



PONTELAND
REPERTORY SOCIETY
YOUR LOCAL THEATRE COMPANY

Ponteland Repertory Society

Safeguarding Adults Policy

(Ponteland Repertory Society)
(21 November 2024)



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Safeguarding Adults Policy

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Section 1: Safeguarding Adults Policy



Introduction

Ponteland Repertory Society has been in existence for 90 years and has, perhaps because of its position in this village community, always enjoyed the loyalty of local people, some as performers and others as audience members. We are very lucky to have plenty of local support for our traditional pantomimes, musicals and plays and we are all incredibly proud of our heritage. Our vision for the future is to continue to be an inclusive organisation, to continue to be an integral part of our community whilst continually responding to the changing market that surrounds local, amateur theatre.

Ponteland Repertory Society (PRS) is committed to Safeguarding Adults in line with national legislation and relevant national and local guidelines.

We will safeguard adults by ensuring that our activities are delivered in a way which keeps all adults safe.

PRS is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to adults which necessitates: the recognition of adults who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; knowing how adult abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself; and being willing to report safeguarding concerns.

This extends to recognising and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community or voluntary activities, in the community, in the person's own home and in any care setting.

PRS is committed to best safeguarding practice and to uphold the rights of all adults to live a life free from harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect.



Policy Statement

PRS believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

We acknowledge that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we are committed to prevent abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all adults involved.

PRS recognises that health, well-being, ability, disability and need for care and support can affect a person's resilience. We recognise that some people experience barriers, for example, to communication in raising concerns or seeking help. We recognise that these factors can vary at different points in people's lives.

PRS understands that there is a legal framework within which our organisation needs to work to safeguard adults who have needs for care and support and for protecting those who are unable to take action to protect themselves and will act in accordance with the relevant safeguarding adult legislation and with local statutory safeguarding procedures.

Actions taken by PRS will be consistent with the principles of adult safeguarding ensuring that any action taken is prompt, proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the adult concerned.



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone involved in PRS is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within the organisation.

Scope

This safeguarding adult policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals involved in PRS including (but not limited to) actors, directors, chaperones, backstage crew, PRS Committee and Trustees.

Commitments

In order to implement this policy PRS will ensure that:

- Everyone involved with PRS is aware of the safeguarding adult procedures and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult.
- Any concern that an adult is not safe is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with this policy.
- The well-being of those at risk of harm will be put first and the adult actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to do so.
- Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm. Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with our Data Protection Policy.
- PRS acts in accordance with NODA best practice.
- PRS will cooperate with the Police and the relevant Local Authorities in taking action to safeguard an adult. All members understand their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults and are familiar with this policy and the PRS Code of Conduct.
- PRS continually assesses the suitability of volunteers to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals in this organisation.



- PRS shares information about anyone found to be a risk to adults with the appropriate bodies. For example: Disclosure and Barring Service, Services, Police, Local Authority/Social Services. When planning activities and events PRS includes an assessment of, and risk to, the safety of all adults from abuse and neglect and designates a person who will be in attendance as a safeguarding lead for that event.
- This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Committee and whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance as required NODA.

Implementation

PRS is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy. In order to do so the following will be in place:

- A Safeguarding Lead/ Welfare Officer
- Codes of conduct for all members that specify zero tolerance of abuse in any form.
- Risk assessments specifically for the safeguarding of adults.

Role of Safeguarding Officer

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer to:

- Ensure that all members of the PRS Committee have an up-to-date DBS check in place
- Ensure that all events run by PRS (e.g. socials, rehearsals, performances) have members with DBS present and in the correct ratios to vulnerable adults as required by NODA and Northumberland County Council guidelines.
- To annually review and refresh the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policies annually to ensure that they are still correct and relevant for latest guidelines and legislation.
- To ensure that all members complete the joiners form (on an annual basis) and have, therefore, reviewed and signed the policies and code of conduct at least annually.
- Where a vulnerable adult has been identified, to conduct the required risk assessment (with any relevant carers if necessary) and the lead PRS member for the event (e.g. Director and Stage Manager) to ensure that suitable



safeguarding accommodations are put in place and enable that individual to have the best possible experience taking into account the 6 principles of the 2014 Care Act (see Section 2: Supporting Information)

- Report to the PRS Committee on a monthly basis any safeguarding concerns or actions, or disclosable events (within the bounds of confidentiality) for information or decision.
- To provide refresher training to the PRS Committee on an annual basis to ensure they are clear on our policies, processes and management responsibilities for reporting.
- To act as the liaison between the PRS Committee, any individual who has reported an incident and any relevant authorities.

Reporting Procedure

- Any individual within PRS (Director or Stage Manager) who identifies a potential vulnerable adult within their event, cast or crew, must contact the PRS Safeguarding Officer and hold a review meeting to ensure that sufficient accommodations are able to be put in place whilst taking into account the 6 principles of the 2014 Care Act.
- If any individual within PRS has any safeguarding concerns about the management of an event, suspects an incident of abuse or a safeguarding issue, or has an individual report abuse to them, they should raise their concerns to either the Safeguarding Officer or to another PRS Committee member who will escalate the issue confidentially to the Safeguarding Officer for investigation and action – within the principles of Reporting and Information Sharing contained in Section 2: Supporting Information.
- Each reported concern will be investigated by the Safeguarding Officer and another 2 independent PRS Committee members and appropriate action taken – including taking additional advice from the Education Welfare Officer, Social Services and Northumbria Police (as identified in Section 2: Supporting Information)

Section 2: Supporting Information

Safeguarding Adults Legislation

Safeguarding Adults in England is compliant with United Nations directives on the rights of disabled people and commitments to the rights of older people. It is covered by:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- The Care Act 2014; Care and Support Statutory Guidance (especially chapter 14) 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Care Act 2014's principles within which we will operate are as follows:

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Definition of an Adult at Risk

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) AND;
- (b) is experiencing, or 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.

OR

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 16 years and over who:

- a) is unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests,
- b) is at risk of harm, and

because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, is more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance:

Physical

Sexual

Emotional/Psychological/Mental

Neglect and acts of Omission

Financial or material abuse

Discriminatory

Organisational / Institutional

Self-neglect

Domestic Abuse (including coercive control)

Modern slavery

Some examples of abuse within our organisation and events include:

- Harassment of a participant because of their (perceived) disability or other protected characteristics.
- Not meeting the needs of the participant e.g. training without a necessary break.
- A coach or director intentionally striking a cast or back stage member
- A coach, director or chaperone who sends unwanted sexually explicit text messages to a participant with learning disabilities.
- A participant threatens another participant with physical harm and persistently blames them for poor performance.

Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

An adult may confide to another member of cast and/or crew that they are experiencing abuse inside or outside of the organisation's setting. Similarly, others may

suspect that this is the case.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- Person is not attending / no longer enjoying their sessions. You may notice that a participant in a performance has been missing from rehearsals and is not responding to reminders from the director or other cast members
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance. This could be a member whose appearance becomes unkempt, and there is a deterioration in hygiene.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. For example, a participant may be looking quiet and withdrawn when their brother comes to collect them from sessions in contrast to their personal assistant whom they greet with a smile.
- Self-harm.
- A fear of a particular group of people or individual.
- A parent/carer always speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure

Mental Capacity and Decision Making

We make many decisions every day, often without realising. UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they can't. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise.

We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted. The Law says that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information



→ Communicate our decision

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health.

Most adults have the ability to make their own decisions given the right support however, some adults with care and support needs have the experience of other people making decisions about them and for them.

Some people can only make simple decisions like which colour T-shirt to wear or can only make decisions if a lot of time is spent supporting them to understand the options. If someone has a disability that means they need support to understand or make a decision this must be provided. A small number of people cannot make any decisions. Being unable to make a decision is called "lacking mental capacity".

Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time that decision is needed. A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe/possible to wait until they are able to be involved in decision making or to make the decision themselves.

For example:

- A person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure.
- Someone who is anxious may not be able to make a decision at that point.
- A person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Mental Capacity is important for safeguarding for several reasons.

Not being allowed to make decisions one is capable of making is abuse. For example, a disabled adult may want to take part in an activity but their parent who is their carer won't allow them to and will not provide the support they would need. Conversely the adult may not seem to be benefiting from an activity other people are insisting they do.

Another situation is where an adult is being abused and they are scared of the consequences of going against the views of the person abusing them. It is recognised in the law as coercion and a person can be seen not to have mental capacity because they cannot make 'free and informed decisions'.

Mental Capacity must also be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an 'adult at risk' has choices in the actions



taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened, however, in some situations the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

England has legislation that describes when and how we can make decisions for people who are unable to make decisions for themselves. The principles are the same.

- We can only make decisions for other people if they cannot do that for themselves at the time the decision is needed.
- If the decision can wait, wait – e.g. to get help to help the person make their decision or until they can make it themselves.
- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we must make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account what we know about their preferences and wishes.
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe will restrict them then we must think of the way to do that which restricts to their freedom and rights as little as possible.

Many potential difficulties with making decisions can be overcome with preparation. A person needing support to help them make decisions whilst taking part in a theatrical organisation will ordinarily be accompanied by someone e.g. a family member or formal carer whose role includes supporting them to make decisions.

It is good practice to get as much information about the person as possible. Some of those things will be about how to support the person, their routines, food and drink choices etc. but will also include things they like and don't like doing. It's also important to have an agreement with the person who has enrolled the adult in the performance activity about how different types of decisions will be made on a day to day basis.

If a person who has a lot of difficulty making their own decisions is thought to be being abused or neglected you will need to refer the situation to the Local Authority, and this should result in health or social care professionals making an assessment of mental capacity and/or getting the person the support they need to make decisions.

There may be times when our organisation needs to make decisions on behalf of an individual in an emergency. Decisions taken in order to safeguard an adult who cannot make the decision for themselves could include:



- Sharing information about safeguarding concerns with people that can help protect them.
- Stopping them being in contact with the person causing harm.

Recording and Information Sharing

PRS must comply with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Information about concerns of abuse includes personal data. It is therefore important to be clear as to the grounds for processing and sharing information about concerns of abuse.

Processing information includes record keeping. Records relating to safeguarding concerns must be accurate and relevant. They must be stored confidentially with access only to those with a need to know.

Sharing information, with the right people, is central to good practice in safeguarding adults. However, information sharing must only ever be with those with a 'need to know'. This does **NOT** automatically include the persons spouse, partner, adult, child, unpaid or paid carer. Information should only be shared with family and friends and/or carers with the consent of the adult or if the adult does not have capacity to make that decision and family/ friends/ carers need to know in order to help keep the person safe.

The purpose of Data Protection legislation is not to prevent information sharing but to ensure personal information is only shared appropriately. Data protection legislation allows information sharing within an organisation. For example:

- Anyone who has a concern about harm can make a report to an appropriate person within the same organisation

There are also many situations in which it is perfectly legal to share information about adult safeguarding concerns outside the organisation. Importantly personal information can be shared with the consent of the adult concerned. However, the adult may not always want information to be shared. This may be because they fear repercussions from the person causing harm or are scared that they will lose control of their situation to statutory bodies or because they feel stupid or embarrassed. Their wishes should be respected unless there are over-riding reasons for sharing



information.

The circumstances when we need to share information without the adult's consent include those where:

- it is not safe to contact the adult to gain their consent – i.e. it might put them or the person making contact at further risk.
- you believe they or someone else is at risk, including children.
- you believe the adult is being coerced or is under duress.
- it is necessary to contact the police to prevent a crime, or to report that a serious crime has been committed.
- the adult does not have mental capacity to consent to information being shared about them.
- the person causing harm has care and support needs.

When information is shared without the consent of the adult this must be explained to them, when it is safe to do so, and any further actions should still fully include them.

If you are in doubt as to whether to share information seek advice e.g. seek legal advice and/or contact the Local Authority and explain the situation without giving personal details about the person at risk or the person causing harm.

Any decision to share or not to share information with an external person or organisation must be recorded together with the reasons to share or not share information.

Multi-Agency Working

Safeguarding adults' legislation gives the lead role for adult safeguarding to the Local Authority. However, it is recognised that safeguarding can involve a wide range of organisations.

PRS may need to cooperate with the Local Authority and the Police including to:

- Provide more information about the concern you have raised.
- Provide a safe venue for the adult to meet with other professionals e.g. Police/Social Workers/Advocates.
- Attend safeguarding meetings.



- Coordinate how we might be able to accommodate internal investigations (e.g. complaints, disciplinary) with investigations by the police or other agencies.
- Share information about the outcomes of internal investigations.
- Provide a safe environment for the adult to continue their role in the organisation.

Section 3: Appendices



Appendix 1 – Sources of Information and Support

Hourglass

A national organisation based in London. It aims to prevent the abuse of older people by raising awareness, encouraging education, promoting research and collecting and disseminating information.

Tel: 0808 808 8141

Email: helpline@wearhoursglass.org

www.wearehourglass.org

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Tel: 0800 01190100

Respond

Respond provides a range of services to victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse who have learning disabilities, and training and support to those working with them.

Tel: 0800 220 300

Email: hello@respond.co.uk

www.respond.co.uk

Stop Hate Crime

Works to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity. Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.

24 hours service:

Telephone 0113 293 5100

E mail: info@stophateuk.org

www.stophateuk.org

Ponteland Repertory Society Safeguarding Officer: Alexander Finlayson-Heap 07526 000288

Education Welfare Officer, Northumberland County Council: Linda Stephenson 01670 622800

Social Services, Northumberland County Council: 01670 624 888

Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit, non urgent 101, urgent 999