

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR AUDLEM PUBLIC HALL –

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Charity Commission requires that all charities should regularly review their Safeguarding Policy which takes account of the regular advice from the Commission and in the light of any incidents or risks the charity identifies.
2. The overall advice from the Charity Commission is that:

**Safeguarding children** duties apply to any charity working with, or coming into contact with, anyone under the age of 18 which requires Audlem Public Hall to:

- protect children from abuse and maltreatment
- prevent harm to children's health or development
- ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

This means following the guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

**Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect.** Your charity may have trustees, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries or other connections who are classed as adults at risk.

Safeguarding duties for adults at risk apply to any charity working with anyone aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health
- have a learning disability
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems
- be frail

In England follow Guidance on the Care Act 2014

3. This national guidance states that charity trustees have a legal duty to promote best safeguarding practice, to act prudently and take all reasonable steps within their powers to ensure that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity are not harmed in any way through contact with it. This includes ensuring that this duty of care is promoted within any directly provided services and via hire agreements with all voluntary groups who hire the Public Hall for children [all under 18s] or vulnerable adults
4. This comprehensive update of the 2015 Public Hall Safeguarding Policy is also required following the opening of the new Annexe in November 2017 and the additional activities which are now taking place. These include the Community Gym, the provision of changing rooms, youth club facilities, the treatment room, spaces for performing arts and the provision of rooms for the use by vulnerable adults.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

5. All Public Hall Management Committee members and staff have a legal duty of care to promote and safeguard the welfare and safety of children [all under 18s] and vulnerable adults who use Audlem Public Hall and Annexe and its facilities.
6. This policy is in place to protect all vulnerable persons regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith. The Management Committee will maintain up-to-date awareness, with relevant training where necessary, of relevant legislation, guidelines and best practice
7. This policy also describes the safeguarding undertakings required of Organisations who hire the hall for activities which cater for children or vulnerable adults.
8. The Public Hall Management Committee is directly responsible for the running of the community gym which includes provision for enabling access for 16, 17 year olds and up to 18 year olds. As such, the policy for provision to 16 and 17 year olds, and up to age 18 is that they must either be accompanied at all times by a parent or guardian. A signed undertaking to this effect will be provided by the parent or guardian and compliance with this policy will be routinely monitored by the nominated person[s] nominated by the Public Hall Committee. Any abuse of this requirement will automatically lead to the withdrawal of Gym membership.
9. Members of the Public Hall Committee will not directly run or manage events for children or vulnerable adults.
10. Public Hall Trustees will undertake on-going monitoring to ensure the effective implementation of these policies and procedures and accept a responsibility to continue to assess the safeguarding risks that might arise from their charity's activities. This includes ensuring that:
  - people working within the charity respond properly when allegations and incidents arise
  - these are reported as necessary to the police and other agencies as necessary
  - procedures are reviewed both periodically and following serious incidents
  - suitable procedures are in place to handle allegations and incidents
  - that learning from the experience of particular incidents to manage and minimise the risk of something similar happening again

## **Definitions**

11. Safeguarding relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding is defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013' as
  - protecting children from maltreatment
  - preventing impairment of children's health and development
  - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
  - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
12. Trustees of charities which work with vulnerable groups must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to them. Having safeguards in place not only protects and promotes the welfare of children and vulnerable adults but also it enhances the confidence of trustees, staff, volunteers, parents/carers and the general public (Charity Commission).

13. For the purposes of child protection legislation the term 'child' refers to anyone up to the age of 18 years. A vulnerable adult is a person '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 unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation". (Who Decides, Lord Chancellor's Department – 1997).
14. Abuse is a violation of a child or vulnerable adult'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 an omission 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 it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it (The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' Report).
15. Adults who may be vulnerable include any adult over 18 who, by reason of mental or physical disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently, or for the time being, unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves from significant harm. Vulnerability is not a fixed state but depends on the context of the person's situation. We are all potentially vulnerable at some point e.g. bereavement, being in hospital, etc. Vulnerable adults may also be receiving support from health or social care services to meet their specific needs.
16. Whilst operating the Public Hall provision, Trustees, users groups and hirers may well come across evidence of a wide range of potential abuse which children or vulnerable adults which could originate in their home or in the wider community and any concerns stemming from outside the Public Hall still require reporting via the Public Hall Safeguarding Lead. The types of abuse is now recognised as being wider than previously understood and could include:
  - Physical and/or emotional abuse and neglect
  - Sexual abuse and exploitation
  - Online abuse and bullying
  - Financial abuse
  - Discriminatory abuse of all kinds
  - Domestic abuse
  - Modern slavery
  - Spiritual abuse

## Procedures

17. All Hirers of the hall, who provide activities for children or vulnerable adults, be they organisations or individual professionals will be given a copy of this policy as part of the Hire Agreement.
18. Security, key holding and use of access fobs to the building will be overseen by designated members of the Public Hall Management Committee alongside the Booking Clerk to ensure that only authorised people have access to the premises, with a signed undertaking not to pass key/fob on.
19. Organisations must provide the Booking Clerk with a copy of their Safeguarding Policy for Children and/or Vulnerable Adults. Professional individuals, including those using the Treatment Room, will be also be required to confirm they hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] certificate of relevant status. They will also be required to provide copies of their professional qualifications and current registration to the Booking Clerk.
20. The Hirer must ensure that any activities for children under eighteen years of age comply with the provisions of The Children Act of 1989 and 2004 and any relevant succeeding legislation and guidance including that on vulnerable adults. Only fit and proper persons who have passed the appropriate DBS checks are to have access to the children or vulnerable adults. It is also important that there is also oversight of access to social media and any online material within the premises.

21. Any services which are directly provided by the Public Hall, including the Community Gym, will have separate procedures for use by children or vulnerable adults, including any use of the changing rooms.
22. **Gym procedures:** Gym members will be advised of the safeguarding policy to ensure the safety of 16, 17 year olds and up to age 18 who use the Gym with the parent or guardian or any vulnerable adults requiring support. The Safeguarding Policy will be displayed clearly at the entrance to the Gym and changing rooms and members will be advised on a clear reporting mechanism to the Gym lead person/s
23. The procedures, as advised by the Child Protection in Sports Unit 2016, for the use of changing rooms by children less than 18 years of age have been adopted within this policy. These state that:
  - ideally, groups of children and young people should have sole use of changing facilities as this obviates any risks and potential vulnerability associated with mixing with adults or other young people (known or unknown to them) when changing and showering
  - Where adults need to use changing rooms at the same time as children [under 18s] it is advisable that there are separate rooms are used or that specific times slots for the exclusive use of children and the coaches/helpers can be arranged
  - A team area within the changing facility is recommended and can be designated and nobody else allowed in that area. Or children and young people may opt to change at home before they arrive for the activity. It is important to remember that many children and young people are self conscious and anxious about undressing in front of others
  - Staff/volunteers should consider offering the option of changing at home as a matter of course
  - If mixed use of the changing facility is unavoidable, then at least two members of staff (of the same gender as the children) should supervise the group. It is important that staff/volunteers seek to balance the need for adult supervision with the rights of children to privacy in this context
24. Use of facilities by groups providing for children or vulnerable adults must ensure full supervision and physical oversight at all times in all areas by DBS checked and approved staff or volunteers, including the observing of the required ratios of staff to children of different age groups, including supervision of the use of toilets.
25. The Hirer retains the overall responsibility to safely supervise the children or vulnerable adults within this safeguarding policy and cannot delegate this responsibility to any other person or organisation. Hirers who are providing activities for children or vulnerable adults have the responsibility, within their own Safeguarding Policy, to report to the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer or the police any concerns they have about risks or abuse.
26. Notwithstanding these responsibilities of hiring organisations and individuals, the first priority of the Public Hall Management Committee is always to ensure the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all Committee Members, staff, volunteers and visitors to the Public Hall to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998). Where Committee Members, staff, volunteers or visiting members of the public do receive disclosures of abuse or observe children or vulnerable adults who may be at risk this must be taken seriously and dealt with immediately by reporting this to the person in charge of that activity, to the Public Hall Safeguarding Lead Person or to any Trustee.
27. Any concerns must be passed on immediately to the named Safeguarding Leads within the Management Committee – Joanna Allman 07774 741725 and Lorna Matthews 07792 7701130. The lead Committee Members have the responsibility for reporting concerns that

arise and seeking appropriate advice from Cheshire East Council's Designated Safeguarding Officer or the police. People concerned about possible abuse relating to a child or adult can also contact the Lead Cheshire East Council's Designated Safeguarding Officer for **Children** on **0300 123 5012** or for **Adults 0300 123 5010** [8:30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8:30 am to 4:30pm Friday or **Emergency Duty Team** on **0300 123 5022** at all other times including bank holidays or in an emergency **contact the emergency services on 999**. The Safeguarding lead also has a responsibility to ensure that, via the Public Hall Committee, any safeguarding issues or concerns are also notified to the Charity Commission.

28. With respect to one-off activities such as children's parties or events for adults, it is the Hirer's responsibility to ensure the safety of children and any vulnerable adults who attend the party. The Hirer must ensure that sufficient responsible adults, including parents, are present to assist with the supervision and safety of children. The supervision of children and vulnerable adults must ensure that they are visible at all times. It is also important that there is oversight of access to social media and any online material within the premises. The Hirer must also ensure that entertainers who they may hire are suitable for the purpose.

## Summary

29. This policy and the contact details of the Public Hall safeguarding lead will be prominently displayed within the Public Hall, Annexe, Gym and Changing Rooms. It will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Management Committee and/or when changes occur in national legislation or procedures. New Management Committee members will be provided with training on their responsibilities in line with this policy.

JA/LM June 2024