



Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This policy applies to all directors, volunteers, associated artists, sessional workers and/or anyone working specifically with children and vulnerable adults on behalf of Participate Contemporary Artspace (PCA).

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and vulnerable adults who receive PCA services
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults

PCA believes that a child or a vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We will provide services in a manner that as far as possible prevents any child or vulnerable adult from experiencing harm.

All children and vulnerable adults deserve the same protection regardless of age, disability, neurodivergence, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

The safeguarding procedure is invoked when we become aware of a harm situation and the person at risk is:

- Any child under the age of 18 OR
- Any adult who fits our definition of a vulnerable adult*

*A Vulnerable Adult is someone with physical, neurodivergent or mental health needs who is currently or has recently been under the care of health or social services. This includes a person who has experienced trauma as a refugee or forced migrant to the country.

When PCA has reasonable grounds for concern that children or vulnerable adults are at risk of being harmed, PCA will immediately share their concerns with Social Services.

A harm situation includes:

- A child or vulnerable adult disclosing they are being abused or divulging historic abuse
- Any situation where there is a risk of serious harm or abuse to another person

Categories of abuse include:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional / psychological abuse (eg.Coercion) and bullying (this includes cyber and internet abuse and radicalisation)
- Financial / Material abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Neglect / acts of omission
- Human trafficking

We will keep Children and Vulnerable Adults (CVA) safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child and vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and code of conduct for directors, associated artists, sessional workers, and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children and vulnerable adults, by applying health and safety measures

DISCLOSURE

In the event of a disclosure directors, associated artists, volunteers, sessional workers and/or anyone specifically working with children (PCA workers) should:

- Stay calm and try not to look shocked
- Listen carefully
- Be sympathetic and reassuring:
 - They are right to tell you
 - You will treat the information seriously
 - It was not their fault
 - You are not able to keep information secret, but will tell someone appropriate
- Stay close to any co-worker, within eye contact if possible
- Write down, word for word if possible, what you have been told, after the contact with the person (who should have access to this document.)
- Contact the PCA Directors as soon as possible.

Remember that following disclosure it is not your responsibility to determine how to use the information that you have been given, or to conduct an investigation into what the person is telling you. It is Social Services that decide whether concerns should be investigated, and a decision is made in consultation with the police regarding the nature of any investigation.

In the event of a disclosure, PCA workers should not:

- Press the person for more details
- Promise to keep secrets
- Ask leading questions or make assumptions
- Make promises that cannot be kept
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental
- Instigate a discussion about the abuse
- Take the person to a worker's home.

Where disclosure has not been made but suspicions or doubts are held PCA workers must:

- Keep an accurate record of your reasons
- Document any supporting evidence of information
- Monitor the situation closely
- Discuss the issue with the PCA Directors
- Allow the person access to written records if they request it during any part of the process.

In this situation, staff must not:

- Directly question the person in connection with their thoughts
- Seek information from peers or other people
- Contact family members

Record Keeping

- Where possible and appropriate take notes at the time of disclosure. If this is not possible write a report as soon as possible after the incident, using the words and phrases of the person wherever possible.
- Sign and date the report.
- Forward the report in full to PCA Directors as soon as possible.
- Do not keep written information relating to any CVA protection issues in an unsecured file.
- Remember your records could be required to support any formal action taken at a later date. Keep factual information in the report separate from any personal opinions or comments you make

This policy comes into force on 27th. July 2017 and will be reviewed on 27th. July 2019,

Updated 22nd February 2025

NEXT REVIEW: 22nd February 2028