

## Policy and Guidelines for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

### 1) Policy Statement

Liquid Listening believes that children and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a duty of care and will do everything we can to provide a safe, caring and secure environment for them whilst they are engaged in Liquid Listening programmes and activities.

We recognise that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take, all children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

We recognise that some children and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

We are committed to practice that protects children and vulnerable adults from harm and recognise our duty to ensure that appropriate action is taken where a child or vulnerable adult is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm. We recognise that working in partnership with children and vulnerable adults, their parents and carers, partner organisations and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

We will ensure that our policy and any associated procedures and training comply with statutory requirements and reflects available guidance on good practice in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, and that safeguarding arrangements are proportionate to the risks involved.

This policy is to be reviewed, updated and signed off annually by Liquid Listening Board of Trustees, and the Board receive training each year. This policy has been updated and approved by the Trustees on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 and a Trustees' training session was included in April 2023 Trustees' meeting.

### 2) Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and guidelines is to:

- to protect children and vulnerable adults who participate in Liquid Listening programmes and activities from harm and to promote their welfare
- provide staff members, volunteers, partner organisations, children and vulnerable adults and their families and carers with the overarching principles and procedures that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection

This policy and guidelines apply to all staff members and volunteers working on our behalf which includes: board members, employees, freelancers, contractors, volunteers and any others associated with Liquid Listening.

This policy and guidelines apply to all contexts where there are either disabled children or vulnerable adults present (or both at the same time).

### **3) Definitions**

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to health or development
- ensuring the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and vulnerable adults have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

As per the definitions set out in the Children Act 1989, a 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. It also includes unborn children.

As per the definition set out in "'Who Decides?' (Lord Chancellor's Office 1997)" a 'vulnerable adult' is anyone who is 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
- is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself; or
- is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation

### **4) Legal Framework**

Everyone has a right to be safeguarded from abuse or neglect. There is a legislative framework in place in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults through The Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004) and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Further guidance that sets out the requirements and expectations on professionals to work together to effectively safeguard children include *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015), *Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance* (2009), *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (2015), *Prevent* (2015) and *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (updated 2022).

### **5) Policy Commitments**

We will seek to keep children and vulnerable adults safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them

- appointing a nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- adopting safeguarding and child and vulnerable adult protection best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- working closely with our partner organisations such as schools and learning providers; health care providers; sports/leisure centres; and charities to provide safe programmes and activities
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made using our safeguarding and child and vulnerable adult protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children and vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, vulnerable adults and their families and carers, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

## 6) Types of Abuse

Abuse can take a number of forms including physical, emotional or sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and neglect.

Abuse neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child

that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone. Emotional abuse can also be experienced by vulnerable adults.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving them looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children, young people and vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming them in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Child sexual exploitation:** is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships may receive gifts, money or affection in return for performing sexual activities. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online.

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect can also be experienced by vulnerable adults.

Disabled children and vulnerable adults are particularly vulnerable to abuse in any form. Safeguards for disabled children and vulnerable adults are essentially the same as for non-disabled children and vulnerable adults. Staff and volunteers must maintain high standards of practice, remain vigilant to the possibility of abuse and minimise situations of risk. Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child or vulnerable adult, they should be acted upon in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy. The same thresholds for action apply. Where concerns are raised about a child or vulnerable adult who has communication difficulties, appropriate support, interpreting services and communication aids must be secured.

## **7) The Designated Safeguarding Lead Role and Responsibilities**

The Liquid Listening Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is given a high priority within Liquid Listening. This includes:

- receiving and dealing with any safeguarding concerns
- ensuring that safeguarding procedures are kept up to date and reviewed regularly
- providing training, support and information for staff and volunteers
- keeping up to date with new developments in this field and undertaking training where necessary.

The DSL will liaise with Senior Leadership staff and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead at any partner organisation where a programme/activity is taking place regarding any concerns. They will ensure that correct information is shared with the police or local social services as necessary and that any referral is confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

The DSL is currently: Judith Robinson, Executive Director

The Deputy DSL is currently: Joel Cahen, Artistic Director and Project Manager

## **8) Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities and Code of Conduct**

All Liquid Listening staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults with whom they work; to promote good practice; and minimise and manage potential risks.

All staff and volunteers must be aware of their role and responsibilities under this policy and guidelines.

All Liquid Listening programmes are designed to be delivered to groups of people in schools and learning centres; health care settings; and sports/leisure centres. All staff members and volunteers delivering programmes must adhere to the Liquid Listening Safeguarding Policy and the partner organisation's Safeguarding Policy at all times.

Before delivery of a programme at a partner organisation premises, Liquid Listening will conduct a risk assessment and request a copy of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and the name of the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead. All programme staff and volunteers will be required to make themselves aware of the partner organisation's Safeguarding Policy before they enter their premises.

The following **Code of Conduct** must be adhered to by all staff and volunteers.

They must:

- listen to and respect children and vulnerable adults all times
- ensure that their safety of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount
- not knowingly place themselves in a situation where they are alone with any child/vulnerable adult
- endeavour to ensure that they work with groups of children/vulnerable adults supported by another staff member/volunteer

- use inappropriate language in front of, about or to a child/vulnerable adult
- be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child/vulnerable adult, observers or by anyone to whom this action is described. Never make physical contact with a child/vulnerable adult in a way which may be construed as being indecent. Be aware of cultural or religious views about physical contact and always be sensitive to issues of gender
- in particular, those working directly in the hydrotherapy pool should be careful about how they hold and support children/vulnerable adults and should ensure they are not wearing skimpy, revealing or provocative swimwear, and cover their top half with a tshirt
- not give individual children/vulnerable adults a lift in a car. Groups may be transported where there is suitable insurance cover in place
- not make arrangements to contact, communicate or meet with children/vulnerable adults outside the Liquid Listening programme activities
- not share any personal information with children/vulnerable adults and not request, or respond to, any personal information from them unless it is appropriate as part of their role within Liquid Listening.
- not send personal notes/letters/emails/texts or other forms of social media communications to children and vulnerable adults. If it is necessary to contact an individual, ensure that the partner organisation or a Liquid Listening colleague is informed in advance of any communication. Seek advice and guidance where necessary. Do not give out personal contact details. All communications must be transparent and open to scrutiny.
- offer or accept personal gifts
- understand that bullying will not be accepted or condoned (for more information please refer to the Liquid Listening Bullying Policy).

### **Social Media Guidelines**

Staff and volunteers using social media should be aware of the potential risks to children and young people. Staff and volunteers should also be aware of potential indicators of online grooming and sexual exploitation of children and young people.

Any potential illegal/abusive content or comments on Social Media should be reported to the DSL immediately.

### **Photographic and Video Images**

Staff and volunteers should be aware of the procedure for using images and videos of children in regards to Liquid Listening programmes and activities, events, social media sites and promotional material as detailed in the Liquid Listening Photography and Video Policy.

## **9) Non-compliance**

Staff and Volunteers within Liquid Listening are placed in a position of trust with regard to the children/vulnerable adults taking part in Liquid Listening programmes and activities. Anyone who abuses that trust will be subject to disciplinary action, or in the case of a volunteer will be required to cease volunteering activities, and the abuse may be reportable to the police.

## **10) How to deal with a Safeguarding Concern**

Any member of staff or volunteer who has a safeguarding concern should inform Liquid Listening Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Senior Leader/Designated Safeguarding Officer at the partner organisation immediately.

***Please refer to Appendix 1.***

You may become aware of suspected or likely abuse through:

- your own observations and concerns
- being told by another person that they have concerns
- the abused person telling you
- the abuser telling you

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses that they are being abused, you should:

- listen to the child or vulnerable adult in whichever way they choose to communicate – e.g. drawings, behaviour, emotional responses
- tell the child or vulnerable adult that you are taking what they are saying or expressing seriously
- reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they are right to talk to someone and that you will need to tell someone who can help. **Do not promise them full confidentiality.**

Remember:

- do not delay in reporting your concern
- do not investigate
- carefully record anything you observe or are told
- seek advice from Designated Safeguarding Lead at Liquid Listening and the partner organisation.

If appropriate, the Liquid Listening DSL will make a written referral to Social Services within 24 hours. Liquid Listening will take part, as appropriate, in any investigation and will co-operate with the partner organisation, police and Social Services in the course of their enquiries. Children's Social Services have a duty under Section 47 of the Children Act to investigate suspected and actual cases of child abuse where there is a likelihood of children suffering significant harm.

## **11) Allegations against Liquid Listening staff or volunteers and non-compliance**

Any suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a child or vulnerable adult by a staff member or volunteer must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. Disciplinary procedures will be invoked immediately or in the case of a volunteer will be required to cease volunteering activities and the abuse may be reportable to the police.

If there are concerns that abuse has taken place the DSL will pass this information to the Local Authority Designated Officer for investigation.

They DSL will refer staff or volunteers to the Disclosure and Barring Service if they are dismissed or permanently removed as per legal requirements.

Parents or carers who are dissatisfied with Liquid Listening' actions can make use of the organisation's Complaints Policy.

## **12) Confidentiality**

The interests of the child/vulnerable adult are paramount. Confidentiality is vital and is a right for children, their parents, and vulnerable adults (General Data Protection Regulations 2018). Information is shared on a need-to-know basis, however **information can be shared without the consent of the individual if that individual is at risk of harm**. For further information, please refer to Liquid Listening Confidentiality Policy.

## **13) Whistleblowing**

All Liquid Listening Staff and Volunteers have a duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice should be sought initially from the DSL. Please also refer to the Liquid Listening' Whistle Blowing policy.

## **14) Staff and Volunteer Recruitment, Induction and Training**

Liquid Listening' recruitment practices aim to prevent unsuitable people working with children and vulnerable adults and include the use of the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) for enhanced disclosure for staff and volunteers depending on the nature of their role.

When recruiting staff, Liquid Listening will request an up-to-date CV; two references; and conduct a formal interview process. A DBS check will be required depending on the nature of the role.

When recruiting volunteers, Liquid Listening will request the completion of a volunteer registration form and an informal interview to determine suitability. A DBS check will be required depending on the nature of the role.

All staff and volunteers will receive a clear induction and training process which will include:

- role description and responsibilities
- training appropriate to their role
- all relevant policies and procedures, including clear guidance as to when and whom a safeguarding concern is to be reported

## **15) Record Keeping**

All safeguarding related records will be kept securely by the Liquid Listening DSL and will only be kept for as long as required by law.

All records held should be factual and will also include the decision-making undertaken to determine whether an individual is suitable for volunteering or employment with Liquid Listening.



## **16) Safeguarding Contacts**

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Judith Robinson, Executive Director

Tel: 07903 369903

Email: [judith@liquidlistening.org.uk](mailto:judith@liquidlistening.org.uk)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Joel Cahen, Artistic Director & Project Manager

Tel: 07908 374 952

Email: [joel@liquidlistening.org.uk](mailto:joel@liquidlistening.org.uk)

**Date policy updated: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Appendix 1:**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS  
IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN**

Write down notes:  
Dates, times, facts and  
observations  
Try to ensure you have all  
relevant facts recorded



**As soon as possible:**

- 1) Contact the Liquid Listening Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to report and log your concern, and to seek guidance and support.  
Programme delivery staff or volunteers should speak in the first instance to their Liquid Listening Project Manager who will contact the Liquid Listening DSL
- 2) Speak to the senior leader/DSL at the partner organisation to report your concerns.



The partner organisation or  
Liquid Listening DSL will liaise  
with Social Services and revert if  
further information is required  
from you.

**Liquid Listening Safeguarding Contacts:**

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Judith Robinson, Executive Director

Tel: 07903 369903

Email: [judith@liquidlistening.org.uk](mailto:judith@liquidlistening.org.uk)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

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