



TOUCH TRUST

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1.** Touch Trust is committed to providing services and activities which are safe for all of our clients - who we refer to as 'guests'- including vulnerable adults, young people, children and their carers.
- 1.2.** We take our responsibility for physical health and safety, respect for the rights of all guests, staff and volunteers and the secure management of personal information very seriously
- 1.3.** We support and encourage all guests, volunteers and staff to speak up where they have any concern, observation or information about harm or potential harm to a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- 1.4.** We will provide training and support for all volunteers, staff and Board members to ensure they are able to recognise harmful or abusive situations or behaviours and respond appropriately.
- 1.5.** We will record and report all incidents or concerns and review our procedures and practice regularly.
- 1.6.** We will communicate this policy to all staff, board members, volunteers, guests and their families / carers, using appropriate methods, formats and language so that our message is understood by all.
- 1.7.** You must read, understand and comply with this policy and attend any compulsory training on its requirements. The policy may be supplemented by specific guidance relevant to your role.
- 1.8.** Your compliance with this policy is mandatory. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. The aims of this policy are:

- to **PROTECT** children and vulnerable adults who are guests of Touch Trust
- to **PREVENT** harm to vulnerable guest's health and well-being
- to **ENSURE** that all staff, volunteers and Board members are aware of their responsibilities
- to **WORK IN PARTNERSHIP** with other agencies and providers to promote a positive safeguarding culture.

2.2. The main objectives of this policy are:

- to ensure that guests and their carers are welcomed into an environment where services and activities are safe for all guests
- to provide all Touch Trust staff and volunteers with a clear structure and process for the safeguarding of the guests and their carers within which they too are protected in their work
- to encourage everyone involved in Touch Trust to understand that safeguarding is **EVERYBODY'S** business
- To provide training and opportunities for discussions about issues and concerns, policy and procedures to reflect, review and to continue to learn and improve in our safeguarding responsibilities.

3. Health and Safety

3.1. The Touch Trust has clear policies and procedures to maintain a healthy and safe environment for all guests, carers, staff and volunteers. These include:

Safer recruitment – including the requirement for DBS checks, references and relevant qualifications

Lone working policy

Risk assessments for all activities and equipment

Building safety and security – including:

signing in and out for all users;

secure storage of records and personal information;

use of social media and taking photographs;

fire safety – including regular fire drills;

regular testing and maintenance of all heating and electrical systems including water temperature checks, boiler service etc;

cleaning;

kitchen and food hygiene;

3.2. These can be found in the staff handbook and will be covered at induction for all new members of the team.

3.3. The Board member and senior staff responsible for Health and safety are:

Alison Woodward Lead trustee for safeguarding, Alison.woodward@wno.org.uk

Hiroko Uenishi: Designated Safeguarding Person hiroko.uenishi@touchtrust.co.uk

4 Protection from Abuse

4.1 Definitions

4.1.2 Abuse is: A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child 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 others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. (HM Gov, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018). This definition is also applicable for vulnerable adults.

4.1.3. A child: is any person aged between 0 and 17 years old.

4.1.4. A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 who is in need of community care or support to live independently, or who cannot live independently. This could be due to disability, age, illness, inability to take care of themselves, or because they cannot stop themselves from being harmed, abused or exploited. Adults may be temporarily vulnerable as a result of short term illness or loss of capacity or it may be a permanent situation.

4.1.5. Staff includes employees and volunteers who work full or part time for Touch Trust.

4.1.6. Trustees are those who sit on the Board of Trustees of Touch Trust.

4.2 Abuse is often divided into categories – although it is important to be aware that maltreatment can be of more than one kind and harm can be caused in multiple ways. The category is less important than the harm caused to the child, young person or vulnerable adult. However it is important to understand and be able to recognise potential or actual abusive behaviour and to know how to respond.

4.2.1. Physical Abuse

- May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or adult.

4.2.2. Sexual Abuse

- Forcing or enticing a child or adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. This may involve:
 - physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts;
 - non-contact, such as involving a child or adult in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities; or
 - encouraging children or adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

4.2.3. Emotional Abuse

- The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional and behavioural development.
- It may involve telling the child or adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.

It may involve causing children or adults to feel frightened or in danger, for example by witnessing domestic abuse within the home, being bullied, or by exploitation or corruption

4.2.4. Neglect

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.
- It may involve a parent, family member or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child or adult from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or adult's basic emotional needs.

4.2.5. Other forms of Abuse include:

Financial Abuse

- Money or property stolen
- Being defrauded e.g. scams
- Being put under pressure to pay for things for someone else's benefit
- Someone else using their money as their own

Additional forms of abuse place include forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), modern slavery, and radicalisation.

5. Perpetrators of Abuse:

5.1. Abusers are most often people known and trusted by the vulnerable child or adult that they harm or exploit. They may be family members, neighbours or carers – and they may also be other children or vulnerable adults themselves.

In the context of The Touch Trust we need to be aware that many of our guests do rely on trusted carers or family members for personal care, physical care and, often for financial and other decision making. This potentially makes them more vulnerable to abuse or exploitation by someone close to them.

In addition, guests with communication difficulties, learning disabilities or other additional needs may not always recognise that what is happening to them is not acceptable, may not be able to effectively communicate what is wrong and may not be able to protect themselves for example by leaving a harmful environment or situation.

Staff and volunteers should be sensitive to nonverbal indicators of abuse or distress such as changes in appearance, behaviour or mood – particularly if these are associated with, for example, changes in living situations, different care arrangements or new people in their lives.

5.2. A culture of Safeguarding requires everyone to be alert to possible incidences of abuse and harm. Government guidance makes it clear that Safeguarding is Everyone's Business and that it is better to check something out than to assume there is not a problem. In many cases harm is caused through inability to respond to complex needs and in stressful circumstances. Young people or vulnerable adults who are themselves behaving in abusive ways, may not be aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and appropriate intervention and support can be put in place where issues are brought to light. All concerns about harmful or potentially harmful behaviour – of any kind should be discussed with your supervisor and recorded so that patterns can be monitored and appropriate action taken.

6. If you have a Concern:

If you have any concern or reason to believe a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being mistreated you should discuss this in the first instance with your supervisor or the Designated Safeguarding Persons within the Touch Trust.

Our **Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)** is Hiroko Uenishi, Programme and Project Manager. The Board Member responsible for Safeguarding is Alison Woodward (Please find their contact email address and phone number below).

If you have reason to believe someone is in immediate danger call the emergency services (999) before continuing with the procedure outlined in the following chart.

Level of concern	Action
If an immediate cause for concern – an emergency (imminent or current risk of serious harm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone the emergency services- 999. Follow up by contacting DSP if available. • In an out of hours situation or if DSP unavailable contact the Local Authority Emergency Duty Team –see numbers below. • Make a written record of actions you have taken including the times and names of people you have spoken to. Pass this on to your supervisor or the DSP at the first available opportunity.
If an urgent concern (Needs to be dealt with that day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to your supervisor and DSP. • DSP to phone appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Team and follow up with Referral Form to the Local Authority’s Duty Safeguarding Officer. • If DSP unavailable, contact a Lead Trustee for Safeguarding or or Health and Safety Officer Vivette Boon, vivette.boon@touchtrust.co.uk. If no one is available, contact NSPCC help line (see number below).
If a non-urgent concern (On-going situation) or any other concern/doubts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the situation with your supervisor to determine whether a referral needs to be made to DSPs and the Local Authority. • Record the concern and conversation. • Monitor via supervision. • If concern persists or increases speak to DSP
If the concern is about a Touch Trust colleague – or DSP	If you do not feel comfortable, speaking to your supervisor or the DSP you may phone the NSPCC helpline for further advice at any time or contact the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding team direct.
Contact Numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSP Hiroko Uenishi Mobile: 07955 402879 Hiroko.Uenishi@touchtrust.co.uk • Lead Trustee for Safeguarding Alison Woodward: 07783 769586 Alison.woodward@wno.org.uk • Vivette Boon, Health and Safety Officer Contact Tel: 02920 635660 • Cardiff Adults Safeguarding Team 029 2233 0888 • Cardiff Children’s Safeguarding Team 029 2053 6490 • All urgent out of hours concerns telephone Cardiff EDT 029 2078 8570. • NSPCC help/advice line: 0808 800 5000.

Disclosures / Allegations

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells or shows you directly that they are being abused or mistreated you should:

- reassure them that you are taking them seriously, they are right to tell you and you will try to help
- check whether they are in immediate danger of harm and take appropriate action if so.
- listen carefully to what they want to tell you - and make notes if this is practical. If not practical at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards
- let a colleague know and follow the procedures outlined above

You should not:

- promise that you can 'fix' the situation or that you can keep anything they tell you 'a secret'. Explain that you will need to tell others so that steps can be taken to keep them safe. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves someone at risk of harm then their **'safety has to come first'**.
- question them about the abuse – except to clarify what they are saying. Do not 'put words into anyone's mouth' or add your own interpretations. Record using their own words as far as possible.
- try to 'investigate' the issue yourself. Do not question carers or family members about what you have been told. This is because doing so may alert abusers and worsen the situation.
- dismiss or ignore any concerns. Always check out what you have been told or observed with a supervisor. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and nobody should make decisions about potential abuse issues on their own.
- Dealing with child protection or adult safeguarding matters can be stressful. All staff are reminded to access support from Touch Trust line managers and to discuss and record any matters at supervision.

7 DSP RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1. The DSPs have access to appropriate training to support them in their safeguarding roles.

7.2. Their roles include:

- responding to Safeguarding concerns raised by staff and volunteers
- referral and liaison with appropriate local and national agencies,
- contributing to appropriate policies within the organisation
- maintaining and monitoring confidential records of incidents or concerns
- promotion of safeguarding policy and culture within the organisation

7.3. Where there is risk of harm to our guests, volunteers of staff, it is the DSP's responsibility to:

- log all conversations regarding the issue
- sign and request signatures on reports and statements
 - these will be kept in the safeguarding report form for 3 years - or longer if the concern is an ongoing matter - within the password secured individual files.
- seek advice from expert sources
- share concerns and make referrals to external agencies such as Social Services, Police or NSPCC as appropriate to the circumstances.
- share concerns (with consent where required and appropriate) internally with the Chief Executive Officer / the Chair of the Board of Trustees
- to make referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service regarding staff or volunteers in regulated activity whose conduct is harmful to guests and service users.

7.4. The DSP's will also arrange access to relevant training. We will provide an induction programme for all new staff, volunteers and Board members to enable them to undertake their roles safely and confidently. Ongoing and refresher training as befits the personal and professional development of individuals and of our organisation will also be made available.

8. Equality Considerations

8.1. This policy and procedures promote inclusion irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, disability or any other protected characteristic. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy.

8.2. All persons engaged in Touch Trust activities must be sensitive to cultural, racial, class and economic factors and take care not to impose their own view on either a child, a vulnerable adult, a parent or a carer.

8.3. In all Safeguarding situations there is a balance to be found between respect for family and cultural decisions and the protection of vulnerable people's rights. If you experience any conflict of interests in this respect it is appropriate to discuss this in supervision or with the DSP. Keep in mind that the protection of children and vulnerable adults from harm is the paramount consideration.

9. Concerns about Practice: Responding to allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff (Also refer to 'Whistle Blowing Procedure/ Making a Protected Disclosure' section in Employee Handbook)

9.1. It is difficult to accept that colleagues within the organisation may not always act in the best interests of the guests. However all staff need to be aware of the attitudes of other staff members within Touch Trust and other partner organisations. Members of staff need to be

alert to any incident or activity involving guests that may be inappropriate or which gives cause for concern.

9.2. Any concerns or suspicions about the behaviour of colleagues should be reported to your line manager or a member of Senior Management Team.

9.2.1. Inappropriate behaviour such as failure to maintain professional boundaries/behaviour, non compliance with procedures etc may be addressed by managers through supervision in the first instance. Repeated incidents may trigger the disciplinary policy and procedure.

9.2.2. In situations where there is a suggestion of seriously harmful behaviour or practice it may be necessary to suspend the staff member or volunteer while an investigation is carried out.

9.2.3. There may be situations where suspicions and allegations relate to one of DSPs. In these cases the issue should be raised with the Chief Executive Officer or a member of the Board of Trustees. You will be able to get advice from NSPCC Whistle Blowing Advice Line on 08000280285.

9.3. 'Whistle blowing' is supported by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1999, which offers a level of employment protection to employees who report concerns about poor and dangerous practises. The fear of making an allegation against a colleagues should not prevent anyone from expressing any concerns. Managers must treat such concerns in confidence and support any staff or volunteer who raises the concern and must manage the situation within the organisation in a respectful manner. Nobody who raises a genuine concern will be penalised in any way by the Touch Trust.

10. Additional Policies and Procedures:

10.1. Recruitment of staff and volunteers: staff recruitment procedures will reflect the priority given to safeguarding our guests at all times:

10.1.1. All candidates for employment with The Touch Trust will have to obtain an enhanced **DBS** check for both Adult and Children's workforce.

10.1.2. Applications must also be supported by appropriate **references** and completed **self declaration form**. References will be followed up with a telephone call to the referee from the recruiting manager to confirm the recommendation.

10.1.3. As a general rule The Touch Trust would not employ anyone who has committed offences of violence or any abuse towards children or adults. If an applicant for employment – or to volunteer - does declare any history of such behaviour a risk assessment should be carried out by the recruiting manager and signed off by the responsible Board Member. It may be reasonable, for example to take on someone who has learned from a violent or abusive incident in their past but this decision – and the risk assessment, would need to be fully recorded in their staff file.

If any applicant did not declare a relevant history of violent or abusive behaviour, in either their personal or professional life – and this subsequently came to light, the case would

need to be investigated thoroughly under the disciplinary policy. It is likely that such an individual would be dismissed as unsuitable on the grounds that they did not disclose the truth on their appointment.

10.2. Online Safety

From June 2020, our service will start to offer sessions online. It is important to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect also online. Our staff members are well placed to spot any emerging safeguarding concerns or signs of possible abuse and neglect (Please refer to the section 4 above).

It is also good to remember that due to COVID-19 and social distancing measures, children, young people and vulnerable adults are spending much more time at home and we know isolation can put some them at a greater risk of abuse and neglect.

Here is a selection of the useful web sites offering guidance for more information.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

10.3. Safety Matters /Points to Remember

10.3.1. The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult guest is PARAMOUNT. All policies and procedures are designed to promote this. Remember:

- All staff must sign in and out every time they enter or leave the premises.
- An attendance register of guests and carers must be maintained for every session.
- Only people approved by Touch Trust may work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults on what is defined as regulated activity. All such people MUST possess an Enhanced DBS certificate, although it is very unlikely that any Touch Trust employee will work alone or out of sight of others since carers are normally present. (please refer to Touch Trust Lone-working Policy)

10.3.2. If someone, who is not an employee (e.g. other guests' partner or volunteer), is asked to assist in special circumstances that person MUST be supervised by an approved employee and never be left alone with a child or vulnerable adult or left out of sight.

10.3.3. If volunteers are under the age of 18 themselves, the activities they take part should be risk assessed prior to their engagement by approved members of Touch Trust Staff.

10.4. Investigating and diagnosing abuse is NOT the responsibility of Touch Trust but it has a duty to pass on all concerns to relevant partners and authorities.

11.1. Links to Legislation:

Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014: - informing our Care and Support of families, previously referred to as Child In Need

- **Children Act 1989:** - informs our Child Protection System in Wales and remind us that welfare of the child is **PARAMOUNT**
- **Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019:** - The Wales Safeguarding Procedures are built on the statutory guidance of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, part 7 Safeguarding and specifically Working Together to Safeguard People volumes 1, 4, 5 and 6. The Procedures have been written to provide clear guidance and expectations for safeguarding both adults and children. They aim to help anyone who works with adults or children (whether through paid or unpaid work) to apply the legislation and statutory guidance of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 to their roles and duties by explaining what their responsibilities are and how to meet them. That **“Safeguarding is Everyone’s Business”** is clearly stated within the Procedures which also clarify what is required of people in specific roles.
- **Data Protection Act 2018:**
 - It is worth noting that, where practitioners need to share special category personal information, they should be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes **‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’** as a condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent
 - Information can be shared legally without consent, if a practitioner is unable to, cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if to gain consent could place a child or vulnerable person at risk.
 - Relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.
(Sourced from NSPCC training materials citing HM Government, Information Sharing – Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, July 2018)
- **GDPR 2018**
- **Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003**
- **Modern Slavery Act 2015**

11.2. Links to Touch Trust Policies:

- **Touch Trust Health and Safety Policy**
- **Touch Trust Infection Control Policy**
- **Touch Trust Fire and Evacuation Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or whenever new legislation makes it necessary
(Last update May 2022)
