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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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CONTEXT

The Charity Commission states that Charity trustees, staff and volunteers (hereon in “staff”) are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity are not harmed in any way through their contact with it. They have a legal duty to act prudently, and this means that they must take all reasonable steps within their power to ensure that this does not happen. It is particularly important where beneficiaries are vulnerable persons or children in the community.

Trustees are expected to find out what the relevant law is, how it applies to their organisation, and to comply with it where appropriate. They should also adopt best practice as far as possible. Children are an especially vulnerable demographic and therefore the Charity Commission is concerned to stress the importance of charities having proper safeguards in place for their protection.

This policy applies to all those involved in Phab Nottingham, be they trustees, Management Committee staff or volunteers.

The term “child protection” has been changed to “safeguarding” as it reflects the wider responsibility for health and safety and prevention as well as protection from abuse. It may be defined as: doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults. We must be proactive and put measures in place in advance of any contact with children to ensure that children are going to be kept safe.

OUR APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDING

Phab Nottingham endeavours to put safety at the heart of everything we do. As such, we adopt a holistic approach to safeguarding, in that it is woven into every aspect of our governance and activities. This document sets out the key elements of our approach to safeguarding, but much is also contained within our other policies and procedures. As such, this document should be considered in conjunction with the policies and procedures detailed below:

Training: Management Committee and volunteer training materials.

Policies & Procedures: Key Documents: Member Safety Policy, Emergency Contact Procedure, Administration of Medication Policy, First Aid and Medical Guidance Policy, Social Media Policy, Data Protection Policy.

Culture: We aim to create an environment where members feel they can talk to us.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS

Child: Anyone under the age of 18.

Vulnerable Adult/Adult at Risk: A person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a mental health issue, a disability, a sensory impairment, are old and frail, or have some form of illness.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Emotional Abuse: Persistent lack of love and affection where a child/vulnerable adult may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, may make the individual nervous or withdrawn. Emotional abuse may also occur if there is constant overprotection, or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.

Psychological/Mental Abuse: This type of abuse is similar to emotional abuse and can be in the form of threats, intimidation, harassment, stopping a child/vulnerable adult from seeing friends and family or invasion of privacy.

Neglect: Occurs when the child/vulnerable adult's basic needs such as food, warmth, and adequate clothing are not provided, as well as a failure or refusal to give love, affection and attention. It can also occur when there is inadequate supervision or the child/ vulnerable adult is left alone.

Physical Abuse: Where adults physically hurt or injure children/vulnerable adults by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, and biting or using excessive force when trying to restrain a child/vulnerable adult, or by giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs etc.

Sexual Abuse: Some adults - both male and female - may seek to satisfy their own sexual needs by abusing girls, boys and vulnerable adults. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children/vulnerable adults pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse. Sexual exploitation and grooming are forms of sexual abuse.

Financial Abuse: This includes: fraud, stealing, pressuring a child/vulnerable adult to part with money, benefits, possessions or property.

Bullying and Cyberbullying: behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online and may be via social media networks, online gaming or through a mobile phone.

Criminal exploitation and gangs: child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE

Abuse in all forms can affect a person at any age. The effects are so damaging that, if not tackled, they can affect an individual for the rest of their life. The effects on disabled children/vulnerable adults may have an increased impact on their lives, as these groups already suffer from many additional disadvantages.

There have been a number of studies which have shown that disabled children are at an increased risk of abuse through various factors, such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and an inability to protect themselves. They may also have difficulty communicating the fact that abuse has occurred.

EVIDENCE OF ABUSE

Evidence that a child/vulnerable adult may be being abused or has been historically abused could include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if sustained on part of a body not normally prone to such injuries.
- A situation in which the explanation for an injury seems inconsistent or unlikely.
- A description of what appears to be an abusive act involving the child/vulnerable adult.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Not socialising with their peers.
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not in itself proof that abuse is taking place.

HOW SHOULD YOU ACT ON SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS?

There are three primary 'types' of safeguarding concerns:

- **Disclosure:** Where a member voluntarily describes a scenario to you that may be considered a safeguarding concern.
- **Allegation:** Where an allegation is made about a potential safeguarding breach against a member by a member of staff.
- **Proactive concerns:** Where you identify a potential safeguarding concern based on your observations.

For the first two types, you should follow the steps 2-5 below. For proactive concerns, you should follow step 1 (Recognise) and discuss with a Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) before proceeding further. The DSLs will proactively reach out to the Management Committee following an event run by Phab Nottingham to ensure these steps are followed.

5 'R'S APPROACH

1. Recognise (for proactive concerns)

The ability to recognise behaviour that may indicate abuse is of fundamental importance. Those in a position to identify concerns include Phab Nottingham staff. In the event of any proactively identified

concern, before commencing any action, unless the child/vulnerable adult is in immediate danger of further abuse, as the observer you should:

- Complete an [incident report form](#) detailing your concerns (these trip specific forms are sent out to the management committee the day before an event run by Phab Nottingham);
- Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (details below);
 - If no one is immediately available and you believe the event requires immediate action, do not delay in taking this action. If immediate action is not required, await advice from a DSL before proceeding.
 - If there is immediate risk or danger to the child/vulnerable adult, contact Police or Social Services as appropriate.

2. Respond

- Signs and symptoms of abuse of young people and/or vulnerable adults may include direct disclosure/allegations. Appropriate response is vital. No report of or concern about possible abuse should ever be ignored. To determine the most appropriate response, it is necessary to understand the nature of the identified risk/allegation.
- In responding to a disclosure/allegation, the recipient of the information should remain calm, ensure the child is safe and if required seek medical attention.
- Do not lead or probe with questions and if a member decides to pause part way through their disclosure/allegation, they should not be forced to continue. Remain calm and demonstrate interest and concern whilst listening carefully. Inform the person sharing a concern with you that you cannot promise confidentiality. Explain that the concerns they have raised must be recorded and passed on so that possible abuse can be dealt with, and that this will be done on a limited “need to know” basis, with as few others as possible knowing the identity of the complainant.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in reporting their concerns and that you will do everything you possibly can to help. Do not make unrealistic promises.
- It may occur that a child/vulnerable adult wishes to have a third-party friend or parent/guardian/carer present before they will offer any information. This is perfectly acceptable, ensuring the concern is not about this third party. However, great care must be taken not to let the third party speak for the child/vulnerable adult especially where that person is the child's/vulnerable adult's parent/guardian or carer. The voice of the child is the priority.

3. Record

- Using the form [here](#), you should record precisely the details of the concern, using the words of the complainant where possible. Your record should use accurate quotations. It should also, if appropriate, include factual observations about the physical and emotional state of the individual sharing their concerns with you.

- You may be unable to record details whilst dealing with the situation; however, you should record details of the incident as soon as possible afterwards to ensure the details are fresh in your mind.
- The form should be stored securely in the designated folder on OneDrive and access should be restricted by password such that only those involved in investigating or dealing with the situation can view the document. All information should be treated as confidential in line with Phab Nottingham's Data Protection Policy.

4. Report

Note: It is not the responsibility of anyone working at Phab Nottingham in a voluntary or paid capacity to decide whether or not abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children to the extent that the appropriate agencies can make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child/vulnerable adult. The Social Services Department has a statutory duty under The Children's Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult. When a child protection referral is made, its staff has a legal duty to investigate. This may involve talking to the child/vulnerable adult and family/guardian or carer and gathering information from other people who know the child/vulnerable adult. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police.

- Once the form has been completed, it will automatically go to the DSL. In the absence of a DSL, another member of the Board of Trustees will act as DSL for that trip. The Management Committee will be made aware of this before the trip.
- The DSL will make a decision as to the action to take and will refer the concern to the appropriate agency as required. The responsibility for taking any further decisions and/or actions then resides with the agency. The DSL should ensure they receive an acknowledgment of a referral to any agency in order to make certain that the allegation will be dealt with by them.
- In most situations, the DSL will advise talking to parents/guardians or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child/vulnerable adult seems withdrawn he/she may have experienced bereavement in a family. However, there are circumstances in which a child/vulnerable adult may be placed at a greater risk if such concerns were shared (e.g. where a parent/guardian or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these circumstances, or where concerns still exist, the DSL will likely report any concerns of abuse to the appropriate agency.
- You may at any time seek advice from a DSL but should keep to an absolute minimum discussion of any concerns with other staff.

NOTES ON ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Complaints against or concerns about a member of staff should be made directly to a DSL. If the complaint is about one of the DSLs, the alternative DSL should be contacted. They will then contact the Nottingham City Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/lado), and they will decide on any action required.

Phab Nottingham assures all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child/vulnerable adult.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against staff, there may be 3 types of investigation:

- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation
- A child/vulnerable adult protection investigation
- A criminal investigation

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children/vulnerable adults in some way; it is therefore important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children/vulnerable adults. It is essential the same procedures be used consistently whether for staff or volunteers. Phab Nottingham is required by law to have all staff and volunteers checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service and opts to require the enhanced check.

As per the Member Safety policy, if Phab Nottingham becomes aware that an individual is no longer suitable to work with our members, it reserves the right to stop the individual from attending any future activities associated with the Charity.

Staff, the Management Committee and volunteers should be appropriately trained to recognise safeguarding concerns. It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard our members.

All Trustees and Management committee are required to complete the '[Introduction to safeguarding and child protection training](#)' provided by the NSPCC. For the Management Committee, this is to be completed before the first trip in October. For all Trustees, this training is required to be renewed every three years as recommended by the NSPCC.

BEST PRACTICE

Promoting good practice can reduce the possibility of potentially abusive situations and help to protect staff from allegations of abuse. The following are specific examples of good practice that Phab Nottingham encourages:

- Avoid situations where staff and an individual child/vulnerable adult are working completely unobserved. e.g. if assistance is required when toileting/providing personal care, 2 staff should be present (of the same sex where possible).
- If any form of personal care is required, two staff should always be present.
- Where a mixed group of male and female members are involved in an activity, male and female staff should be present.

Phab Nottingham does not permit the following:

- Staff driving members in their own vehicle
- Staff meeting members outside of officially organised Phab activities
- Staff or members engaging in rough, physical, sexually provocative games or horseplay
- Staff sharing a bedroom with a member alone
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching
- Use or allowing the use of inappropriate language
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a member/staff, even in jest
- Allowing allegations made by a member to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults that they can reasonably do for themselves.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Miriam Sanderson, Trustee. Her contact details are below:

Phone: 07847393592; **Email:** miriam.sanderson@phabnottingham.co.uk

The Deputy DSL is Katy Conlon, Trustee. Her contact details are below:

Phone: 07840170693 **Email:** katy.conlon@phabnottingham.co.uk

APPENDIX 1: INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Example of incident report form:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=JRUIo_Y3k0qkpzDFGINKU-yka9YYn9Rli6WtusfigOZUMTQzWFRQNFgxSU82Mzg4RIFFWFM4VDhOVC4u