



## Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Our Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to all staff, Board members, volunteers, interns, agency staff, consultants and anyone working on behalf of the organisation, collectively referred to as Engender's community. It is everyone responsibility to familiarise themselves with this Policy.

This policy represents the commitment of the organisation in its obligation to protect children and vulnerable adults who are or may be at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination. All those who are part of Engender's community have a role to play in ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected and the organisation is committed to working within the principles of dignity, safety, equality and diversity.

For children, safeguarding sits within the content of the wider Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach, the Early Years Framework and the UN convention on the Rights of the Child.

### 2. Scope and Aims

It is recognised that members of our community may come into contact with children and vulnerable adults during the course of their work or volunteering with the organisation.

This policy provides a framework which aims to:

- Promote a culture of 'safeguarding' by 'protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.'<sup>1</sup>;
- Promote a culture in which signs of possible harm, mistreatment or neglect are recognised and promptly acted upon;
- Provide clarity of procedure for those involved, including reporting concerns, recording and communicating information, data protection and confidentiality, and
- Promote positive collaborative working both within our community and with any external agencies.

### 3. Key definitions

**Child** – for the purposes of this policy, children are defined as young people under the age of 18.

Scots law recognises that despite having full legal capacity at 16, young people under 18 can be vulnerable in certain situations. Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are still subject to a supervision requirement by a Children's Hearing can be viewed as a child and therefore those over the age of 16 may still require intervention to protect them. The priority is to ensure that a vulnerable young person who is, or may be, at risk of significant harm is offered support and protection.

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<sup>1</sup> Safeguarding people, Care Quality Commission

**Vulnerable Adult** –It should be noted that a person may be able to safeguard their own well-being and interests and have a disability, physical and/or mental health condition and It is the whole of an adult’s particular circumstances which can combine to make them more vulnerable to harm than others.

Under section 3 of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, ‘Adults at risk’ are defined as adults over 16 years of age who:

- Are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests’
- Are at risk of harm, and;
- Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected

All three elements of the definition must be met, and the presence of a particular condition does not automatically mean that an adult is an ‘adult at risk’.

**Harm/Abuse** – Under section 53 of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 ‘harm’ includes all ‘harmful conduct’ and, in particular, includes:

- Physical
- Domestic violence
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Sexual
- Psychological
- Financial or material
- Organisational/institutional
- Discriminatory
- Self-neglect
- Modern slavery
- Self-harm
- Gender based violence
- Hate crime

This list is not exhaustive, and no category of harm is excluded simply because it is not listed. Harm can be accidental or intentional as a result of self-neglect or neglect by a carer or caused by self-harm and/or attempted suicide.

Whilst most abuse takes place when people are in physical contact, it can also take place in a virtual environment such as an online discussion board or chat room.

#### **4. Key principles for implementing this policy**

- **Recognise**  
Know what to look for; recognise the signs and symptoms and listen to concerns. Seek help and discuss early in the course of your concerns.
- **Record**  
Keep a clear and contemporaneous record of your concerns.
- **Report**

Know where to get help and who to report your concerns to

- **Refer**  
It is the responsibility of the Head of Development to refer concerns on to the appropriate external agencies.

## 5. Prevention

### Recruitment

The organisation will take all reasonable and appropriate measures to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults. Where it is identified that an individual or job role is likely to have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults in the course of their work, the organisation will follow the statutory guidance for example, to ensure that where appropriate the individual will join the PVG Scheme (Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme) introduced by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

The organisation will always seek to recruit the best applicant for the job based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

**5.1 References** - all offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of at least 2 references which are considered satisfactory by the organisation. The referee should not be a family member, a peer or a subordinate from the candidate's previous employer. All referees will be asked if they think the candidate is suitable for the job for which they have applied.

**5.2 Interviews** - short-listed candidates will normally be required to undergo a face to face interview and a minimum of two interviewers will see each candidate for the vacant post. The interview will enable the interviewer(s) to explore any anomalies or gaps that have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the job criteria (including any safeguarding criteria).

Any information regarding past disciplinary actions or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process if it has been disclosed on the application form. At least one member of the interviewing panel will have undergone safer recruitment training or refresher training.

**5.3 Offer of employment** - where an offer of employment is to be made, the organisation will seek verification of any professional qualifications deemed necessary for the post as well as verification of the candidates right to work in the UK. The service provided by the organisation does not normally require either a basic or an enhanced disclosure check; nor does it take part in 'regulated work' that would require the successful candidate to be a member of the PVG Scheme.

**5.4 Induction** - all new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the organisation's policies and procedures including our Safeguarding Policy and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and others are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy. Any safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Head of Development.

### **Training**

The organisation will take steps to ensure that all of its community are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and where appropriate and will provide relevant training for its staff, Board, volunteers and interns in line with this policy. Some good practice guidance for those in contact with children/vulnerable adults can be found at Appendix 3.

## **6. Responding to Specific Events, Concerns or Allegations**

The organisation encourages all of its community to respond promptly to any concerns regarding potential harm as outlined in this policy. All reports made in good faith will be dealt with fairly. However, the organisation recognises the possibility of malicious or vexatious complaints and any complaints identified as such will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary or other appropriate action being taken against the complainant.

Any member of our community found to have committed any act of abuse or harm towards a child or vulnerable adult will be subject to disciplinary or other appropriate action; they may also be subject to criminal proceedings.

**6.1 Reporting Concerns** – a Step-by-Step guide for staff dealing with reported or suspected abuse can be found at Appendix 1

In the event that a member of our community has been informed that abuse of a child or vulnerable adult is taking place, they must report this to the Designated Person (see below). Examples of when a report should be made, include when:

- A child or vulnerable adult at risk discloses abuse;
- A person makes an allegation of abuse about a member of our community;
- There are suspicions or indicators that a child or vulnerable adult at risk is being abused – for example, where there are observable changes in a child or protected adult’s behaviour that may be related to abuse; or
- The behaviour of any person towards a child or vulnerable adult at risk causes concern or there is a suspicion that a child or protected adult is being harmed;

If any member of our community is unsure of whether a matter should be reported, it is their responsibility to discuss their concerns with the Designated Person.

**6.2 Designated Person** – the organisation’s Designated Person is the Head of Development.

### **6.3 Responsibilities of the Designated Person**

Once the matter has been referred to the Designated Person, they or a nominated person will investigate the matter further. This is likely to include:

- Gathering details;
- Assessing risk and ensuring that the child/vulnerable adult is not in any immediate danger. Additionally, they will take any action deemed necessary in the circumstances, such as

assessing the requirement for emergency services and liaising with other external agencies such as the police and social services;

- Liaising with others within the organisation, as appropriate;
- Contacting parents or guardian(s) unless this may place the child or vulnerable adult in harm;
- Recording written records of actions, discussions and decision-making rationale and keeping these in a secure location with access only for those who need to know;
- Acting as the point of contact for any external agencies throughout the investigation;
- Referring the matter to be dealt with under any relevant internal procedure such as the disciplinary procedure.

#### **6.4 Confidentiality**

Any initial disclosure of suspected harm to a child or vulnerable adult should be treated seriously and with sensitivity. Where such concerns exist, the safety of the individual and/or the safety of other members of our community takes precedence and it may be that confidentiality has to be breached.

It should be made clear to the disclosing person and the child or vulnerable adult involved that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. They should be made aware that relevant information may require to be shared on a need-to-know basis within the organisation and with external agencies. The disclosure of any information including personal data or special categories of special data will be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

**This policy will be reviewed again in June 2021.**

# Appendix 1

## Dealing with reported or suspected abuse

### Step-by-Step Guide

It is important to ensure that any declaration of suspected harm is treated seriously and sensitively. The limits of confidentiality should also be explained as outlined above.

It should be recognised that a declaration may be made to any member of our community, in which case the organisation is considered to have been informed.

If an emergency situation arises, any member of our community can call the emergency services.

### Recognise

All those in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults must ensure that they are familiar with the potential signs of abuse or harm as outlined in Appendix 2.

- Listen carefully and respond sensitively without expressing an opinion and without imposing your views and values;
- Do not ask direct or invasive questions. These can prevent the person from telling the full story and can also trigger trauma symptoms;
- Encourage, give lots of time and don't pressurise;
- Be aware that for various reasons, disclosing such information can be difficult:
  - The person may be low in self-confidence
  - s/he may have poor communication skills
  - s/he may not expect to be believed
  - there may be a background of threat or coercion
  - there may be 'secondary gains' such as presents, power or attention
  - s/he may be protecting others including an abuser or other potential victim(s)
  - the experience may have become a normal reality
  - stay calm and keep listening

### Record

Make a written record of your concerns as soon as possible after the conversation. This record should include the following information:

- Appropriate personal details eg name, age, address, contact details – email, phone number(s)
- The nature of the concern
  - What has been told to you using quotations where possible and being careful to be objective and factual
  - Be objective; do not make assumptions; do not include personal opinions and interpretations; you may refer to any signs of the abuse
- The sources of information about the concern
- What you have discussed with the child or vulnerable adult and any advice you give
- Names of any of the staff or community with whom you have discussed the incident
- Details of the action you have taken or any referrals you have made (internal and/or external)

- Date and signature of the person making the record

### **Report**

Individual members of our community should never deal with abuse disclosures in isolation and should always refer to the Designated Person. This is the only person who should deal with the case and report suspected abuse to social work or the police.

### **Refer**

Once the matter has been referred to the Designated Person or their nominated person, it is the responsibility of that person to investigate the matter further and take such further action as is necessary under the circumstances.

This may include:

- Assessing risk and ensuring that the child/vulnerable adult is not in any immediate danger. This includes taking an action deemed necessary under the circumstances such as accessing the emergency services and liaising with other external agencies such as the police and social work as appropriate
- Gathering the details
- Liaising with others within the organisation
- Contacting parents or guardians unless this may place the child/vulnerable adult in harm
- Recording written records of all actions, discussions and decision-making rationale and keeping these in a securely locked locations with access only for those who need to know
- Acting as the point of contact for any external agency throughout the investigation
- Referring the matter to be dealt with under any relevant internal procedure, for example the disciplinary procedure.

## Appendix 2

### Recognising potential patterns and signs of harm

You should note that the following information relates to signs of possible harm only. They may not always be indicative of abuse and it is advisable to approach the issue with due care, seeking advice from the Designated Person as needed.

The clearest expression of harm is a statement by the person themselves. Alongside the trust this person placed in the individual they have reported this to, goes the responsibility to escalate concerns to the Designated Person.

However, it is also recognised that suspicions of potential harm may come to light in other ways, which may include the following physical or behavioural signs (the list is not exhaustive):

- Unusual or suspicious injuries
- Neglected or under nourished appearance;
- Dubious or inconsistent explanations for injuries or bruises;
- Becoming withdrawn, socially isolated and increasingly fearful (eg demonstration of fear by the adult at risk to another person or demonstration of fear of going home);
- A prolonged interval between illnesses/injury and presentation for medical care;
- Difficulty in interviewing the person at risk (eg another individual unreasonably insists on being present);
- Anxious or disturbed behaviour on the part of the person at risk;
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.



## Appendix 3

### Good practice guidance for those in contact with children and vulnerable adults

It is the responsibility of each member of the Engender community to act professionally and respectfully in their dealings with others.

They must ensure that they are aware of the relevant legislation and policies relating to children and vulnerable adults, as outlined in this Policy. Additionally, they must attend any relevant training that may be necessary as part of their role.

General points to be aware of when coming into contact with children or vulnerable adults may include (please note, this list is not exhaustive):

- Treat all children and vulnerable adults with fairness, dignity, equality and respect
- Be sensitive to children or vulnerable adults' appearance, race, culture, religion and/or belief, sexual orientation, gender or disability
- Respect a child or protected adult's right to privacy
- Always work in an open environment. If you are in a situation where you are alone with a child or vulnerable adult, make sure that others can clearly observe you. Where possible, leave the door open.
- Maintain a safe and professional distance in relationships with children and protected adults. You should not share your personal contact details and you should not connect with them over social media except where that is specifically related to the organisation's activity
- When in a position of trust do not engage in sexual relationships with children and protected vulnerable adults. This is an abuse of a position of trust and a criminal offence
- Avoid rough, physical or sexually provocative conduct with children or vulnerable adults
- Do not provide children or vulnerable adults with access to alcohol (where that would be unlawful or inappropriate) or banned substances
- Avoid use of inappropriate language (including sexually suggestive comments)
- Challenge any unacceptable behaviour
- Where appropriate, ensure that you have consent (preferably written) before taking photographs or making video or audio recordings
- If you are required to administer first aid, ensure, wherever possible, that a colleague is present, especially if you are concerned that necessary physical contact may be misconstrued.