

Safeguarding Children and
Vulnerable Adults
POLICY AND PROCEDURE



***WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD AND
PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN &
VULNERABLE ADULTS***

1. INTRODUCTION

While we realise for instance that most childhood/Adult injuries occur in accidental and understandable ways, and that it can be harmful to 'jump to a conclusion' of abuse too quickly based on insufficient evidence, all the volunteer staff at Leigh Film Society undertake to be vigilant for abnormal, untoward signs, of harm, whether physical, emotional, or suffered by way of neglect, and to act immediately and appropriately in any such circumstances.

Thus, whatever position we hold in the Society *it is our responsibility to be alert to the possibility of a Child / Adult suffering any form of harm, and to be aware of, acknowledge and alleviate, where possible, any suffering that a child/Adult may experience. Where volunteers consider that a child/Adult is suffering any type of harm procedures will be followed as laid down in this Policy.*

This Policy will be reviewed when changes in regulations, or revised guidelines are Issued.

This policy is to be kept in the relevant centre Leigh Film Society is working at in the purple child/Adult protection folder.

It is issued to all staff to be included in their personal volunteer files.

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS ORGANISATION

- 1) Develop a Safeguarding Children/Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedure in place
- 2) Operate safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new Directors, staff, volunteers and outside agencies/companies who will work with children and Vulnerable Adults, Directors, staff and volunteers are also required to declare any relevant events, which affect their suitability.
- 3) Develop procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff/volunteers and comply with inter-agency procedures.
- 4) Appoint Designated Safeguarding Person/s and a designated Director, and ensure that they receive the appropriate training.
- 5) Ensure that all other staff who work with children/Vulnerable Adults are aware of their responsibilities regarding Child/ Vulnerable Adult Welfare and Safety. Staff should be alert to signs of harm and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- 6) Ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures for handling suspected cases of harm of children/Vulnerable Adult, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff/volunteer is accused of causing harm, and know the procedure should a Child / Vulnerable Adult disclose incidence of harm to them.
- 7) Ensure that the Policy and Procedure is reviewed and updated annually in accordance with legislation and practical experience.

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working/volunteering for Leigh Film Society. Any of staff or volunteers can be the first point of disclosure for a Child / Vulnerable adult.

4. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING PERSON/S

- Ensure that all staff/volunteers are aware of these procedures;
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff/volunteers;
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services;
- Decide with other relevant staff whether to take further action about specific concerns regarding Significant Harm;
- Carry out the actions in line with the Procedure if Significant Harm is considered to be occurring;
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children/vulnerable adults are kept in a secure place and marked '**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**';

5. DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT HARM

There are no absolute criteria that define significant harm.

Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of harm and neglect. Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm eg. physical injury. More often significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long standing, which interrupt, change, or damage the child's/Vulnerable Adult physical and psychological development.

Some children/Vulnerable Adults live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual harm that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm.

6. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT HARM

Staff should always be alert to a Child / Vulnerable Adult who is suffering harm.

Some incidents of harm are easily recognisable, many are not.

Babies, young children, and children/Adults with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse and harm.

Staff should be concerned about a Child / Vulnerable Adult if he or she:

- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed
- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's injuries.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given)
- Confused or conflicting explanations are given on how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age.

- Any mention by the Child / Vulnerable Adult to staff of items that could constitute sexual abuse.

Where the Child / Vulnerable Adult is known to have contact with a person who is assessed as presenting a risk to children/Vulnerable Adults.

- Where the Child / Vulnerable Adult is known to live in a household where there is domestic violence.

- Children / Vulnerable Adults who are showing signs of neglect which may include not being fed properly, being unclean, being unresponsive.

- A Child / Vulnerable Adult who is not developing emotionally or behaviourally as would be expected

7. DEFINITIONS: THE CATEGORIES OF CHILD / VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a Child / Vulnerable Adult

Someone may abuse a Child / Vulnerable Adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children / Vulnerable Adults 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.

Child / Vulnerable Adult abuse is a term used to describe ways in which Children / Vulnerable Adults are harmed by someone often in a position of power. It is not the responsibility of Society staff to decide whether Child / Vulnerable Adult abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of a Child / Vulnerable Adult are paramount.

Abuse might fall into the categories of:

physical

- emotional (including regular exposure to domestic violence)

- sexual

- neglect

PHYSICAL ABUSE

This is defined as a physical injury to a Child / Vulnerable adult where there is definitive knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, and attempted drowning or smothering, or otherwise causing physical harm to a Child / Vulnerable Adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a Child / Vulnerable adult

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or refusal to discuss them
- Cigarette burns
- Long bruises - possibly made by a belt
- Teeth marks
- Fingertip/slap marks or bruises
- History of bruises/injuries with inconsistent explanations
- Bilateral black eyes
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Untreated injuries
- Fear of medical treatment
- Unexplained patterns of absence that could be in order to hide injuries
- Physical injury to areas of the body, which are not usually considered to be common sites of accidental injury

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent or severe emotional maltreatment of a Child / Vulnerable Adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's/vulnerable Adult's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children/vulnerable adult's that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children/vulnerable adult's. This could include over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the Child / Vulnerable adults participating in normal social interaction. It may involve serious bullying, causing children/vulnerable adult's frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children/vulnerable adult's.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a Child / Vulnerable adult though it may occur alone.

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Developmental delay
- Inappropriate emotional responses
- Self-mutilation/harm
- Extreme passivity or aggression
- Running away
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Excessive fear of situations or people
- Social isolation
- Depression
- Domestic violence
- Over-protectiveness
- A Child / Vulnerable Adult is used as a scapegoat within a family (good child/ bad child)

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person, vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the Child / Vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact. It also may involve non-contact activities such as looking at or production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children/vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Key elements in any definition of Child / Vulnerable adult sexual abuse are:

- (1) Betrayal of trust and responsibility
- (2) Abuse of power for the sexual gratification of the abuser
- (3) Inability of children/vulnerable adults to consent

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Depression, suicidal behaviour/thoughts of suicide, self-harm
- Anorexic/bulimic symptoms
- Acting in a sexually inappropriate way towards adult/peers
- Age-inappropriate behaviour/knowledge
- Unexplained pregnancies
- Running away
- Telling of a 'friend with a problem of abuse'
- Sexually abusing a younger child
- Sudden changes in school or work habits
- Fear of, or untoward anxiety around, certain people
- 'Chronic' medical problems (e.g. stomach pains/headaches)
- Withdrawn, excessively isolated behaviour.

NEGLECT

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

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a Child / Vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's/vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs
- Protect a Child / Vulnerable adults from exposure to drugs and/or alcohol, including being cared for by an adult under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

Possible Signs of Neglect

- 'Failure to thrive' (e.g. looks thin, unwell, below average height and weight)
- Usually hungry
- Has regular accidents (especially burns)
- Poor personal hygiene
- Tiredness
- Reluctant to go home
- Poor social relationships
- Frequent lateness/non-attendance at school
- Inappropriate clothing

8. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE FROM A CHILD

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of the society should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
 - Accept what is being said, and be non-judgemental
 - Allow the Child / Vulnerable adult to talk freely, being reassuring and calm
 - Reassure the Child / Vulnerable adult but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
 - *Not* promise confidentiality – as it might be necessary to refer to Children's Services Dept/ Police.
 - Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault, if appropriate telling the Child / Vulnerable adult that she/he is brave
 - Stress that it was right to disclose
 - Listen carefully, rather than ask direct questions
 - When asking questions, ask 'open' questions rather than leading, 'closed' questions
 - Not criticise the perpetrator
- Explain to the Child / Vulnerable adult what must be done next, and who has to be told.

9. PROCEDURE WHEN WORRIED A CHILD / VULNERABLE ADULT IS SUFFERING HARM, OR HAS DISCLOSED INFORMATION

RECORD KEEPING

When a Child / Vulnerable adult has disclosed this sort of information the member of the society should:

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation, including 'nagging doubts and hear-say';
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court of law
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour

as well as the actual words used by the Child / Vulnerable Adult;

- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of bruising or other injury/injuries;
 - Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions;
 - Immediately pass information on to the duty manager
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- Keep a copy for self *only if it can be kept in a secure place*;
 - Do not keep copies saved on disc or computer.

SUPPORT

Dealing with a disclosure of abuse from a Child / Vulnerable adult, and a safeguarding children/vulnerable adult case in general, may well be a stressful experience. The member of the society involved should, therefore, consider seeking appropriate emotional support for him/herself and discuss this with society chairperson.

10. PROCEDURE FOR ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING SOCIETY MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS

This Procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those that are likely to cause a Child / Vulnerable adult significant harm. It also caters for cases of allegations that may indicate the alleged perpetrator may be unsuitable for working with children/vulnerable adult's in his/her present or any other capacity.

This Procedure should be used in all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a Child / Vulnerable adult
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a Child / Vulnerable adult
- Behaved towards a children/vulnerable adult's in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults

We may need to prepare for possible investigations also:

A police investigation of a possible criminal offence

- Consideration by the Board of Directors of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

If a child, vulnerable adult or parent, makes a complaint of harm against a member of the society, the person receiving the complaint must take it seriously and immediately inform the Chair or if it is involving the Chair a member of the board should be informed.

The person receiving the complaint should clarify and record what is alleged, and should not tell any other person.

Any member of the society who has a reason to suspect that a child vulnerable adult may have been harmed by another member of the society, either at a society event

or elsewhere, similarly must immediately inform the Chair or member of the board. He/she should also make a record of the concerns, including a note of anyone else that witnessed the incident or allegation.

Director's must take a decision to inform the parents or carers of the Child / Vulnerable adult involved. This should normally be done as soon as possible. This can be done in discussion with the **Local Authority Designated Officer** aka **(LADO)**

Before any other action and as soon as possible, preferably the same day, the chair should contact the LADO, to report and discuss the allegation. Detailed records of actions and statements should be kept at all stages.

The LADO will first establish that the allegation is within the scope of this procedure and may have some foundation, and when to inform parents or carers of the Child / Vulnerable person, if this has not already been done.

The LADO will decide on further action which may involve the police and/or Children's Services Dept, including where necessary support for the Child / Vulnerable adult and family.

The Designated Director on behalf of the Board of Director as the employer should inform the member of the society about the allegation as soon as possible after discussion with the LADO, unless the other agencies are to be involved.

The possible risk of harm to children/vulnerable adults posed by an accused person should be evaluated and managed effectively by the Board of Directors, in respect of any children/vulnerable adults involved, and in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases, suspension, should be considered, particularly in any case where it is suspected a Child / Vulnerable adult is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants police investigation or dismissal.

Consideration of suspension will also be aided by discussions with the LADO.

In the event of a police investigation, the police should inform the LADO and Designated Trustee of any outcome. The LADO should then discuss if further action is appropriate and how to proceed.

If it is decided the member of society can return to work the Board of Directors should consider how to facilitate this, after this stressful experience. Also it needs to consider how contact with any children/vulnerable Adults involved is managed.

If the allegation is determined to be unfounded, the matter should be referred to the Children's school or Services Dept. to determine whether the Child / Vulnerable adult concerned needs support, or may be suffering harm by someone else.

11. USEFUL CONTACTS LIST

Designated Director /Chair Paul Costello	07794 254795
Designated Safeguarding Person Samantha Rigby	07846 334794
NSPCC Child Protection Line	0800 800 5000
ChildLine	0800 1111
Local Police	0161 856 7329
Wigan Council LADO	01942 828300
Monday to Friday, 5pm - 8pm; Saturday, 8.45am - 1pm:	01942 828777
Monday to Friday, 8pm - 8.45am; Saturday 1pm - Monday, 8.45am:	0161 834 2436
Parent line Plus:	0808 8002 222



Paul Costello

Chair of Leigh Film Society

11.1.17