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# STAGED

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## Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Staged believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone involved in the sessions, projects and workshops, by a commitment to good practice which protects them.

### **We recognise that:**

- the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount;
- all children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse; and
- working in partnership with children and vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and their agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

### **Policy Statement**

The Children Act 1989 and 2004, define a 'child' as a person up to the age of 18 years old. Extensions of this exist for children who have special needs and for those in local authority care settings. The Children Act 1989 makes it clear that the welfare of the child is paramount and it gives everyone involved in the care of children a responsibility for the protection of those children. A 'vulnerable adult' is someone who is 18 years of age or over who may have care needs because of a disability, age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves, or cannot stop themselves being harmed or exploited. Staged is committed to provide a safe environment for all children, vulnerable adults, staff and visitors and to promote a climate where children and adults will feel confident about sharing any concerns that they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others. Staged believes that all children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age and background, have at all times and in all situations, the right to enjoy the activities of the group in a happy, safe and secure environment. Staged will ensure that this is the case by rigorously implementing this policy. All staff and volunteers will be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service prior to working with the organisation.

### **The purpose of this policy is:**

- to provide protection for the children and vulnerable adults who attend sessions and workshops.
- to provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm. ('Staff' here also includes independent contractors or self-employed persons providing activities.)
- this policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Board members, sessional workers or anyone working on behalf of Staged.

### **We will seek to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately; and
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

**Staged "Designated Person"** to whom all safeguarding concerns should be referred in the first place is Ange Williams, ([Stagedtheatrefortheages@hotmail.com](mailto:Stagedtheatrefortheages@hotmail.com) or 07725547521). In her absence, the deputy is Katie Thompson. The Board level lead on safeguarding issues is Katie Thompson. Or as a last resort where no other channel is appropriate to the NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline on 0800 028 0285 or Elder Abuse Helpline on 0808 8088141 (as appropriate).

### **Recognising Types of Abuse**

Abuse is generally divided into four categories:

#### **1. Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, female genital mutilation or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

#### **2. Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

#### **3. Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable person is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging persons to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other vulnerable adults. This includes people from all different walks of life.

#### **4. Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet someone's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a person's basic emotional needs. Remember the abuse may not necessarily be perpetrated by adults.

Safeguarding issues can also arise from peer-on-peer abuse. This could include bullying, cyberbullying, sexting, involvement with gang culture and gender-based assaults.

*Abuse of vulnerable adults can take similar forms:*

- Physical - such as slapping or hitting
- Psychological - such as intimidation, preventing visitors, threats or being deliberately ignored
- Financial - such as stealing someone's money or spending it on the wrong things, putting pressure on someone to make changes to a will or spending their money against their wishes
- Sexual - such as forcing someone into an unwanted sexual activity or touching inappropriately
- Neglect - such as not caring for someone properly, not providing adequate food or putting them at risk.

The abuse can be by anyone, often by those in a position of trust - a relative, friend, paid worker or volunteer.

## **Radicalisation and the Prevent duty**

Protecting vulnerable persons from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting them from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. The definition of 'extremism' also includes calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people and vulnerable adults. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff and volunteers should be alert to changes in behaviour which could indicate that a person may be in need of help or protection. Use professional judgement in identifying those who might be at risk of radicalisation. Report concerns to the Designated Person or the deputy who will then act proportionately in deciding whether to make a referral to the 'Channel' programme, a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into extremism. The local Channel programme coordinator can be contacted on [prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk) t. 01785 232054.

## **Safe Recruitment**

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with Staged. The Designated Person will ensure that all Board members, staff and volunteers hold a current a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check, at the appropriate level. The Designated Person shall bring a report to each Board meeting indicating the status of DBS checks on all staff, sessional workers and volunteers. Recruitment procedures will always include self-declaration and the use of references. All prospective staff and volunteers will be interviewed, for volunteers this need not be a formal interview.

Staged will ensure that all staff and volunteers have appropriate qualifications and training appropriate to their role. Should any concerns arise following a DBS Check, these will be passed onto Staged Board and the Designated Person may decide to contact Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board or Staffordshire and/or Stoke on Trent Partnership Adult Safeguarding Board, as appropriate, for information and guidance. Any Disclosure that causes concern will be assessed to establish the level of risk the subject poses to children, vulnerable adults other service users, colleagues, the general public and/or the reputation of Staged.

## **A number of questions will be asked:**

- Does the offence relate directly to work with children or vulnerable adults?
- What is the seriousness of the offence/s and the circumstances surrounding it?
- How long is it since the offence was committed?
- Does the subject have a pattern of offending?
- Has the subject's situation changed since the offence occurred?
- What is the subject's explanation of the offence?
- Did the subject declare the offence prior to the Disclosure?

If all these questions are not answered satisfactorily, then the prospective staff member, volunteer or Board member will not be allowed to join Staged. All new staff and volunteers will go through a probation and induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all staff and volunteers are adequately supported.

The Designated Person has a legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service in respect of any person connected with Staged who has:

- harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult;
- satisfied the harm test; or
- received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

### **Training and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers**

The Designated Person will ensure that a proper induction on safeguarding issues takes place for all volunteers and staff. The Designated Person will provide regular support and supervision to the new member of staff and volunteer in all areas of their work including child protection. **All new staff and volunteers will read and understand this policy as part of their induction process. Staff and volunteers must be able to identify the signs of abuse and will be confident about the steps to take and how to report any concerns.**

All staff and volunteers will attend appropriate training on protection of children and vulnerable adults.

All volunteers will receive cascade training on safeguarding from staff, and be offered formal training as available, including the distribution of safeguarding key steps reminder cards.

### **Creating a Safe and Caring Environment**

Staff and volunteers should avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult at any time. When this is unavoidable, it should be done with the full knowledge and consent of the worker in Charge.

#### **Staff and Volunteers will:**

- Encourage an 'open environment' (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and discouraging the keeping of secrets).
- Treat all children and vulnerable adults with respect;
- Take care to avoid showing any favouritism;
- Prevent the abuse of younger or weaker children by older or stronger children through bullying, cruelty or any other forms of humiliation;
- Promote, demonstrate and incorporate the values of fair play, trust and ethics throughout activities;
- Set examples of appropriate behaviour. As children and vulnerable adults learn by example, volunteers should avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison; and
- Encourage good behaviour.

#### **Staff and volunteers should never:**

- Engage in rough physical activities, even when playing;
- Engage in sexually proactive activities, or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or vulnerable adult;
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Allow the use of inappropriate language;
- Physically punish any child or vulnerable adult;
- Humiliate or frighten child or vulnerable adult;
- Let a child or vulnerable adult's allegation go either unchallenged and/or unrecorded;
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult. If you do have to do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult e.g. take to the toilet, support, lift, etc., then you should obtain the full consent of their parents/carer and permission from the Worker in Charge. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents, carers and the Worker in Charge, should be fully informed as soon, as is practicable.
- Reduce a child or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control.

- Undertake any tasks for which they feel inadequately trained or have concerns about; or
- Take photos or videos of children or vulnerable adults without parental or carers' consent.

### **Designated Person**

Staged Designated Person for safeguarding is the Charity Manager. In the event of any concerns regarding a child or vulnerable adult, then the Designated Person or his or her deputy must be informed at the earliest available opportunity. If necessary, the Designated Person will inform the relevant Safeguarding team at local authority social care or the police without delay. The Designated Person will attend regular specialist training to refresh their knowledge and best practice every year and ensure that Staged child protection procedures are kept up to date and reviewed.

### **Signs of Abuse**

The signs summarised below do not necessarily mean that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried in any way at all, it **MUST** be reported to the Designated Person. It is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by reporting.

#### **1. Signs of Physical Abuse**

- Unexplained injuries or burns;
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries;
- Refusal to discuss injuries;
- Untreated injuries;
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive;
- Bald patches;
- Withdrawal from physical contact;
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather;
- Fear of returning home;
- Fear of medical help;
- Self-destructive tendencies;
- Aggression towards others; and
- Running away

#### **2. Signs of Neglect**

- Constant hunger;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Constant tiredness;
- Poor state of clothing;
- Emaciated;
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school;
- Untreated medical problems;
- Destructive tendencies;
- Low self-esteem;
- Neurotic behaviour;
- No social relationships;
- Running away; and
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

#### **3. Signs of Emotional abuse**

- Physical, mental and/or emotional development slows down;
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive;
- Over-reaction to mistakes;
- Continual self-deprecation;
- Sudden speech disorders;
- Fear of new situations;
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations;
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. thumb sucking, hair twisting, etc;
- Self-mutilation;
- Fear of parents/carers being contacted;
- Extremes of passivity or aggression;
- Substance misuse;
- Running away; and
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging.

#### 4. Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Lack of trust in adults and/or fear of a particular individual[s];
- Over familiarity with adults or provocative behaviour;
- Withdrawal and introversion/problems with peer relationships;
- Running away from home/sudden behaviour changes e.g. falling standards, truancy, stealing, etc;
- Low self-esteem;
- Substance misuse;
- Displaying sexual knowledge beyond age group;
- Involvement in prostitution;
- Over-sexed behaviour;
- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark;
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks;
- Depression, suicide attempts;
- Anorexia nervosa/eating disorder or a change in eating habits;
- Pregnancy, particularly when reluctant to name the father; and
- Recurring urinary tract problems/vaginal infections.

#### **Responding to Disclosures or Suspicions of Abuse**

Abuse can be brought to staff and volunteers' attention in a number of ways, for example:

- Staff and volunteers may notice signs of abuse and suspect that it may be taking place;
- A child or vulnerable adult may disclose that they are personally being abused to a member of staff or volunteer; and
- Abuse may be reported by a third party, for example a friend or concerned adult.

**It is not the responsibility of staff and volunteers to deal with suspected abuse but it is everyone's responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Person without delay.** It is important that all staff and volunteers should be aware of their responsibilities if abuse is suspected. If you notice any social changes in the behaviour of a child or vulnerable adult, worrying marks or bruises or hear a child or vulnerable adult talking about things which give cause for concern, then your first responsibility is to the child or vulnerable adult. It is not safe to assume that someone else will take action. As an adult you have a duty to take appropriate action. Recognising and coping with abuse is very stressful and the person reporting the concern will not have to cope alone.

**If a child or vulnerable adult spontaneously talks of experiences which give cause for concern staff and volunteers should:**

1. Explain to the person that if he/she discloses information which leads you to believe they are being abused, you will be unable to keep it confidential.
2. Listen to the person without questioning him/her. Be aware of your own reactions as showing disapproval, shock or anger may stop them from continuing with their disclosure.
3. Do not try to stop them from recalling events. Keep a written record of what is said, in what context, the setting, the timing and which people were present.
4. Reassure the person, tell them that they are right to tell you (do not promise to keep it a secret as it is your responsibility to inform others).
5. Stay calm – ensure the person is safe and feels safe.
6. Accept what you have been told. This should not be seen as believing or disbelieving what you have been told.
7. Reassure the person and stress that they are not to blame.
8. Tell the person that you will offer support, but you will have to pass the information on.
9. Do not question the person and/or rush into details that may be inappropriate.
10. Monitor the individuals concerned; encourage them to continue to take part in Staged activities.
11. Do not make promises you cannot keep.
12. Do not approach or contact the alleged abuser[s].

There is a statutory duty to report to the police a discovery (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. FGM occurs where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, without a valid medical reason.

#### **Reporting Procedures**

- Record the concern or incident in the Staged Safeguarding Incident Report Form.
- Inform the Designated Person or his deputy immediately, or if this is not practicable telephone the number(s) below.
- If the matter is urgent/there are concerns about the person's immediate safety and none of the above can be contacted, then contact the appropriate Safeguarding team or the police immediately.
- The Designated Person must contact the appropriate authorities including the safeguarding team in the area where the child or vulnerable adult lives as soon as possible.
- The Designated Person would normally inform the parents/carers as soon as possible. However, there could be circumstances when this could put the person at greater risk or there may be concerns that parents/carers will not respond appropriately. If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, volunteer or Board member, the safeguarding team will follow the same procedure as they do to investigate allegations of abuse for a family.

Signed: *S Allman*

Print Name: S ALLMAN

Role: CHAIR

Date: 26/2/22

Reviewed by board:

Next review: January 2023