

highlights

rural touring scheme

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN and VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

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Due for Review July 2022

Signed:



Date:

9/7/2021

HIGHLIGHTS' SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN and VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

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1) AIMS

Through its various arts activities Highlights, and the companies and artists it engages, have the capacity to be involved with people of all ages and abilities. It is therefore Highlights' duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Highlights arts activities by ensuring that its policies and procedures promote safe working practices, together with a clear understanding of what to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed. Highlights will examine its practice in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults and will ensure that appropriate policy and procedures are in place to both meet the requirements of the law and to deliver best practice in its arts activities. Highlights will also review and update its policies and procedures in light of developments in its own practice and in legislation relating to protection issues.

In addition, project organisers have a responsibility to ensure that artists or project and event facilitators working with children, young people or vulnerable adults are not placed in situations where abuse might be alleged. Project planning must ensure that the skills of the artist match the needs of the situation.

2) POLICY STATEMENT

Education and learning play a key role in Highlights' activities. As a voluntary organisation promoting education in the arts in rural areas Highlights believes that:

- a) The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount
- b) All children, young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- c) All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- d) Staff (paid and unpaid) should know how to respond appropriately

Highlights will take every reasonable step to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded where:

- Our own staff are directly involved in the delivery of an arts project or event
- Our staff recruit or broker relationships between an artist or arts facilitator and a third party
- We fund an arts organisation for a programme of work, or for core work

If, as a result of Highlights' direct or indirect involvement, a complaint or criminal proceeding occurs between an artist or arts facilitator and a third party, Highlights will treat the situation with the utmost urgency.

3) GOOD PRACTICE

Highlights will ensure good practice in all areas of the following:

a) Project/Event Planning

Highlights will:

- i) Ensure that venues we work with have carried out a risk assessment to the best of their abilities
- ii) Identify at the outset the people with designated safeguarding/protection responsibility
- iii) Engage in effective recruitment, including appropriate vetting of staff and volunteers (see section 5 below and Appendix 3)
- iv) Know how to contact local authority services in the instance of having to report a concern to them (see 9 below)
- v) Ensure that the venues we work with have their own suitable Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

b) Physical environment

Highlights will:

- i) Always ensure that someone from the school /educational establishment, youth organisation or care setting is present and therefore meeting their responsibility for ensuring the safety of those involved
- ii) Monitor risks throughout the project or event by ensuring that companies and venues carry out risk assessments. Feedback will be sought both from participants and the company involved in any workshop setting.
- iii) Parents/spectators will not be able to sit in and watch workshops unless agreed with a member of staff prior to the event.

c) Physical contact

Highlights will ensure that contracted artists are aware of the following requirements:

- i) To maintain a safe and appropriate distance from participants

- ii) Only touch participants when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular arts activity
- iii) Seek agreement of participants prior to any physical contact
- iv) Ensure disabled participants are informed of and comfortable with any necessary physical contact

d) Interpersonal dealings

Highlights will:

- i) Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- ii) Always put the welfare of each participant first, before achieving goals
- iii) Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- iv) Make the arts fun and enjoyable
- v) Promote equality
- vi) Be an excellent role model for dealings with other people
- vii) Recognise that children or young people with disabilities may be even more vulnerable to abuse than other children or young people

e) Online Environment including Social Media

For Workshop Leaders, Highlights Staff and Volunteers:

- i) Do not share any personal information, such as personal telephone numbers or email addresses
- ii) When teaching or leading lessons/ sessions the Workshop Leader must only use Highlights' agreed online learning platform and not share information via social media platforms
- iii) It is important online social media platforms do not allow Young People/Participants to access personal information about the Workshop Leader or colleagues

f) Managing sensitive information

Highlights will:

- i) Have a policy and set of procedures for taking, using and storing photographs or images of children, young people or vulnerable adults (see Appendix 1)
- ii) Ensure careful monitoring and use of web-based materials and activities
- iii) Agree procedures for reporting any suspicions or allegations of abuse (see Appendix 2)
- iv) Ensure confidentiality in order to protect the rights of employees, freelancers and volunteers, including safe handling, storage and disposal of any information provided on artists or arts facilitators as part of the recruitment process. This will be in line with the Highlights Data Protection Policy.

g) Professional development

Highlights will:

- i) Keep up to date with health and safety in artistic practice
- ii) Keep informed about legislation and policies for protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- iii) Undertake relevant development and training

h) Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

i) Availability

This policy will be available upon request. It will be available on the Highlights web site: www.highlightsnorth.co.uk

4) RECOGNISING ABUSE

An arts education project or arts event is often a new experience for a vulnerable child or adult, placing them in unfamiliar surroundings. Highlights will ensure that every attempt is made by project workers and event organisers to create an environment in which a vulnerable person feels comfortable and effective - physically, emotionally and intellectually. Project and event organisers will ensure that the project facilitators and/or artists and companies have been appropriately recruited and have enough training and experience to provide a safe and positive experience.

Highlights staff have a responsibility to report any concerns to the appropriate authority (see 3.6.c above).

5) RECRUITING SAFELY

- a) Highlights will implement established procedures for effective and safe recruitment of artists. These will include reviewing the artists' experience, training and qualifications in relation to the specific project for which they are being employed (see Appendix 3).
- b) Where appropriate, advertising may be employed. Where this is the case enough time will be allowed to take up references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
- c) Highlights will undertake enhanced DBS checks on the Creative Engagement Officer, General Manager and Director.

6) WORKING PRACTICES

Health and Safety in Arts Practice. Wherever possible Highlights will ensure that:

- a) Workshop groups will not be larger than 30
- b) The appropriate staffing ratio is in place (in youth work practice the ratio of legally responsible adults to children/young people tends to be 1:8 regardless of age. Other guidance suggests 1:10 for older children).
- c) There will be adequate space for the requirements of the project or event
- d) There will be access to a telephone in the building

- e) Partners will be asked to ensure that equipment meets current safety standards
- f) We will advise all venues will carry out a risk assessment
- g) There will be a first aid box at the venue(s) which meets current Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations, together with a member of staff trained in first aid
- h) Special needs are catered for
- i) No school group, youth group or group from a care setting will be left in the venue without a legally responsible staff member present
- j) The artist/arts facilitator will know the evacuation procedures and will inform the group
- k) Children and young people will have a 'named person' to whom they may report any worries or concerns

7) DEFINITIONS

- a) 'Child' is a legal term, defined as 'anyone up to the age of 18' (extensions exist for children who are disabled and for those in local authority care settings).
- b) Young Person: In this Policy a 'young person' is in the upper age ranges of the official definition of a child. The term has no legal status – it acknowledges that people aged 16 or 17 may not think of themselves as 'children'.
- c) Vulnerable Adult: Vulnerable adults are people who are, or may be, in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

8) CONTACT NUMBERS

NSPCC anonymous Helpline:	0808 800 5000
Cumbria Safeguarding Hub	0333 2401727
Northumberland OneCall	01670 536400
County Durham Duty Team	03000 267979

9) APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Images and audio

Procedure for taking, using and storing images/audio of children, young people or vulnerable adults:

- a) Permission will be sought by Highlights from schools/parents/care givers before taking images/audio of children/vulnerable adults (using an online/printed permission form designed for this purpose).
- b) Images/audio should only be taken within the workshop environment, with appropriate staffing ratios in place.
- c) Images/audio will be stored digitally by Highlights on its sharepoint drive and will be removed from other electronic devices after the event.
- d) For each occasion when images/audio are taken, these will be curated to the minimum number required to keep a record. Excess items will be securely deleted.
- e) Images/audio will be kept in line with the Highlights data retention policy.

Appendix 2

Procedures for reporting suspicions or allegations of abuse:

- a) If a disclosure of abuse is made to an artist/member of staff (such as suspected harm occurring either within or without the workshop setting), the artist/member of staff must respond by informing the on-site Designated Child Protection Officer immediately.
- b) In the first instance, the on-site DCPO will then make sure that the standard reporting procedure is followed and if necessary, promptly referred to the relevant social services agencies. If that is not possible, the artist/member of staff should contact Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer, who will follow the standard reporting procedure.
- c) If it is agreed that a child may be at risk, the DCPO or Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer, will explain to the child that it will be necessary to inform the authorities of the disclosure.
- d) Local authority agencies can be contacted direct if the on-site DCPO or Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer are not able to be contacted and the matter is considered serious enough to warrant an immediate response.
- e) The issue is then in the hands of the on-site DCPO or Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer and/or local authority agency
- f) The artist/member of staff will only be kept informed of developments on the issue if more information is needed and it is considered appropriate.
- g) In the event of the on-site DCPO and Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer not wanting to take further action but the artist/member of staff still has concerns, he/she is entitled to speak to social services themselves for advice or to make a referral if necessary.

Confidentiality:

- a) Revealing the identity of a child, young person or vulnerable adult should only be done if the child is at risk of harm. The legal principle that 'the welfare of children is paramount' means that the consideration of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. Information will only be divulged on a 'need to know' basis. It must be noted that any inappropriate passing of information to any source may be detrimental to the investigation of suspected abuse and may prejudice any subsequent legal proceedings.
- b) Any information gained or given to the on-site DCPO or Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer will be treated with the strictest of confidence.
- c) During each step of the reporting procedure, the child, young person or vulnerable adult will be consulted and kept informed about what action, if any, is to be taken.
- d) Any personal information gathered about a child, young person or vulnerable adult regarding a child protection concern will be stored in a secured and confidential place. Only the on-site DCPO or Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer will have access to this information. It may be necessary to pass this information on to the relevant local authority agency and police.

Allegation against an artist/staff member:

- a) If an allegation is made against an artist/staff member Highlights will pay due regard to the rights and interests of the child, young person or vulnerable adult and the artist/staff member or other party against whom the allegation is made.
- b) Any investigation against an artist/staff member or other party will be carried out by the relevant local authority agencies, whilst the DCPO or Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer will support the child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- c) It is recognised that artists/staff members may be the subject of malicious allegations and it is therefore important to treat all allegations with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- d) In order to ensure the safety of the child, young person or vulnerable adult, the artist/member of staff will be suspended from all workshop activities. This does not constitute an admission of guilt; it is for the protection of all concerned.

Highlights Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer:

Kate Lynch: 017683 53954

Designated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Officer in Kate's absence:

Heather Askew: 017683 53954

The Highlights Management Committee member who takes leadership responsibility for the organisations safeguarding arrangements. (Safe Network Standards Children Act 2004 sec 11)

Edwina Lugg: 0191-386-0150/ 07703-450-212/ rodedlugg@aol.com

Appendix 3

Procedure for effective and safe recruitment of artists:

- a) Companies and individual artists who will work with Children and Vulnerable adults on creative engagement activities will be asked to provide access to their online DBS certificate. (The alternative Scottish certificate is also valid). Once viewed this will be noted on the workshop management system. If companies are unable to provide evidence of DBS checks, then they should not be engaged to carry out engagement work with children or vulnerable adults.
- b) All artists/companies working with Highlights will be supplied with a copy of Highlights Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy before participation in workshops/performances.

