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# **Sheba Arts Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

## **1. Introduction**

The safety and well-being of children are of utmost importance to Sheba Arts. We are committed to creating a safe and secure environment for all children involved in our programmes and activities. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy outlines our commitment to keeping children safe from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation during their participation in Sheba Arts programmes and activities. It also provides guidelines for addressing allegations of abuse.

We will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

## **2. Policy Principles**

- a. **Best Interest of the Child:** We will always prioritise the best interests of the child in all decisions and actions related to their safety and well-being.
  
- b. **Zero Tolerance:** We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm during participation in Sheba Arts programmes and activities.



c. Safeguarding Responsibilities: All staff, volunteers, and associates of Sheba Arts have a responsibility to safeguard children and are required to follow this policy.

### **3. Child Protection Officer**

Sheba Arts will appoint a designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, handling concerns, and reporting incidents, as required by law.

The designated CPO is Fereshteh Mozaffari.

Email address: [fereshteh@shebaarts.com](mailto:fereshteh@shebaarts.com)

Help can also be sought at:

NSPCC - 0808 800 5000

Childline - 0800 1111

### **4. Identification and Reporting of Concerns**

a. Any individual who becomes aware of a safeguarding concern must report it immediately to the designated CPO.

b. All reports or allegations of child abuse or harm will be taken seriously and treated confidentially, with due respect for the rights of all parties involved.

c. Reports will be thoroughly and promptly investigated following the organisation's reporting procedures.

d. If the concern involves the designated CPO, the report should be made directly to another staff member.

### **5. Allegations of Abuse**

a. Sheba Arts will cooperate fully with relevant authorities in the investigation of any allegations of child abuse or harm.

b. The organisation will ensure the safety and support of the child involved during the investigation process.

c. Staff or volunteers subject to an investigation will be temporarily suspended from duties related to children until the investigation is complete.

### **8. Training and Awareness**



a. All staff, volunteers, and associates working with children will receive training on child safeguarding policies and procedures.

## 9. Policy Review

Sheba Arts will regularly review and update this Child Safeguarding Policy to ensure it remains effective and compliant with current legal and regulatory requirements.

This Child Safeguarding Policy will be communicated to all staff, volunteers, and associates, and it will be publicly available on Sheba Arts website and other relevant communication channels. By implementing and adhering to this policy, we demonstrate our commitment to the safety, protection, and well-being of children in our care.

# Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

Sheba Arts is fully committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of children and young people involved in our programmes and activities. As part of this commitment, we have established a robust Safer Recruitment Policy to ensure that all staff and volunteers working with children are suitable and capable of fulfilling their roles responsibly and ethically.

Our Safer Recruitment Policy aims:

**1. Safeguard Children:** The primary objective of our policy is to safeguard children from any potential risks by employing staff and volunteers who have undergone a thorough recruitment process.

**2. Vetting and Screening:** All staff and volunteers who will have direct or indirect contact with children will undergo a screening process, including reference checks. If a candidate is identified as unsuitable to work with children and young people, they will be rejected. Any concerns about the suitability of candidates raised during the recruitment process will be responded to according to the safer recruitment procedures.

**3. Qualifications and Skills:** We assess the qualifications, skills, and experience of candidates to ensure they possess the necessary capabilities to work with children effectively.

**4. Training:** Once recruited, all staff and volunteers will receive appropriate training on child safeguarding, the Sheba Arts Code of Conduct, and relevant policies and procedures.



**5. Supervision and Support:** Staff and volunteers will receive appropriate supervision and ongoing support to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

**6. Reporting Mechanisms:** Our policy ensures that all staff and volunteers are aware of their duty to report any concerns or suspicions about child welfare promptly.

**7. Continuous Improvement:** We continuously review and update our Safer Recruitment Policy to align with best practice and changing requirements in child safeguarding.

**8. Collaboration:** We work in partnership with relevant authorities, organisations, and experts in child protection to ensure our recruitment process remains effective and robust.

The Safer Recruitment Policy applies to all individuals seeking employment or volunteering opportunities with Sheba Arts. It also covers current staff and volunteers who may take on new roles that involve direct or indirect contact with children.

We believe that our Safer Recruitment Policy is fundamental to creating a safe and nurturing environment for all. By following this policy, we demonstrate our commitment to the well-being and protection of children.

All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and adhere to its principles throughout their engagement with Sheba Arts.

This policy will be reviewed regularly, ensuring transparency and accountability in our commitment to safer recruitment practices.

Sheba Arts affirms that we will always act in the best interests of children and take proactive steps to ensure their safety and protection in all aspects of our work.

## Safer Recruitment Procedures

Safer recruitment procedures are essential to ensure that individuals selected for positions involving work with children or vulnerable individuals are suitable, trustworthy, and capable of fulfilling their roles responsibly. Here are some safer recruitment procedures that organisations can implement:

**1. \*\*Application and Job Description\*\*:** Clearly define the job description, including the specific responsibilities and requirements for working with children or vulnerable individuals. Seek applicants through open and transparent recruitment channels. Every advert for a role that includes work with children will include a statement about our commitment to keeping children



safe. We will include an overview of the safer recruitment process in the application pack, so that candidates understand what information will be sought from them and why.

**2. Self-disclosure Form**: Applicants should complete a self-disclosure form before the interview, and bring it in a separate, sealed envelope marked 'Confidential'. This will only be opened if the candidate is selected for the role. All unopened self-disclosure forms will be securely disposed of.

**3. Interview Process**: Conduct thorough interviews with all candidates, asking relevant questions to assess their suitability for working with children. Include questions about safeguarding experience and how they would handle specific scenarios.

**4. Reference Checks**: Obtain references from the candidate's previous employers or relevant individuals who can provide insights into their work history and suitability for the role.

**5. Criminal Record Checks**: Require all candidates working with children to undergo a background check, including a criminal record check (DBS), in accordance with local laws and regulations.

**6. Qualifications and Experience**: Verify the candidate's qualifications and any relevant experience, especially in roles involving working with children.

**7. Training and Induction**: Ensure that successful candidates receive comprehensive training on child protection, safeguarding policies, and the organisation's code of conduct before commencing their roles.

**8. Supervision and Support**: Provide ongoing supervision and support to staff and volunteers working with children to maintain a safe environment and address any concerns that may arise.

**9. Code of Conduct**: Implement and communicate a clear code of conduct outlining expectations for behaviour and appropriate boundaries when working with children.

**10. Regular Review**: Regularly review and update safer recruitment procedures to align with best practices and changing regulations.

**11. Probationary Period**: Consider implementing a probationary period for new staff and volunteers, during which their performance and conduct can be closely monitored.

By following these safer recruitment procedures, Sheba Arts can significantly reduce the risk of unsuitable individuals being placed in roles involving work with children or vulnerable individuals.



# What to do if vetting checks raise concerns

## References

- If a reference expresses concerns, is incomplete or vague, contact the referee directly to address these issues. Keep a written record of any telephone conversations.
- If the issue is significant, ask the referee for further details.
- You should not consider any information about unsubstantiated concerns or allegations that have been proven to be false when deciding whether to interview or employ a candidate.

## Self-disclosure forms

If a candidate discloses a caution or conviction on their self-disclosure form, you need to carry out a risk assessment to decide if this is relevant to the post.

## Criminal record checks

People on the barred list must not be given a role that requires them to work or volunteer with children or young people in regulated activity. If you find that someone who has applied to work with children is barred, you should notify the police.

## Carrying out the risk assessment

Decisions about whether to employ or not to employ someone whose vetting checks raised concerns should be made on a case-by-case basis. You should only share information about an applicant's criminal records with those who need to know. The applicant should be told who in the organisation knows about their record.

- Past convictions might be a great source of anxiety and embarrassment for the person concerned, so you need to act with sensitivity and empathy.
- Take all reasonable steps to gather as much relevant information as possible.
- Make sure a third party is present during the discussions. Ask a colleague who was involved in the recruitment process to support you and take notes.
- Carefully plan the questions you need to ask in advance and keep the discussion focused on the individual and their attitudes.
- It is not your responsibility to decide whether a legal decision was right or fair - you need to decide whether the applicant is suitable to work or volunteer with children and young people.

## Things to consider include:

- The nature of the offence and its seriousness
- The relevance of the offence to other staff, volunteers, children and their families
- The length of time since the offence took place
- The length of their sentence



- Whether the offence was an isolated incident or part of a pattern or history of offending
- The circumstances which led to the offence being committed
- Whether these circumstances have changed
- Whether the individual has changed since the offence
- The level of remorse expressed by the applicant and/or any efforts to change
- Whether the new role provides opportunities to re-offend

### **Storing disclosure and barring checks**

You should not store copies of DBS check certificates unless there is a dispute about the results of the check. Instead, you should keep a confidential record of the date the check was completed, the level and type of check, the reference number of the certificate, and the decision made about whether the person was employed (with reasons).

# Behaviour Code for Adults working with Children at Sheba Arts

## **Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers**

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people
  - ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
  - having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- following our principles, policies and procedures including our policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to Fereshteh
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures, this includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

## **Respecting Children and Young People**

You should:



- listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible
  - If you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

## **Diversity and Inclusion**

You should:

- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- challenge discrimination and prejudice
- encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

## **Appropriate Relationships**

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid showing favouritism
- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people. If a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or can be heard by other adults
  - if a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible





## Inappropriate Behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive
  - including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

## Procedure for Handling Allegations of Abuse Made Against a Member of Staff or Volunteer

**Objective:** To ensure a prompt, consistent, and sensitive response when allegations of abuse are made against an adult working or volunteering at Sheba Arts. This procedure outlines the steps to take to address such situations while prioritising the safety and well-being of all individuals involved.

**1. Initial Response:** **1.1.** If an allegation of abuse is made, any staff member or volunteer who receives the information must treat it seriously and with utmost confidentiality. **1.2.** Listen carefully and empathetically to the individual making the allegation, ensuring they feel heard and understood. **1.3.** If the allegation involves immediate danger or risk, ensure the safety of the alleged victim and others as a top priority.

**2. Reporting the Allegation:** **2.1.** The person receiving the allegation must report it immediately to a member of the Sheba Arts team. **2.2.** The staff member will then report the allegation to the designated safeguarding lead of the organisation, Fereshteh Mozaffari.

**3. CPO Responsibilities:** **3.1.** The CPO will report the allegation immediately to the relevant agencies, such as the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000), local child protection services, or the



police. **3.2.** If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member, they may be suspended with pay during the investigation, in accordance with legal requirements. **3.3.** The CPO will maintain a detailed and secure record of all actions taken throughout the investigation.

**4. Support and Communication:** **4.1.** Keep affected parties informed about the progress of the investigation while respecting their privacy and confidentiality. **4.2.** In case of an external investigation involving law enforcement or other organisations, cooperate fully and provide requested information as necessary.

**5. Sharing Concerns with Other Organisations:** **5.1.** Share information with other organisations only when it is essential to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. **5.2.** When sharing information, ensure that it is done in a confidential and secure manner.

**6. Conclusion of the Investigation:** **6.1.** Once the investigation is complete, the CPO will evaluate the findings and determine appropriate actions, which may include disciplinary measures, termination of employment or volunteer status, or other actions as warranted. 'Settlement agreements' must not be used in cases of abuse. **6.2.** The alleged victim and any affected parties will be informed of the investigation's outcome and any actions taken, while adhering to confidentiality and privacy considerations. **6.3.** If the allegation is unfounded, steps should be taken to support the reputation and well-being of the alleged perpetrator.

**7. Learning and Improvement:** **7.1.** Following the conclusion of the investigation, conduct a review of the organisation's response to identify any areas for improvement in handling similar situations in the future. **7.2.** Provide training and support to staff and volunteers on recognising, reporting, and preventing abuse.

This procedure reflects our commitment to maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals involved with Sheba Arts. It is essential that all staff members and volunteers adhere to these steps and cooperate fully in any investigation. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.