



Bright Sparks Theatre Arts Company

A Community Interest Company (C.I.C.)

Established 2013

Bright Sparks Theatre Arts,
8 The Grove,
Moorhead,
Shipley,
BD18 4LD.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2025

1. Safeguarding must involve promoting the independence and quality of life of adults and must maximise their ability to control their own lives. Where adults cannot make decisions (for example due to a lack of capacity to make the specified decision) they should still be involved in the decision as far as possible.
2. Our participants should be offered the support necessary for them to protect themselves. Where adults are less able to protect or promote their own interests, care professionals should take reasonable and appropriate measures to ensure their protection.
3. Prevention of harm or abuse is the primary goal. Prevention involves working with individuals to reduce risks of harm or abuse that they find unacceptable. Prevention involves delivering high quality person-centred services in safe environments. All adults have a right to holistic care that is focused on their individual needs, including their need to be kept safe.
4. In addition to respecting the informed choices of competent adults, safeguarding responses should be proportional to the nature and seriousness of the concern. Options should be presented that are the least restrictive of individual rights and choices.
5. Safeguarding adults is most effective where individuals, professionals and communities work together to prevent, detect, and respond to harm and abuse.
6. Good safeguarding requires collaboration and transparency with partner agencies. In addition to these principles, care providers must avoid discriminating unfairly between groups of people. Decisions that impact their lives must be made based on a fair and objective assessment of individual needs and not on assumptions about age or disability.
7. Although the phrase 'vulnerable adult' is widely used, it is not without its problems. Competent adults have a right to make decisions that affect their lives, even where this may result in exposure to risk. Labelling adults 'vulnerable' can be stigmatising and lead to unfounded assumptions that individuals lack the ability to direct their own lives. This can result in unacceptably paternalistic interventions and the kinds of disempowerment that safeguarding is designed to avoid. Alternatively, drawing too narrow a definition of vulnerability could mean that opportunities to identify adults who may benefit from additional consensual support can be lost. Recognising the wide range of circumstances in which safeguarding issues can arise, a key message is the need for an approach that addresses the specific needs of individuals. Such a person-centred approach rooted in good communication skills and respectful of everyone's dignity and independence is likely to lead to optimal outcomes.

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SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

1. Designated Person.

This is the person who is responsible for the implementation of the policy for the project. It is their duty to ensure that all those taking part in the project are aware of the policy and procedures. They are also the person to whom concerns, or allegations are to be made to and are responsible for acting on such information. For Bright Sparks Theatre Arts Company, our Designated Safeguard Lead is Caitlin Smith. Deputy Designated Safeguard Leads are Julie Lill and Marc Walton.

2. Background Checks.

All workers on a project are to provide two referees, which are to be checked. Previous and/or existing DBS will be requested; and in situations in which the worker is lacking these documents, special care will be taken in ensuring they are accompanied whilst working with the client group.

3. Code of Behaviour.

All workers are expected to treat each other and groups with whom they are working with respect; racism, bullying, homophobia, sexism and religious discrimination will not be tolerated; nor will aggressive or oppressive behaviour. Artists and helpers are not expected to carry out any intimate care tasks unless they have been employed specifically for that task.

4. Information for group members.

All participants in a project are to receive details of this policy, and information on what to do and who to contact if they have a concern or problem.

5. Confidentiality.

All information that members of the group share with workers is to be considered confidential. That is to say that personal information given to workers by group members should not be discussed with anyone outside of the project. It is especially important that personal information given by one group member is not shared with other members of the group. However, it is a legal requirement that workers should share information about abuse, as further outlined in sections 6 - 9.

6. Reporting of Suspicions of Abuse.

All workers on a project are to note the definitions of abuse listed below. If they have any suspicions that a person may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, then they must make the designated person aware unless the allegation is about the designated person, in which case they should inform someone else on the management team, a director, or someone else working on the project that they trust.

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SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES (continued)

7. Reporting Allegations.

In the event of an allegation, the designated person should record the following information. Name and contact details of the victim, and of parents/carers (where applicable). Time of incident. What was seen. What was said. Who was there? What evidence there is. Who else has been told about the incident? Whether the parents/carers have been told (where applicable).

8. Next Steps.

The designated person should share the details of the allegation with the following people (unless they are the person against whom the allegation has been made), the directors, a senior member of staff from the host organisation, and/or the parents/carers of the victim (where appropriate). If the allegation is against a worker, they should be removed from contact with the group immediately and should not be re-employed until the allegation has been fully investigated and resolved. Where the allegation is such that it is believed that a person may be suffering, or may be at risk of significant harm, then the police and local social services department must be informed.

9. Definitions of Abuse.

PHYSICAL ABUSE. This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a person whom they are looking after.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE. This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar that they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of people.

SEXUAL ABUSE. This involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.

NEGLECT. This is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, failing to protect a person 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.

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SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES (COVID-19)

Adults who need care and support may be targeted at this time because of several factors. They may need assistance with some tasks, be less up to speed with technology, more welcoming of new contacts, and be more trusting. There is evidence that social isolation increases the likelihood of abuse. Many older and disabled people spend long periods at home alone under normal circumstances and will continue to do so even as/after the restrictions lift. People who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 may not feel safe or ready to mix more freely. Those who seek to exploit these vulnerabilities are quick to act and this remains a possibility.

Safeguarding duties and responsibilities apply to adults who:

- Have care and support needs,
- are experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and
- are unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

Many people with care and support needs will be supported either in the family home or by residential and nursing care services. It could be argued that these people will be better shielded from abuse, but national statistics show high incidence of abuse where the abuser is a family member or the paid care provider. Those living alone in the community, who continue to be isolated, may also be a particular target for scammers and fraudsters.

People with disabilities and special educational needs may be in a state of heightened anxiety. Increased incidence of depression and suicide risk are more common, because of fear and loss of freedoms, and reduced contact with, or the loss of, loved ones and family. At this time, those who are particularly vulnerable may accept help from those who seek to exploit them.

Our creative team, and associated support staff, are the eyes and ears that may first pick up any signs of abuse. Here is our checklist of things we do:

- Talk about the increased risk of abuse as appropriate to pandemic measures.
- Be aware that any changes in behaviour or demeanour could indicate abuse.
- Advise people not to answer the door to strangers – and be aware of fake ID.
- Try not to alarm people but ask them to be wary of offers to help, particularly from strangers.
- Warn people against responding to any text, email, or phone call from an unidentified source. Explain that fraudsters will imitate official bodies such as the government or the NHS - and they do it very well!
- Advise people that they should never give their personal information, passwords or pin numbers to anyone, unless they are completely confident that they are who they claim to be.

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A concern that someone is being abused or neglected, will be raised as a priority, internally, in line with Bright Sparks Theatre Arts' policy and procedure.

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