



Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

Purpose

- To ensure that participants' welfare is of paramount importance, regardless of age, gender, ability, religion or race, when planning, organising, advising on and delivering activities
- To ensure that all staff working with children and vulnerable adults are carefully selected and accept responsibility for the safety of participants in their care
- To reduce the possibility of staff being placed in situations where abuse might be occur or be alleged
- To respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate external agencies

Definitions

In law, a child is defined as up to and including the age of 18 in The Children Act, 1989. Extensions of this exist for children who are disabled and for those in local authority care settings. 'Young person' has no legal status, but it is used to acknowledge that people aged 16 or 17 may not think of themselves as 'children'. For the purpose of this policy, people aged 18 and under are referred to as 'children'.

There is no standard definition for vulnerable adults. Arts Council England defines vulnerable adults as "people who are, or may be, in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age, or illness, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation".

The term 'staff' covers our core staff, casual staff, artists, workshop leaders and volunteers.

Recruitment

Good staff recruitment procedures play a vital role in safeguarding. The advertising and interviewing process will be appropriately structured, and the importance of safeguarding children emphasised. CRB Disclosure checks will be carried out for all personnel with substantial access to children and vulnerable adults.

Guidelines for Staff – Creating a Safe Environment

Our staff potentially work with children and vulnerable adults in a more 'open' atmosphere than other environments that they may regularly encounter. These guidelines are to help staff create a safe environment where participants can enjoy



Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

rewarding and stimulating experiences.

Staff working with children and vulnerable adults should:

- plan activity sessions with the care and safety of participants as their primary concern
- produce risk assessments before the project commences
- be appropriately trained and qualified to ensure the safe provision of services, coaching and use of equipment
- familiarise themselves with building safety issues such as fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment
- ensure the room where sessions take place is of adequate size, safe and as open as possible
- ensure that their work sessions start and end on time
- have access to any consent forms for all participants taking part in the organised sessions, emergency contact details, information about who they will be collected by, relevant information about any allergies and illnesses, which should be treated as confidential
- take an attendance register at the beginning of each session and return this information at the end of each session
- Ensure there are no additional adults, beyond the core staff and support team, regularly in sessions without authorisation and CRB checking
- report all accidents and record the incident in the Accident Book as soon as possible, ideally countersigned by the parent or carer
- observe safeguarding children and vulnerable adults guidelines issued by the organisation that runs the building that they are working in, when outside our premises
- promote, demonstrate and incorporate the values of fair play, trust and ethics throughout the session and course of their activities
- ensure children are aware that their safety and enjoyment is important and let them know they can mention any issues if they feel this is not how they are being treated

Staff working with children and vulnerable adults should never:

- allow participants to spend time unsupervised
- spend excessive amounts of time alone with participants away from others
- take participants alone in a car or on a journey, however short
- take participants to their home
- arrange to meet participants outside the workshop context, or become friends on social networking sites
- engage in rough physical activities including horseplay - apart from structured activities
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form

Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

- use inappropriate language or allow participants to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- let an allegation made during a group session go unchallenged or unrecorded
- do things of a personal nature for participants that they can do themselves
- work with participants whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Physical contact should be deflected, if possible. However, there may be times when physical contact is unavoidable, such as providing reassurance to a distressed younger child or physical support in drama games. Physical contact should only take place with the consent of the participant and the purpose of the contact should be made clear.

If staff have to do things of a personal nature for children and vulnerable adults (take to toilet, support etc) then they should obtain the consent of the participant and their parent or carer. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents or carers should be fully informed, as soon after the event as possible.

If a child or vulnerable adult are not collected at the end of a session, the workshop leader and FOH staff will endeavour to contact their parent or carer. If they are not collected within 30 minutes of the end of the session, staff will contact the police.

We will ensure that staff working with children:

- have an appropriate number of legally responsible adults present
- have adequate space
- have no unaccompanied children under the age of five in their group without the express agreement of staff and parents / carers, who should remain in the building for the duration of the activity
- always have a teacher present in school settings
- are adequately insured against claims of negligence

Use of the internet

Children and vulnerable adults using the internet could potentially be at risk from people who create fake profiles on social networking sites, from cyber bullying or being exposed to inappropriate images. To minimise the risk of this happening staff working with children and vulnerable adults should:

- ensure that participants using the internet are supervised
- give participants adequate information about how to protect themselves online, including never giving out personal details and contact information, never arranging face to face meetings with anyone and immediately exiting any chat room or site that has unsuitable content
- encourage participants to report anything that concerns them to a member of staff



Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

- never post photographs on the internet that could identify a participant

Photography & Video

Formal permission should be obtained for the use of any images, both from children and vulnerable adults themselves (where appropriate) and from parents / carers.

Signs of Abuse

Signs which could alert staff to the fact that abuse might be taking place could include:

- ◆ Unexplained bruising and injuries
- ◆ Sexually explicit language and actions
- ◆ Sudden changes in behaviour
- ◆ Something a participant has said
- ◆ A change observed over a long period of time e.g. losing weight or being increasingly dirty or unkempt

If a participant displays these signs it does not necessarily mean that they are being abused. Similarly there may not be any signs; staff may just feel something is wrong. If there are concerns, it is not the responsibility of staff to decide if it is abuse but it is their responsibility to act on concerns and report it in accordance with the procedure set out in this policy.

Types of Abuse

Neglect:

The actual or likely persistent and significant neglect of a child or vulnerable adult or the failure to protect a child or vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care. Neglect in recreational and social situations might occur if staff fail to ensure that participants in their care are safely protected or are exposed to undue risk, cold, sunburn or injury.

Sexual Abuse:

The involvement of children or vulnerable adults in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent and as such are illegal. Recreational and social situations may involve physical contact (e.g. supporting and guiding participants) and could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed.

Physical Abuse:

Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child or vulnerable adult, or wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child or vulnerable adult.

Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

Emotional Abuse:

The actual or likely persistent or significantly emotional ill treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child or vulnerable adult. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment but emotional abuse is where it is the main or only form of abuse. Emotional abuse in recreational or social activities might also include situations where parents, staff or volunteers subject children or vulnerable adults to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations. Bullying may also take place between children and vulnerable adults.

What should you do if a participant tells you that they are being abused?

Always:

- Stay calm - ensure the participant is safe and feels safe
- Accept what you have been told (This should not be seen as believing or disbelieving what you have been told)
- Reassure the participant and stress that they are not to blame
- Tell the participant that you will offer support but you will have to pass the information on
- Using the checklist below, record the incident on the Children and Vulnerable Adult Incident Form as soon as possible after the event detailing what you and the participant discussed

Never:

- Rush into details that may be inappropriate
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Take sole responsibility - consult someone else so that you can protect the participant and gain support for yourself

Checklist

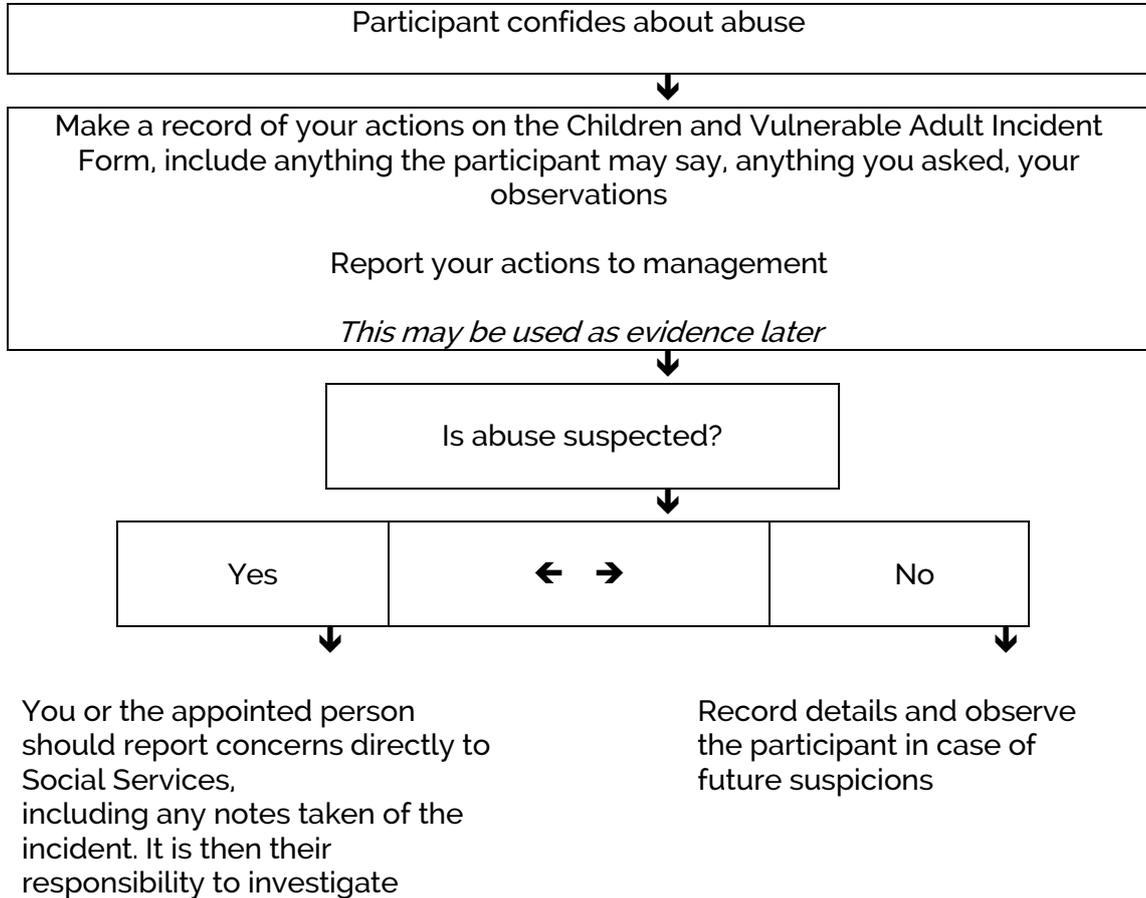
Participant behaviour/appearance gives reason for concern

Or

Participant has an unusual physical injury

Or

Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy



DO NOT INVESTIGATE - REPORT



Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

The day-to-day implementation of this policy is delegated to the Artistic Producer.

The Artistic Director has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation and may be changed from time to time.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the Artistic Director.