

Richmond Walking and Book Festival Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, including children, at risk adults, and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with Richmond Walking and Book Festival (The Festival).

This includes any harm arising from:

- The conduct of Trustees, volunteers or personnel associated with The Festival or
- The design and implementation of The Festival activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by The Festival and informs Trustees, volunteers and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

Reviewing the Policy and Procedures

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis by The Festival Board.

Trustee Oversight

A nominated Trustee is required to provide oversight on this policy and its application. As of February 2024, this role will be undertaken by Dr Jane McLennan.

What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means: protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights; and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with Trustees, volunteers, associated personnel or programmes.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in Appendix A Glossary of Terms.

Scope

All Festival Trustees, volunteers and associated personnel.

Associated personnel are those engaged in work related to The Festival including but not limited to the following: consultants; contractors; speakers, workshop and activity providers; room hirers.

Policy Statement

The Festival believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding as appropriate: child safeguarding, vulnerable adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have other policies and procedures associated with them (see Appendix B).

The Festival commits to addressing safeguarding through the three pillars of Prevention, Reporting and Response.

Prevention

The Festival will:

- Ensure all Trustees and volunteers have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy;
- Design and undertake all its activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with The Festival;
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures are considered when recruiting, managing and developing volunteers;
- Ensure volunteers receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role;
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly according to due process.

Child safeguarding

Festival Trustees, volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

Adult safeguarding

Festival Trustees, volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults
- Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

Festival Trustees, volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, Festival Trustees, volunteers and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by Festival Trustees, volunteers and associated personnel to the Designated Person

Reporting

Enabling reports

The Festival will ensure that safe, appropriate and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to Trustees, volunteers and the communities we work with.

The Festival will accept complaints from volunteers, customers, and external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Trustees or volunteers who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Designated Person or the Chair of The Festival.

They should also, as soon as reasonably possible, record details of concerns on the Safeguarding Incident form.

The original document is to be securely stored in the Safeguarding log file. No copies in any other medium to be kept.

The referral must be submitted to NYC Customer Service Children's Social Care Services within 24 hours of receipt.

Emergency Action

In some cases it may be important or an absolute necessity to act quickly to protect a vulnerable person. In these cases:

(i) Wherever possible, take immediate action to protect the person from the immediate harm or possible immediate harm.

(ii) Contact NYC Customer service Children's Social Care Services or Police immediately.

- NYC Customer Service Children's Social Care Services: 0300 1312131

- If necessary, dial 999 and report the incident or your concerns to the Police.

IN EMERGENCIES DO NOT DELAY MAKING A REFERRAL. MAKE IT STRAIGHT AWAY AND MAKE IT DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE.

Response

The Festival will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure and to legal and statutory obligations (see Appendix B).

The Festival will apply appropriate measures to persons found in breach of policy.

The Festival will offer support to survivors of harm caused by volunteers or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

At risk adult sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult.

A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Beneficiary of Assistance

Someone who directly receives goods or services from The Festival's activities. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that The Festival serves and can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child

A person below the age of 18.

Harm

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

Safeguarding

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our volunteers or activities.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our activities, partners and volunteers. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise.

Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty. Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

Sexual abuse

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

Appendix B

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is a part of the wider role of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults – and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Safeguarding Children

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex)

or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Volunteer awareness

All volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all volunteers.

Where necessary or possible, volunteers will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses, such as those run by NYC.

Procedures

What to do if you have concerns about a child:

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- ✓ Not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to NYC Children's Social Care Services.
- ✓ Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Accept what is said.
- ✓ Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest; don't make promises you may not be able to keep eg: 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.
- ✓ Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it; for example, you could say, 'You're not to blame'.
- ✓ Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- ✓ Do not ask leading questions e.g.: did they touch your private parts?; ask open questions such as 'Anything else to tell me?'.
- ✓ Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another person.
- ✓ Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- ✓ Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- ✓ Record the date, time, place, any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- ✓ Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the Designated Persons as appropriate. If you and/or a Designated Person still have any concerns, you should refer to NYC Children's Social Care Services:

Customer Relations Unit: T 0300 1312131 E social.care@northyorks.gov.uk

Out Of Hours Duty team: T 0300 1312131 E edt@northyorks.gov.uk

Emergency: T 999

What information will you need when making a referral:

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible; such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call.

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, and do so within 48hrs.

Where there are concerns about a child's welfare:

Allegations involving a Trustee or volunteer

The Festival is committed to having effective recruitment procedures; including checking all relevant volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people.

There may be occasions when there is an allegation against a Trustee or volunteer. Such allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to the Chair of The Festival or the Designated Person.

Person has concerns

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- ✓ Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- ✓ Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- ✓ Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The Designated Person, or in their absence the Chair of the Trust will, where necessary, obtain further details of the allegations and the circumstances in which they were made and determine what steps should be taken.

They should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegations are false or unfounded. The Chair of The Trust will then decide whether it should be referred to the NYC Customer Service unit Children's Social Care Services and/or the police or whether other action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

1. The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
2. Enquiries and assessment by NYC Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is in need of protection or in need of services;
3. Consideration of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is a part of the wider role of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults – and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

For reasons of consistency and practicality, The Festival's procedures for safeguarding vulnerable adults will be the same as those for safeguarding children and young people except where the law or the specific circumstances of an individual's need require otherwise.