



**ALCHEMY**  
FILM & ARTS

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

This policy applies to all activities undertaken by Alchemy Film & Arts and impacts upon staff, key participants, volunteers, freelance contractors, partner venues, filmmakers and our audiences. Alchemy Film & Arts will monitor the implementation and application of this Policy and ensure that it reflects and meets the needs of the diverse community we serve.

Alchemy Film & Arts believes that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

Alchemy Film & Arts is committed to supporting the right of adults at risk to be protected from abuse and to making sure all volunteers, board members, and staff act promptly when dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse. A vulnerable Adult is defined in 'No Secrets' Guidance (Department of Health, 2000) as 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". A vulnerable person may fall into any one of the following groups: older and frail people; people with a mental health need, a learning difficulty, a physical impairment, a sensory impairment; people who are substance or alcohol dependent; or family carers providing assistance to another vulnerable adult.

All vulnerable adults at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Working in partnership with vulnerable adults at risk, their relatives, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare

We recognise that the welfare of children and young people is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### **The purpose of the policy:**

- To provide protection for the children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in, receive services from, or volunteer with Alchemy Film & Arts.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Alchemy Film & Arts.
- To actively promote the empowerment and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## **Safeguarding procedures**

### **How to notice abuse**

Concerns about or evidence of abuse can come through:

- A direct disclosure by the vulnerable adult, child or young person.
- A complaint or expression of concern by a member of staff, a volunteer, another service user, a carer, a member of the public or relative.
- An observation of the behaviour of the vulnerable adult, child or young person by a volunteer, member of staff or carer.

### **Our Commitment**

To support vulnerable adults, children or young people who are experiencing, or at risk from, abuse, Alchemy Film & Arts is committed to:

- Identifying the abuse of vulnerable adults, children or young people where it is occurring.
- Responding effectively to any circumstances giving grounds for concern, or where formal complaints or expressions of anxiety are expressed.
- Ensuring the active participation of individuals, families, groups and communities wherever possible and appropriate.
- Raising awareness of the extent of abuse on vulnerable adults, children or young people and its impact on them.
- Promoting and supporting work designed to reduce abuse and the fear of abuse as experienced by vulnerable adults, children or young people .
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating how our policies, procedures and practices for protecting vulnerable adults, children or young people are working.
- Making sure our policies, procedures and practices stay up to date with good practice and the law in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults, children or young people .
- Ensuring our procedures are in line with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Procedures.

### **Preventing opportunities for abuse**

- Practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of all volunteers including Board Members
- Ensuring appropriate training and certification is in place where necessary appropriate.
- Raise awareness of safeguarding issues.
- Develop and then implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- Make the Alchemy Film & Arts Safeguarding Policy available.
- Training where needed for all volunteers and Board Members on safeguarding adults, children and young people.

### **Confidentiality**

Alchemy Film & Arts will work with vulnerable adults, children or young people in a way that meets all the aspects of confidentiality in our different policies, but where abuse to a vulnerable person is alleged, suspected, reported or concerns are raised, the Safeguarding Adults Procedure must be followed. The confidentiality of the vulnerable person will be respected wherever possible and their consent obtained to

share information. The vulnerable person should be made aware that members or volunteers cannot ignore issues around abuse and that steps will be taken to deal with them in as sensitive manner as possible. The welfare of the individual is paramount.

### **Safer recruitment and supervision of staff/volunteers**

All volunteers staff and board members of Alchemy Film & Arts, who work directly with vulnerable adults, children or young people will complete a Criminal Records Disclosure application and/or PVG certification as appropriate . If the interaction is likely to be unsupervised at any time, then an Enhanced Disclosure application will be required.

Alchemy Film & Arts will also check with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) [www.isa.gov.org.uk/](http://www.isa.gov.org.uk/) prior, to any interaction with a vulnerable adults to ensure that they have been assessed to work with vulnerable adults.

### **Definitions of abuse**

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other persons(s) or group of people. Abuse may be single or repeated acts. Abuse or neglect of a child is caused by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting: by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.

Abuse takes many forms and can be:

**Physical:** for example, hitting, slapping, burning, pushing, restraining or giving the wrong medication.

**Psychological and emotional:** for example, shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring or humiliating a person, threats of harm or abandonment, intimidation, verbal abuse.

**Financial:** including the illegal or unauthorised use of a person's property, money, pension book or other valuables, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.

**Sexual:** such as forcing a person to take part in any sexual activity without his or her informed consent – this can occur in any relationship.

**Discriminatory:** including racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This also includes stopping someone from being involved in religious or cultural activity, services or support networks.

**Institutional:** the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people. This includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers of care.

**Neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical or physical care needs. These can be deliberate or unintentional, amounting to abuse by a carer or self-neglect by the vulnerable person: for example, where

a person is deprived of food, heat, clothing, comfort or essential medication, or failing to provide access to appropriate health or social care services.

## **Alchemy film & Arts safeguarding reporting procedure**

### **1) Immediate Action**

If a staff member, volunteer or board member suspects abuse has or may have occurred, act immediately to:

- **Make sure the person is safe.**
- Inform a senior staff member or board member immediately.
- Contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed.
- Record details of the allegation (what was said, observed, when, where, date of allegation)
- It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with any parents/carers about any concerns.

However, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- Where sexual abuse is suspected.
- Where organised or multiple abuse is suspected.
- Where fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected.
- Where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

### **What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect**

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations you must:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that:
  - you are glad they have told you;
  - they have not done anything wrong;
  - what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

### **2) Next Steps**

Bringing the concern to the attention of a senior staff member or board member who in turn will contact the Police.

- Senior staff member discusses the concerns with board member and contacts the local authority referral agency on 0300 100 1800 during office hours. Where a call falls out with normal office hours, all calls should go through the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on Tel 01896 752111, or the local (Hawick) police on 101.
- Refer to most recent Scottish Borders procedural guidelines for vulnerable adults at [http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/9555/adult\\_protection\\_procedure\\_2014](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/9555/adult_protection_procedure_2014)
- Or, for children and young people: [http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/1361/children\\_and\\_families/213/child\\_protection](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/1361/children_and_families/213/child_protection)

### **3) Investigation**

The Alchemy Film & Arts Board will coordinate an investigation.

- If necessary they will hold a meeting to review the incident decide what action to take next.
- The incident will be recorded in Alchemy Film & Arts Incidents file.
- Social services or the police will decide what to do next.
- Alchemy Film & Arts will review its safeguarding procedures and training.

### **Confidentiality**

Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk of harm then the person's safety has to come first. Remember: Legally, it is fine to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child. Not everyone needs to know when a concern or worry is raised. This respects the child's, family's and/or staff's rights to privacy. So only people who need to know should be told about it. It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following our procedures. Alchemy Film & Arts will ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place.

We committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

### **Implementation of this policy:**

This responsibility for implementing this policy lies with the Board of Trustees, and will be actively supported and implemented by all paid members of staff, including freelance contractors. Volunteers will be fully briefed and provided with a copy of this policy. Alchemy Film & Arts aim to comply with all relevant legislation and regulations.

Any complaint or grievance under this policy should be made in writing to the Chairman, or any Trustee or Board Member of Alchemy Film & Arts, who will bring the matter to the attention of the rest of the Board of Trustees. The matter will then be formally investigated by one or more board members who will report back to the Board of Trustees. If the complaint or grievance is considered reasonable, the Board of Trustees shall decide by majority vote on the appropriate action to be taken.

**Richard Ashrowan, Creative Director, Alchemy Film & Arts, May 2016.**