

Mudford Village Hall

Safeguarding Policy Practice and Procedures

1. The Purpose of the policy

Mudford Village Hall (MVH) is committed to following safeguarding practices that will ensure the safety of adults and children that may be at risk of abuse, whilst they are taking part in our activities held in the hall. We are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who enters our premises, children, young people and adults at risk, visitors and participants in all activities and events. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our trustees, and volunteers.

This policy will help all volunteers involved with MVH –

- To be aware of our legal responsibilities.
- Understand the safeguarding risks
- Know what to do if they have a concern about the wellbeing or welfare of any adult or child at risk that encounters our group.

2. Code of Conduct

All personnel belonging to the volunteer group at MVH are acting in a position of trust. They should recognise that keeping all individuals safe is everyone's responsibility, and we expect our members, volunteers, and trustees to behave according to the following values:

- All adults and children at risk have an equal right to protection from abuse and to be kept safe from harm regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- We recognise some adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- We listen to and respect all individuals.
- We use language that is appropriate for age and ability, and not offensive or discriminatory.
- We encourage a culture of honesty, where everyone feels comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
- We know it isn't always easy to be vocal about concerns – for ourselves or for other people.
- All allegations and suspicions of neglect and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

When having a conversation with a patron and they decide to disclose, we do not –

- Promise to keep secrets – safeguarding relies on sharing concerns appropriately with other agencies.
- Allow suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect to go unreported.
- Act in a way that is threatening, abusive or bullying.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Enter into a sexual or intimate relationship with a potential person at risk.

3. Legislation

MVH recognises that the local authority has the main legal duty to safeguard adults at risk, and we are committed to working with them and our local Safeguarding Adults Board. We will follow relevant legislation and government guidance which includes –

- The Care Act 2014.
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (which protects people’s right to make their own decisions in any situation where they are able to do so).

We base our practices on the principles laid out in the Care Act 2014, see **Appendix A**.

4. Definitions

Children and Young People: Persons aged under 18 years old.

Adults: An individual aged 18 or over.

A vulnerable person as has needs for care and support, may be experiencing, or is 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.

There is no legal definition of abuse, it is commonly defined as any intentional action that harms or injures another person.

The types of abuse we need to be aware of are:

- 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

5. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

There are many signs and indicators and even nonverbal cues that may suggest someone is experiencing abuse or neglect. There may be other explanations too, but the volunteers and trustees of MVH will not ignore any of these signs if they are apparent.

A vulnerable person may confide or disclose to a trustee, volunteer, or other member of MVH that they are experiencing abuse, inside or outside the activities of the group. Or someone else may notice signs in a particular individual. The signs we will look out for include:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Belongings or money going missing from the person.
- The person no longer attending or enjoying MVH activities or responding to contact from other members of the group.
- A change in confidence or behaviour of a person e.g. if they are withdrawn and quiet around a particular person or people, when usually they are outgoing and confident.
- A change in appearance of the person e.g. losing or gaining weight, deterioration in personal hygiene or way of dressing.
- Someone else (e.g. a parent, carer or family member) always speaking for the person and not allowing them to make their own choices.
- The person showing fear of, or not wanting to be around, a particular individual or group of people.

6. Responding to Concerns

MVH has designated safeguarding leads whose contact details are in section 11.

It is without question that it can be difficult for many reasons to speak up if you think someone is being abused or neglected. However, we expect our volunteers, and trustees to act in response to any concerns. Our safeguarding leads will support the person raising the concerns, as well as the person being abused.

If anyone in the group notices any signs of abuse or neglect in another person, they should bring these concerns to the safeguarding lead.

If someone discloses to anyone else in the group that they are being abused, the response should be as follows:

- Always make sure the person speaking up feels they are being listened to and supported.
- Don't promise to keep information confidential between you and them.
- Tell the designated safeguarding lead about the concerns (unless the safeguarding lead is implicated in causing the harm or perpetrating the abuse. In this situation, information should be shared with a trusted committee member/trustee, and they will be responsible for taking further action instead of the safeguarding lead).

- Ask for the person's consent to share the information. If they refuse and you are still worried that they or someone else is at immediate risk of harm, you cannot wait for this consent. You must share this information with the safeguarding lead.
- Write a clear statement of what you have been told, seen, or heard.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for taking further action once concerns have been raised with them. Throughout the process, the safeguarding lead will record all the information they are given, the actions they take, and why. The procedures they will follow are identified in **Appendix B**.

7. Keeping records

MVH group recognises that it is vital to record and store details about any safeguarding concerns that arise. We will record information, even if the concerns have not been shared with the police or the local authority safeguarding team. These records are extremely sensitive and will be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer (if hard copy) and/or password protected and stored on a computer with protection against hackers and viruses (if electronic).

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that information is recorded about every safeguarding concern: examples of information to be recorded can be found in **Appendix C**.

8. Confidentiality, consent and information sharing

Timely information sharing is key to keeping people safe and responding appropriately to concerns about their welfare. In general, MVH expects all committee members, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality and act in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

We will share information within the group (e.g. with other volunteers) in situations where this is necessary to deal effectively with safeguarding concerns or to provide continuity of support. We will share information with other organisations to keep a person safe.

9. Recruiting and training volunteers

MVH volunteers that work with potential adults/children at risk will be expected to review the safeguarding policy and procedures of the group and undertake training where appropriate. All volunteers will know who the designated safeguarding leads are, and that they should go to them with any concerns.

The designated safeguarding leads will take responsibility to update their safeguarding certification every two years. We will apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all volunteers for whom we are legally required to do so.

10. Reviewing policy and procedures

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed every year. They were last reviewed and updated in February 2025.

11. Key contacts

Mudford Village Hall Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Lydia Gane

Contact details: lydia@mudfordvillagehall.org.uk

Name: Jan Sugg

Contact details: jan@mudfordvillagehall.org.uk

Somerset and National support groups and helplines to be found in **Appendix D**.

Appendices

A

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.

B

Sharing Information

6.1 Initial assessment

As soon as information is shared with the safeguarding lead, they will make an initial assessment of the concern. They will, if possible, talk to the person reporting the concern and gather as much information as possible from them.

Key questions to ask:

What type of concern has been reported? Different actions are required depending on what type of concern it is (see below)

What action has already been taken?

Is anyone else in the organisation affected by this situation (e.g. other volunteers or those you work with)? Are there any attitudes or emotions that you may have to be aware of?

How might this concern affect what the organisation delivers in the short term?

Who else might need to be informed?

What other actions now need to be taken?

6.2 Immediate actions depending on what type of concern has been raised

(a) Emergency incidents: this is when there's a life-threatening situation where there's imminent danger and harm to an adult, young person or child.

- Immediately contact the emergency services if they haven't been called already.
- Make sure the current situation is safe.
- Establish how others are coping – do they need any immediate support?
- Inform the senior people in the group

(b) Protection concerns: This is when an adult who you believe is unable to protect themselves is at current risk of, or has experienced, abuse or harm.

- If the person is in immediate danger, call the police.
- If they're not in immediate danger, you must contact the local authority safeguarding team within 24 hours and make a referral (contact details are in section 10).
- Be guided by the safeguarding team or police on any further actions required of you.

(c) Allegations concerning staff or volunteers: this is when someone has alleged that staff or volunteers from your organisation have harmed or abused an adult at risk.

- Contact the local authority safeguarding team as soon as possible within 24 hours.
- Be guided by them on any further actions required of you.

(d) Welfare concerns: This is when no one has been harmed in any way, but a person shows signs of being in need. It's when you have concerns for their health, wellbeing or safety if they don't get help.

- Within 7 days you, or someone in your organisation, should speak with the person. When it is appropriate you should also speak with their family or carer. You must explain your concerns and make sure they have the support they need.
- Depending on the conversation, the safeguarding lead may then also:
- Help the person or their family access services or give them the information they need to do this themselves.
- Speak to another professional who is already working with the person or family, such as a social worker, about their needs.

(e) Concerns about other organisations: This is a situation where the safeguarding concern is about another organisation, their staff, volunteers or the people they work with.

- As soon as possible within 24 hours contact the designated safeguarding lead of the organisation in question and pass on your concerns, if this has not already happened.
- In some circumstances you may decide to follow up with the organisation to confirm they have acted on the issue.
- If at any point you think the organisation has not acted and someone is at risk, you should contact the local safeguarding team yourself.

(f) Responding to historic or non-recent concerns: You may become aware or be told about a concern from an adult relating to an incident which took place in the past, including when they were a child. Historical allegations of abuse should be taken as seriously as contemporary allegations.

- Remember that it's never too late to report abuse. An individual can make a formal complaint to the police about non-recent abuse, ideally in the geographic area in which the abuse is reported to have taken place.
- Establish if the person alleged to have caused the harm works with children or adults at risk. Try to find out their recent or current whereabouts and any contact they have with children or adults at risk. A referral should be made to social services, with the consent of the person who experienced the abuse if possible.
- Consider what consent the person has given for information to be shared. How, when and to whom they share this information should usually be with their consent.
- Signpost the person who experienced the abuse to relevant support groups that can help them.

(g) Supporting those who share a concern with you: Your primary concern should be the best interests of the person who is at risk of harm. However, the person sharing this concern with you may also be distressed by the situation, even if they are reporting on behalf of

someone else. Everyone can respond to worries about another differently. If someone has previously experienced trauma they can find it especially upsetting.

- Thank them for bringing this concern to your attention and that they have fulfilled their key responsibility
- Explain that you will now take responsibility in leading management of this concern and any contact with statutory agencies
- Highlight that there may be limited updates that you have or can give them on the situation; that does not mean that it was not important for them to share their concern
- Remind them of the importance of confidentiality and not sharing this information further
- Ensure they have your contact details in case they think of anything else they have not yet shared that they think may be relevant
- Discuss with them what additional support they may require. Consider contacting them later to check in on how they are doing

C

The date and time of the incident/disclosure/concern

The date and time of the report

The name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details

The name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details

The names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses

The name and any other relevant information about the adult who is the subject of the concern (including information about their care and support needs)

What was said or done and by whom

Any action taken to investigate the matter

Any further action taken (such as a referral being made)

The reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant)

Each record will be signed and dated by the person making the report.

D

Elder Abuse UK Helpline

Phone for advice: 080 8808 8141

<https://wearehourglass.org/>

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Freephone, 24 hours a day, for advice: 0808 2000 247

<http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

Somerset County Council 0300 123 2224

Email: childrens@somerset.gov.uk or adults@somerset.gov.uk

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 11 11

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Action on Elder Abuse: 0808 8088 141

The Samaritans: 116 123

Stop it Now: 0808 1000 900

Family Lives: 0808 800 2222