Arts Alive

Safeguarding Policy

Children, young people and adults at risk

Document control

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Review frequency	At least annually and after any serious incident, major event, or material legal/guidance change

Named safeguarding leads (complete before adoption)

Role	Name / contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Hannah Prior, hannah@artsalive.co.uk
Board safeguarding lead / Chair	Michael Connolly, chair@artsalive.co.uk

Immediate action – what anyone working for Arts Alive must do

- If someone is in immediate danger, needs urgent medical help, or a crime may have been committed, call 999 first.
- Listen, reassure, and take the concern seriously. Do not promise secrecy and do not investigate yourself.
- Make a factual written record as soon as possible, using the person's own words where you can.
- Report the concern to the DSL immediately and no later than the end of the same working day.
- If the DSL is unavailable, implicated, or delay would increase risk, contact the police and/or local authority safeguarding team yourself and then inform the Chair or Chief Executive as soon as possible.

1. Purpose and scope

Arts Alive believes that everyone who comes into contact with the organisation through its work has the right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be heard. This policy sets out how Arts Alive will safeguard children, young people and adults at risk in line with current law, statutory guidance and Charity Commission expectations.

This policy applies to trustees, employees, casual workers, freelancers, artists and facilitators, volunteers, students, contractors and anyone acting for or on behalf of Arts Alive. It covers events, workshops, participatory programmes, rehearsals, outreach, travel, digital and hybrid activity, social media, work experience, and any activity delivered in Arts Alive's name or funded by Arts Alive.

Partner organisations remain responsible for meeting their own legal duties. Arts Alive will not assume that another organisation is managing safeguarding; responsibilities must be clarified and recorded in advance, especially where activity is delivered jointly or in a partner venue.

2. Policy statement

- Arts Alive has zero tolerance of abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment, discrimination or mistreatment.
- We will work in a child-centred and person-centred way, listen to concerns, and act early where there is a risk of harm.
- We will take proportionate steps to prevent harm through safer recruitment, role design, induction, training, supervision, event planning and clear behavioural expectations.
- We will respond promptly, record concerns accurately, share information lawfully and on a need-to-know basis, and refer to statutory agencies where required.
- We will support a culture in which trustees, staff, volunteers and partners feel able to raise concerns, challenge poor practice and whistleblow without fear of retaliation.
- We will review practice, learn from incidents and near misses, and keep this policy under active review.

3. Legal and regulatory framework

This policy is intended to reflect the legal and regulatory framework applying to Arts Alive's work in England and the Charity Commission's expectations of charities and trustees. Key legislation and guidance include:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, together with current statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance for adult safeguarding.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, including DBS eligibility and barring referral requirements where applicable.
- Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- Charity Commission guidance on safeguarding and protecting people, serious incident reporting, and incidents involving partners.

This policy should be read alongside Arts Alive's code of conduct, complaints procedure, disciplinary and grievance procedures, whistleblowing procedure, equality policy, data protection/privacy policy, health and safety policy, lone working arrangements, photography/filming guidance, and any recruitment or DBS procedures used by the organisation.

4. Definitions and principles

Term	Working definition for this policy
Child / young person	Anyone under the age of 18. Concerns relating to unborn children should also be treated seriously and referred where appropriate.
Adult at risk	For the purposes of this policy, an adult aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and may be unable to protect themselves because of those needs.
Safeguarding	Protecting a child's right to grow up safe and protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
Abuse / neglect	A single act or repeated acts. This may include physical, emotional or psychological, sexual, financial or material abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, discriminatory abuse, organisational abuse, online abuse, exploitation, modern slavery, self-neglect and coercive or controlling behaviour.

Arts Alive will apply the following practice principles in all safeguarding work:

- Children first and adults heard: we will prioritise welfare, safety, dignity, wishes and lived experience.
- Prevention: it is better to act early than to wait for more evidence while risk increases.
- Proportionality: we will take the least intrusive response compatible with safety and legal duties.

- Inclusion and equity: we will recognise barriers created by disability, age, race, sex, gender identity, faith, sexuality, poverty, language, rural isolation, caring responsibilities or previous trauma, and we will challenge discriminatory practice.
- Partnership: we will work with families, carers, venues, partners and statutory agencies where appropriate, while recognising that referral decisions may need to be made without consent if someone is at risk of serious harm.
- Accountability: responsibilities will be clear, records will be factual and timely, and decisions will be capable of scrutiny.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Core responsibilities
Board of Trustees	Set the tone and culture; oversee safeguarding risks; approve and review policy; ensure adequate resources, named leads and reporting routes; receive timely reports on serious incidents; ensure Charity Commission reporting is considered and made where required.
Chief Executive / Director	Ensure this policy is implemented in day-to-day practice; support the DSL; ensure staff and volunteers are inducted, supervised and trained; ensure safeguarding is considered in planning, contracts, communications and partnership working.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Provide advice and decision support; receive concerns and allegations; make or oversee referrals to local authority children's or adult safeguarding teams, police and other agencies; maintain secure records; coordinate internal safeguarding actions; escalate serious incidents to senior leadership and trustees.
Event leads / managers	Build safeguarding into event planning and briefings; identify higher-risk features of activity; clarify responsibilities with venues and partners; ensure workers know the reporting route; report concerns immediately.
All trustees, staff, freelancers, artists, volunteers and contractors	Read and follow this policy; complete required induction/training; stay within role boundaries; raise concerns the same day; cooperate with investigations and learning reviews; never assume someone else will report.
Partners and commissioned providers	Hold and implement suitable safeguarding arrangements; share named contacts, incident routes, and relevant risk information; cooperate with Arts Alive and statutory agencies; notify Arts Alive promptly of incidents connected to our joint work.

If a safeguarding concern involves the DSL, the concern must be reported to the Chair or board safeguarding lead. If it involves the Chair, it must be reported to another trustee and the relevant statutory agency.

6. Prevention, safer culture and safer working practice

6.1 Safer recruitment and engagement

- Arts Alive will use proportionate safer recruitment and selection processes for roles involving contact with children or adults at risk, including clear role descriptions, references where appropriate, role risk assessments, interviews or suitability discussions, and induction to this policy and expected behaviours.
- Where a role is legally eligible, Arts Alive will obtain the appropriate level of DBS check and will not request a higher level check than the law permits. Where criminal record checks are used, Arts Alive will maintain an ex-offenders policy and handle disclosures confidentially and fairly.
- Contracts and volunteer agreements will make clear the behavioural standards expected, including boundaries, reporting duties, respect, and the requirement to cooperate with safeguarding procedures.

- Arts Alive will assess whether any activity amounts to regulated activity and whether there may be a duty or power to refer to DBS if safeguarding concerns arise.

6.2 Training, supervision and culture

- All staff, volunteers and relevant freelancers will receive safeguarding induction appropriate to their role before or at the start of their involvement.
- DSLs will receive role-specific training and refresh their knowledge regularly.
- Arts Alive will encourage respectful challenge, reflective practice and early escalation. Raising a genuine concern will never be treated as disloyalty.

6.3 Safer working at events and activities

- A named Arts Alive lead will be identified for each event or programme, even where delivery is shared with a venue or partner.
- One-to-one contact with children or adults at risk should be avoided unless it is necessary, planned, transparent and risk assessed.
- No private transport should be provided to a child or adult at risk by a worker or volunteer unless this has been authorised, is insured, is risk assessed, and is consistent with parental / carer and organisational arrangements.
- Personal contact details must not be shared unnecessarily. Direct messaging, photography, filming and social media contact must follow Arts Alive's approved arrangements and consent processes.
- Arts Alive will make reasonable adjustments and consider communication needs so that people can report concerns and participate safely.

7. Recognising possible abuse, neglect or exploitation

Abuse and neglect can happen in any setting, including community venues, schools, care settings, public spaces, online spaces, travel arrangements and people's own homes. It can be carried out by strangers, professionals, peers, carers, family members, partners, members of the public, or people connected with the organisation.

Area	Examples of concerns	Arts Alive response
Children and young people	Physical injuries, fearfulness, sexualised behaviour, unexplained absences, neglect, online harm, exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, bullying, domestic abuse in the home, coercive or controlling behaviour.	Treat as a safeguarding concern. Record, report to DSL the same day, and refer to children's services/police where required.
Adults at risk	Unexplained injuries, sudden withdrawal, fear, neglect of care needs, financial concerns, discriminatory treatment, coercion, domestic abuse, organisational abuse, self-neglect, unsafe living conditions, barriers to communication.	Take immediate steps to reduce risk, involve the adult as far as possible, and refer to adult safeguarding / police where required.
Contextual or organisational concerns	Unsafe venue practice, grooming, inappropriate behaviour by a worker or volunteer, boundary breaches, missing DBS/safer recruitment controls, partner failures, poor information sharing, repeated near misses or complaints.	Escalate to DSL and senior leadership promptly. Consider whether the matter requires partner escalation, suspension from duties, regulator notification, or Charity Commission serious incident reporting.

8. Responding to a concern, disclosure or allegation

1. Make the situation as safe as you can. If there is immediate danger, urgent medical need, or a crime in progress, call 999.

2. Listen carefully. Stay calm, take the person seriously, and do not ask leading or investigative questions. Do not promise to keep the information secret.

3. Explain what will happen next in straightforward language, including that you may need to share the information with people who can help keep them safe.

4. Write down what you saw, heard or were told as soon as possible. Include date, time, place, who was present, exact words used where you can, and what action you took.

5. Report to the DSL immediately and by the end of the same working day at the latest. If neither is available or they are implicated, contact the Chair or Chief Executive and the relevant external agency yourself.

6. Do not investigate internally before obtaining advice where there is a possible safeguarding offence or allegation against a worker. Preserve evidence such as messages, photos, CCTV references or notes.

7. Offer appropriate support to the person affected and maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis.

Anyone can make a referral directly to the police or local authority if they believe a delay would place someone at further risk. Internal procedures must never block urgent external reporting.

9. External reporting and escalation routes

9.1 Where a child or young person may be at risk

- The DSL will contact children's social care in the area where the child lives and/or where the incident occurred, and the police where a crime may have been committed or the child is in immediate danger.
- Where the concern involves an allegation against a trustee, employee, volunteer, artist, freelancer, contractor or partner worker who works with children, Arts Alive will seek advice from the relevant local authority designated officer (LADO) / children's safeguarding service and will not undertake an internal fact-finding process beyond immediate risk management unless advised that this is appropriate.
- Parents or carers will normally be involved where safe and appropriate, but Arts Alive may delay informing them if doing so would increase risk, compromise a police or social care response, or place a child or another person in danger.

9.2 Where an adult at risk may be experiencing abuse or neglect

- The DSL will contact adult social care / adult safeguarding in the relevant local authority area and the police if a crime may have occurred or the person is in immediate danger.
- Arts Alive will, as far as possible, involve the adult in decisions affecting them and will seek to work in a way that respects their wishes, capacity, communication needs and safety.
- Where risk is high, coercion is suspected, or others may also be at risk, Arts Alive may need to share information or refer without consent, in line with legal duties and safeguarding guidance.

9.3 Concerns involving staff, volunteers, trustees, artists, freelancers or contractors

- Arts Alive will take all allegations seriously, assess immediate risk, and consider temporary protective measures such as changing duties, supervision arrangements or suspending unsupervised contact while advice is sought.
- Any internal employment or volunteer management process will be kept separate from the statutory safeguarding response and will not interfere with police, social care or LADO processes.
- Where the legal threshold is met, Arts Alive will make a referral to DBS and/or other relevant professional regulators.

9.4 Concerns involving partners or jointly delivered activity

- Arts Alive will notify the relevant partner safeguarding lead promptly and will record who is leading on the safeguarding response, who is communicating with families and agencies, and who is responsible for immediate risk management.
- Arts Alive will escalate concerns to trustees where an incident involves our people, funds, activities, brand or reputation, or where a partner's response appears inadequate.
- Where a serious safeguarding incident materially affects Arts Alive, trustees will consider Charity Commission reporting even if the incident occurred within a partner organisation.

10. Record keeping, confidentiality and information sharing

- Safeguarding records will be clear, factual, dated, signed or attributable, and stored securely with restricted access.
- Information will be shared only with those who need it for safeguarding, legal, employment or governance reasons.
- Arts Alive recognises that data protection law does not prevent the lawful and proportionate sharing of information for safeguarding purposes.
- Personnel records relating to allegations will be handled carefully and retained in line with legal requirements and Arts Alive's retention schedule.
- Learning, trends and anonymous case information may be used for training, supervision and board reporting.

11. Serious incident reporting, governance and learning

- The DSL and Chief Executive will escalate serious safeguarding incidents to the Chair / trustees without delay.
- Trustees will consider promptly whether the incident meets the Charity Commission's serious incident reporting threshold, including where significant harm or risk of harm has arisen for beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with Arts Alive through its work.
- Arts Alive will review incidents, allegations, complaints, near misses and partner concerns to identify learning, strengthen controls and improve practice.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and after any serious incident, significant near miss, substantial change in Arts Alive's services, or material change in law, statutory guidance or Charity Commission guidance. Trustees will monitor implementation through incident reporting, training records, event reviews, and periodic assurance from senior staff and the DSL.

Appendix 1 – Quick response checklist for Arts Alive workers and volunteers

When someone tells you something worrying

☐ Stay calm and listen carefully.
☐ Do not ask leading questions or press for more detail than the person wants to give.
☐ Do not promise confidentiality; explain you may need to share information to keep people safe.
☐ Write down the concern promptly and accurately.
☐ Report to the DSL immediately, or to external agencies directly if there is immediate danger or delay would increase risk.

When the concern is about someone working for Arts Alive or a partner

☐ Do not confront the person or start your own investigation.
☐ Take immediate steps to make the situation safer.
☐ Contact the DSL / Chair urgently so LADO, police, adult safeguarding or other agencies can be consulted as appropriate.
☐ Preserve evidence such as emails, messages, photos, logs or venue reports.

Appendix 2 – Local authority safeguarding contacts (current at March 2026; verify during review)

Emergency: dial 999. West Mercia Police non-emergency: 101 or 0300 333 3000 where relevant.

Area	Children	Adults
Shropshire	First Point of Contact: 0345 678 9021. Out of hours: 0345 678 9040 (option 1).	First Point of Contact: 0345 678 9044. Out of hours: 0345 678 9040.
Herefordshire	MASH: 01432 260800. Out of hours: 01905 768020.	Adult Safeguarding: 01432 260101. Out of hours: 0330 123 9309.
Telford & Wrekin	Family Connect: 01952 385385 (child protection / option 1). Out of hours: 01952 676500.	Family Connect: 01952 385385 (adult safeguarding / option 2). Out of hours: 01952 676500.

For allegations against people working with children, the relevant local authority designated officer (LADO) / equivalent should be contacted through the relevant children's safeguarding partnership or local authority route. Arts Alive should keep a current internal contact sheet with direct numbers and email addresses for local escalation.