**Community Creations Safeguarding adults at Risk Policy and Procedure**

Community creations Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Name: Kirsty Lumm

Contact details: 07850237129

**Introduction and Purpose**

Community creations is committed to safeguarding adults at risk and working in accordance with The Sussex Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk. The Policy and Procedures describe the arrangements for safeguarding people formerly referred to as vulnerable adults.

Having policies and procedures to safeguard adults at risk is a legal requirement and ensures a proportionate, timely and professional approach is taken and is coordinated across all relevant agencies and organisations, which is essential for the prevention of harm and abuse.

Community creations recognises that the local authority has the main legal duty to safeguard adults at risk, and we are committed to working with them and our local safeguarding adults board.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Community creations complies with the legal obligations associated with working with adults at risk and that all staff and volunteers of Community creations are aware of their responsibility to report suspected or reported abuse.

Whilst regular training will be provided for staff and volunteers as appropriate, Community creations has an additional expectation that all staff and volunteers will keep themselves independently informed of possible signs of abuse. Staff will be expected to undertake appropriate Safeguarding training within their probationary period and appropriate refresher training every two years.

Failure to fully comply with the policy and related procedures may amount to gross misconduct and will be considered in line with the disciplinary policy of Community creations

**Key Principles**

In accordance with The Sussex Multi-Agency Policy & Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk, all safeguarding work with adults at risk should be based on the following principles:

• the empowerment of adults at risk underpins all adult safeguarding work;

• every person has a right to live a life free from abuse, neglect and fear;

• safeguarding adults at risk is everyone's business and responsibility;

• there is a zero tolerance to the abuse of adults at risk;

• all reports of abuse will be treated seriously;

• every person should be able to access information about how to gain safety from abuse and violence;

• all adults safeguarding work aims to prevent abuse from taking place, and to respond quickly and effectively to investigate this and take appropriate action where abuse is taking place or suspected;

• all partner agencies, organisations and partners across the community of Sussex actively work together;

• people working or involved in supporting adults at risk have the appropriate knowledge, skills and training to undertake their responsibilities in relation to adult safeguarding;

• supports are in place for adults at risk to prevent abuse from occurring.

**The Sussex Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk**

The principles and approaches outlined in The Sussex Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk follow the statutory guidance provided by the Department of Health and Home Office in 2000 in 'No Secrets', and the best practice guide 'Safeguarding Adults - A National Framework of Standards for Good Practice and Outcomes in Adult Protection Work' 2005.

This policy and procedure updates and replaces the 'Sussex Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults' 2007, and has been commissioned and agreed by Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Boards.

The Local Authority has the coordinating role in relation to adult safeguarding, and other partners, such as Mind in Brighton and Hove have a key role in the prevention and response to adult abuse.

These 'Sussex Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk' (formerly 'Vulnerable Adults') provide an overarching framework to co-ordinate all activity undertaken through other procedures where a concern relates to the actual or alleged harm or risk of significant harm to an 'adult at risk'.

The Sussex Multi-Agency Policy & Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk are available online at:

<http://pansussexadultssafeguarding.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

**Amendments and Version Control**

Planned revisions of the Policy and Procedures are undertaken at least annually.

**Definitions**

This policy acknowledges that definitions may be amended by future legislation and case law and as such this policy should be read in conjunction with The Sussex Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Adults at Risk, within which further guidance around these definitions is provided.

The term 'adult at risk' has been used to replace 'vulnerable adult'. This is because the term 'adult at risk' focuses on the situation causing the risk rather than the characteristics of the adult concerned.

The term 'adult at risk' is used as an exact replacement for 'vulnerable adult', as used throughout No Secrets*: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, Department of Health and Home Office, 2000.*

No Secrets defines an adult at risk as a person aged 18 or over who:  
  
'...is or may be in need of community care services 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   
‘An adult at risk is a person who is unable, or less able, to protect themselves from harm, neglect or abuse that arises as a result of the action or inaction of others’.

Community care services will be taken to include all support and care services provided in any setting or context whether these are funded by a statutory agency or by the person themselves.

Adults at risk of abuse include people with a wide range of disabilities and circumstances; sometimes it is difficult to establish if a person might be considered an 'adult at risk' who is covered by these procedures. In considering whether these procedures should be used, it should be assumed that an individual is covered by these procedures, unless and until information suggests this is not the case.

The definition of an adult at risk may apply broadly within health care. Levels of independence and well-being may be temporarily or permanently affected by health related conditions. A person's health condition may reduce the choice and control they have, their ability to make decisions or to protect themselves from harm and exploitation.

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who:

* is frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment;
* has a learning disability;
* has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment;
* has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder;
* has a long-term illness/condition;
* misuses substances or alcohol;
* is a carer such as a family member/friend who may be at risk because of their caring role;
* is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a relevant decision and is in need of care and support.

It is important to remember that a person is not inevitably 'at risk' just because of their age, frailty or disability. For example, a person with a disability who has the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety could be perfectly able to make informed choices and protect themselves from harm.

In the context of safeguarding adults at risk, the vulnerability of the person is related to how able they are to make and exercise their own informed choices free from duress, pressure or undue influence of any sort, and to protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation. It is important to note that people with capacity can also be at risk of abuse or exploitation.

A person's vulnerability is determined by a range of interconnected factors including those associated with their personal characteristics, their situation, environment and social circumstances.

### Definitions of Harm and Significant Harm

Key concepts in adult safeguarding work are 'Harm' and 'Significant Harm'. This helps to determine how serious or extensive abuse is and to enable a proportionate response.

'Harm' (regardless of whether the impact of this is significant or not) is defined as:

* ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical);
* the impairment of development and/ or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health and;
* the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development or the impairment of health;
* conduct which appropriates or adversely affects property, rights or interests (for example theft, fraud, embezzlement or extortion).

(Who Decides: *Lord Chancellor's Department 1997; and the Law Commission Review of Adults Social Care Law consultation 2010*).

The impact of harm upon a person will be individual and depend upon each person's circumstances and the severity, degree and impact or effect of this upon that person.

The following would indicate that the effect of harm for the person is likely to be significant:

* the person's life could be or is under threat, for example due to neglect or physical abuse;
* there is or could be a serious, chronic and/or long lasting impact on the person's health / physical/ emotional,/ psychological well-being;
* the person has little or no choice or control over vital aspects of their life, environment or financial affairs.

### Adult Abuse

'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons'.

'Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or failure to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

'Physical, sexual, financial, emotional, discriminatory or psychological violation or neglect of a person unable to protect him/herself to prevent abuse from happening, or to remove him/herself from abuse or potential abuse by others. (No Secrets, *Department of Health and Home Office 2000*)

**Raising a Safeguard Concern (Alert)**

Anybody can raise an alert for themselves or another person.

All staff, volunteers and others aware of an adult who may be at risk, has the responsibility to recognise the possible signs of abuse.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to take appropriate action by reporting their concern whenever they become aware that abuse may have taken place or may occur unless someone does something to prevent it from happening.

It is important to remember that there may be concerns that have been alerted by others of which you may not be aware. Reporting concerns can enable serious abuse or harm to be prevented from happening or from escalating.

**Raising a safeguarding concern continued**

Community creations has a designated safeguarding lead whose contact details are at the end of this policy.

Community creations recognises that it can be difficult for many reasons to speak up if you think someone is being abused or neglected. However, we expect our volunteers, trustees, and staff to take action in response to any concerns. Our safeguarding lead will support the person raising the concerns, as well as the person being abused.

If anyone in the group notices any signs of abuse or neglect in another person, they should bring these concerns to the safeguarding lead.

If someone discloses to anyone else in the group that they are being abused, the response should be as follows:

* Always make sure the person speaking up feels they are being listened to and supported
* Don’t promise to keep information confidential between you and them
* Tell the designated safeguarding lead about the concerns (unless the safeguarding lead is implicated in causing the harm or perpetrating the abuse. In this situation, information should be shared with a trusted committee member/trustee and they will be responsible for taking further action instead of the safeguarding lead)
* Ask for the person’s consent to share the information. If they refuse and you are still worried that they or someone else is at immediate risk of harm, you cannot wait for this consent. You must share this information with the safeguarding lead.
* Write a clear statement of what you have been told, seen, or heard

The [**designated safeguarding lead (DSL)**](https://resourcecentre.org.uk/information/safeguarding/#leads) is responsible for taking further action once concerns have been raised with them. Throughout the process, the safeguarding lead will record all the information they are given, the actions they take, and why. The procedures they will follow are:

#### Initial assessment

As soon as information is shared with the safeguarding lead, they will make an initial assessment of the concern. They will, if possible, talk to the person reporting the concern and gather as much information as possible from them.

Key questions to ask:

* What type of concern has been reported? Different actions are required depending on what type of concern it is (see below)
* What action has already been taken?
* Is anyone else in the organisation affected by this situation (e.g. other volunteers or those you work with)? Are there any attitudes or emotions that you may have to be aware of?
* How might this concern affect what the organisation delivers in the short term?
* Who else might need to be informed?
* What other actions now need to be taken?

#### Immediate actions depending on what type of concern has been raised

**(a) Emergency incidents**: this is when there’s a life-threatening situation where there’s imminent danger and harm to an adult, young person or child.

* Immediately contact the emergency services if they haven’t been called already.
* Make sure the current situation is safe.
* Establish how others are coping – do they need any immediate support?
* Inform the senior people in the group

**(b) Protection concerns:** This is when an adult who you believe is unable to protect themselves is at current risk of, or has experienced, abuse or harm.

* If the person is in immediate danger, call the police.
* If they’re not in immediate danger, you must contact the local authority safeguarding team within 24 hours and make a referral (contact details are in section 10).
* Be guided by the safeguarding team or police on any further actions required of you.

**(c) Allegations concerning staff or volunteers:** this is when someone has alleged that staff or volunteers from your organisation have harmed or abused an adult at risk.

* Contact the local authority safeguarding team as soon as possible within 24 hours.
* Be guided by them on any further actions required of you.

**(d) Welfare concerns:** This is when no one has been harmed in any way, but a person shows signs of being in need. It’s when you have concerns for their health, wellbeing or safety if they don’t get help.

* Within 7 days you, or someone in your organisation, should speak with the person. When it is appropriate you should also speak with their family or carer. You must explain your concerns and make sure they have the support they need.
* Depending on the conversation, the safeguarding lead may then also:
  + Help the person or their family access services or give them the information they need to do this themselves.
  + Speak to another professional who is already working with the person or family, such as a social worker, about their needs.

**(e) Concerns about other organisations:** This is a situation where the safeguarding concern is about another organisation, their staff, volunteers or the people they work with.

* As soon as possible within 24 hours contact the designated safeguarding lead of the organisation in question and pass on your concerns, if this has not already happened.
* In some circumstances you may decide to follow up with the organisation to confirm they have acted on the issue.
* If at any point you think the organisation has not acted and someone is at risk, you should contact the local safeguarding team yourself.

**(f) Responding to historic or non-recent concerns:** You may become aware or be told about a concern from an adult relating to an incident which took place in the past, including when they were a child. Historical allegations of abuse should be taken as seriously as contemporary allegations.

* Remember that it’s never too late to report abuse. An individual can make a formal complaint to the police about non-recent abuse, ideally in the geographic area in which the abuse is reported to have taken place.
* Establish if the person alleged to have caused the harm works with children or adults at risk. Try to find out their recent or current whereabouts and any contact they have with children or adults at risk. A referral should be made to social services, with the consent of the person who experienced the abuse if possible.
* Consider what consent the person has given for information to be shared. How, when and to whom they share this information should usually be with their consent.
* Signpost the person who experienced the abuse to relevant support groups that can help them.

**(g) Supporting those who share a concern with you:** Your primary concern should be the best interests of the person who is at risk of harm. However, the person sharing this concern with you may also be distressed by the situation, even if they are reporting on behalf of someone else. Everyone can respond to worries about another differently. If someone has previously experienced trauma they can find it especially upsetting.

* Thank them for bringing this concern to your attention and that they have fulfilled their key responsibility
* Explain that you will now take responsibility in leading management of this concern and any contact with statutory agencies
* Highlight that there may be limited updates that you have or can give them on the situation; that does not mean that it was not important for them to share their concern
* Remind them of the importance of confidentiality and not sharing this information further
* Ensure they have your contact details in case they think of anything else they have not yet shared that they think may be relevant
* Discuss with them what additional support they may require. Consider contacting them later to check in on how they are doing

### Keeping records

Community Creations recognises that it is vital to record and store details about any safeguarding concerns that arise. We will record information, even if the concerns have not been shared with the police or the local authority safeguarding team. These records are extremely sensitive and will be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer (if hard copy) and/or password protected and stored on a computer with protection against hackers and viruses (if electronic).

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the following information is recorded about every safeguarding concern:

* The date and time of the incident/disclosure/concern
* The date and time of the report
* The name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
* The name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details
* The names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses
* The name and any other relevant information about the adult who is the subject of the concern (including information about their care and support needs)
* What was said or done and by whom
* Any action taken to look into the matter
* Any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
* The reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant)

Each record will be signed and dated by the person making the report.

### Confidentiality, consent and information sharing

Timely information sharing is key to keeping people safe and responding appropriately to concerns about their welfare. In general, Arts for Life expects all committee members, volunteers and staff to maintain confidentiality and act in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

We will share information within the group (e.g. with other volunteers) in situations where this is necessary in order to deal effectively with safeguarding concerns or to provide continuity of support. We will share information with other organisations in order to keep a person safe.

Whenever confidential information is shared, we will follow the principles below. We will:

* Have a clear and legitimate purpose
* Keep clear records of why we chose to share the information
* Ensure we are not putting the person at risk by sharing information
* Be as factual as possible
* Seek consent. If the adult refuses consent, we may share information **only** if:
  + We think they are at serious risk of harm or abuse, including harming themselves;
  + Information indicates that a serious crime has been or is going to be committed;
  + We think the person lacks the mental capacity to decide for themselves and we believe it would be in the individual’s best interests;
  + We are required by law e.g. if we suspect FGM, forced marriage, or a possible terrorist threat.

### Recruiting and training volunteers

Community Creations volunteers that work with adults at risk will be given an induction which covers the safeguarding policy and procedures of the group. They will be trained in: our code of conduct; definitions of abuse and harm; recognising signs of abuse; and how to respond to concerns and disclosures. All volunteers will know who is the designated safeguarding lead, and that they should go to them with any concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead will be offered further training to ensure they are clear about their role, and what action to take in response to different concerns.

We will apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all volunteers for whom we are legally required to do so.

### Reviewing policy and procedures

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed every 2 years.

**Key contacts**

##### Community Creations Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Name: Kirsty Lumm

Contact details: 07850237129

This policy was agreed at the Inaugural General Meeting of Community Creations