

## Safeguarding Policy – 2026

### **Policy Statement:**

Safeguarding and the welfare of all young people and vulnerable adults is one of Make/Sense Theatre's highest priorities. We are fully committed to carrying out safe practice to protect these individuals from harm, abuse and exploitation. A safe and mutually respectful environment, where everyone's voice is heard, is at the heart of Make/Sense Theatre's ethos.

All those working and interacting with Make/Sense, whether you are staff, interns, trainees or volunteers, have a duty to maintain and abide by this policy and support service users. We have a duty to act appropriately to any allegations, suspicions or reports of abuse of young people and/or vulnerable adults both in our care and in their lives away from Make/Sense Theatre. This policy offers safeguarding guidelines and specific procedures to deal with concerns that arise.

### **Definitions:**

**Child** – anyone under the age of 18

**Young person/people** – all children and adult participants (whether or not deemed vulnerable) under the age of 24

**Vulnerable adult** – anyone aged 18 or over who is or who may be in need of community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability. Anyone who may be unable to take care of him/her/their self, or unable to protect him/her/their self against harm or exploitation.

**Member of staff** - anyone employed by Make/Sense including unpaid interns and volunteers.

**Worker** – a general term for all employees, freelancers, interns, volunteers, placements, work experience and any other representative of Make/Sense considered having responsibility to implement safeguarding procedures.

**Abuse** – any mistreatment, including physical, emotional and sexual and neglect. With regards to vulnerable adults, this also includes financial and institutional abuse.

### **National Guidance:**

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Prevent 2024
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2012
- The Children Act (1989, 2004)

#### **Local Procedures:**

- The Berkshire Child Protection Procedures/Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures
- The Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures

#### **Designated Safeguarding Leads:**

The DSL and DDSLs are responsible for promoting and implementing safeguarding practices across Make/Sense Theatre. This includes ensuring all staff and volunteers are informed of the company's safeguarding procedures and making sure they receive appropriate training. They will also make sure that each concern reported is recorded and dealt with appropriately, making a referral to the relevant Local Authority in accordance with local procedures.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** – Rosie Durance ([rosie@makesensetheatre.com](mailto:rosie@makesensetheatre.com))

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads** – Karen Wallace-Jones ([karen@makesensetheatre.com](mailto:karen@makesensetheatre.com)) Esther Jacobs ([finance@makesensetheatre.com](mailto:finance@makesensetheatre.com)) and Lucy Barton ([lucy@makesensetheatre.com](mailto:lucy@makesensetheatre.com))

The people responsible for updating this policy and ensuring staff are aware of it and any updates are **Rosie** and **Karen**.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Receiving information from and providing advice and support to all members of staff, volunteers, parents and carers on issues around safeguarding
- Responding to safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring that Safer Recruitment guidelines are followed as and when new staff join the company
- Reporting to external agencies as and when appropriate
- Keeping confidential records of concerns, complaints or referrals using CPOMS
- Ensuring that all staff in contact with young people and vulnerable adults are informed of the safeguarding procedures and receive basic safeguarding information and training
- Ensuring that all staff are trained in safeguarding on a regular, two-yearly basis
- Being familiar with national and local safeguarding legislation and guidance

## **Responding to Safeguarding Concerns:**

You may become concerned about a child or vulnerable adult for a number of reasons:

- A disclosure – someone may inform you of abuse that they/someone else is experiencing
- Behaviour – you may notice someone is behaving differently
- Physical marks or symptoms – signs of abuse could include physical signs such as bruising or marks, unexplained injuries, vomiting, IBS, stomach upsets, seizures, signs of trauma, short-temperedness and/or irritability
- Behaviour of an adult – a parent/carer, member of staff, volunteers, or anyone else who comes into contact with attendees

### **In the event of a disclosure-**

DO –

- Stay calm and listen
- Allow the individual to speak at their own pace
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do with the information
- Make a detailed report of the disclosure using the person's own words, accurate date and time and any other witnesses, using the safeguarding form provided
- Sign and date the form
- Hand it to DSL or DDSL as soon as possible

DO NOT –

- Ask leading questions
- Paraphrase
- Promise to keep secrets
- Discuss any Safeguarding concerns with anyone other than the DSL/DSLs

When speaking, use the TED technique:

**T – tell**

**E – explain**

**D – describe**

If you believe the individual is at immediate risk, let the Safeguarding team know. They will assess the situation and could decide to call social services based on the information you have provided.

**If the concern is a child/vulnerable adult protection issue:**

Any worker who either suspects, witnesses or is told of any incident of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, discriminatory or institutional abuse or neglect occurring to a child or vulnerable adult has a duty to report this immediately to the safeguarding leads. In the rare case that none of these are available, the worker should contact social services or the police. Staff should hand over any notes taken during the disclosure and submit a written record to a relevant member of the DSL team using the safeguarding forms provided.

### **Allegations against Workers:**

A young person or vulnerable adult may make an allegation of abuse against a worker in the company, or you may have a suspicion yourself. Any concerns regarding a worker should be reported to the DSL/DDSLs. Allegations may be around the following:

- Worker behaving in a way that has caused harm to young people and/ or vulnerable adults
- Committing a criminal offence against, with or related to a young person or vulnerable adult
- Behaving towards a young person or vulnerable adult in a way which indicates they are unsuitable to work with children

The company will deal with such matters with discretion, sensitivity and confidentiality, recognising its obligations to both parties. Information will be assessed quickly and carefully, seeking further information from relative parties where necessary.

The suspension of a worker against whom an allegation of abuse is made will not necessarily be automatic. The company will consider any and all relevant information, including advice from outside agencies prior to deciding to suspend.

Make/Sense reserves the right to remove any young person or vulnerable adult proven to have made a malicious allegation of abuse against a company worker.

### **Reporting:**

Workers should make their reports to the DSL and/or DDSs. Reports may then be made to the LADO:

Bracknell Forest: [lado@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:lado@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) or 01344351572

Reading: [lado@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:lado@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) or 01189372684

### **Contracted Services:**

If/when Make/Sense contracts its services to outside providers, we will ensure that these providers have appropriate safeguarding and children protection policies and procedures in place. Such considerations will be declared in any contract or service level agreement.

### **Further Concerns and Whistleblowing:**

All staff and volunteers should feel responsible for raising safeguarding concerns should they arise. Your role with Make/Sense whether paid or unpaid will not be at risk and raising or escalating concerns. If dissatisfied with the response to any concerns raised should be raised again with the DSL and DDSLs. If you feel your concerns have not been listened to, you should submit a report to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 02083146660.

If you have concerns about how child protection matters are being handled at Make/Sense, you can contact the NSPCC's Whistleblowing Advice Line on 08000280285.

### **Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children Policy:**

The trafficking of children has become a major concern for those in the UK with a responsibility towards vulnerable young people. Most trafficked children go missing from care settings within the first 48 hours of arrival. At Make/Sense, we work with a lot of children and young people who are in residential care and, as such, it is crucial that we are aware of the signs and risks of missing, exploited and trafficked children.

As it is not possible for a child to give informed consent, it is assumed that any trafficked child is being exploited, regardless of whether they appear to understand or willingly give permission for any activity,

Trafficked children may be used for:

- Sexual exploitation
- Domestic servitude
- Sweatshop or catering work
- Credit card fraud
- Begging or pick-pocketing
- Agricultural labour including in illegal settings
- Benefit fraud
- Drug mules, drug dealing or drug trafficking, county lines
- Illegal inter-country adoption

Possible indicators of a trafficked or exploited child:

- Does not have money but does have a phone
- Receives unexplained or unidentified phone calls
- Has a history of missing links and unexplained moves
- Works in various locations
- Known to beg for money
- Doesn't have a good relationship with caregivers (usually not parents)

- Is one among a number of unrelated children found at one address
- Has not been registered with a GP and doesn't attend school
- Physical symptoms of physical or sexual abuse
- Sexualised behaviour
- Child persistently goes missing
- Child possessing large amounts of money and/or acquiring expensive items of clothing or technology
- Low self-image or self-esteem

If it is thought that a child who attends Make/Sense is exploited or trafficked, employees are instructed to report it as a safeguarding concern to the DSL or DDSL who will then report it to the police.

### **Background Checks and Safer Recruitment:**

Make/Sense have Safer Recruitment procedures in place. These include:

- Identity check
- An enhanced DBS check
- Professional or personal references
- Verification of employment history
- Reading and signing safeguarding policy
- Reading and signing Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

### **Use of Images and/ or Videos:**

It is important that all staff, volunteers and other individuals be vigilant with any concerns they have on the use of photography or film footage of young people and vulnerable adults. These concerns should be reported to the DSL/DSLs. On occasion, workers may use video equipment as a legitimate teaching aid. Young people and vulnerable adults and their parents and carers must be made aware that this will occur and care will be taken in the storing of such films. An individual's image whether it is a photograph or video is considered to be personal data. Therefore, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 it must be given the same sort of protection as any other personal data. When parents/carers sign up for Make/Sense Theatre activities, they are asked whether or not they give consent for photographs and/or video footage to be taken. The company will not allow images of young people and vulnerable adults to be used on websites, for publicity, or press releases without permission from the parent or carer. If we do obtain such permission, we will not identify individuals by name. Use of personal property e.g. mobile phones may be required at times to contribute to the sessions, for example, the use of Spotify. When this is the case, staff are reminded to keep their phones locked and on airplane mode.

### **Confidentiality:**

All workers have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of young people and vulnerable adults with a designated person or safeguarding lead and where requested with other appropriate professionals and/or investigative agencies should the situation arise. All personal information regarding a young person or vulnerable adult will be kept confidential except when:

- It is suspected that a young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm either from themselves or others
- It is suspected that a young person or vulnerable adult is the victim of abuse
- It is suspected that a young person or vulnerable adult may pose a risk to others
- It is suspected that a crime has been committed

In all cases, the need to safeguard the welfare of the young person or vulnerable adult will be the primary consideration.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour usually repeated over time which intentionally hurts or humiliates another individual or group physically or emotionally. This can be done by one person or a group of people. Occasionally, an incident may be considered to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent if it fulfils other descriptions of bullying. If the victim could be in danger, then intervention is required urgently.

Bullying may take the form of:

- Harassment
- Cyberbullying
- Racist and religious bullying
- Disability bullying
- Sexual, sexist and transphobic bullying
- Homophobic bullying

Make/Sense Theatre is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment where everyone is treated equally and with respect. If you suspect bullying, it is your responsibility to report this to the DSL/DDSLs.

### **Categories of Abuse:**

#### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse causes harm to a Young Person or a Vulnerable Adult.

It may involve, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, or suffocating, otherwise causing physical harm to a Young Person or Vulnerable Adult. It may be done deliberately or carelessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury. It may include female genital mutilation. It may also be caused when a parent or

carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes harm to a Young Person or Vulnerable Adult in their care.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a Young Person's or Vulnerable Adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the individual's health and development. This may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing and/or failing to protect a Young Person or Vulnerable Adult from physical harm or danger, and/or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a Young Person or Vulnerable Adult into participating in, or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the Young Person or Vulnerable Adult to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the Young Person or Vulnerable Adult is irrelevant. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts as well as non-contact activities such as involving a Young Person or a Vulnerable Adult in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging Young People or Vulnerable Adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a Young person or Vulnerable Adult, including persistent criticism, denigration, rejection and scapegoating. It may cause severe and adverse effects on the Young Person or vulnerable Adult's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self-worth or extremes of attention seeking behaviour, including violent behaviour and self-harming. It may involve the conveying to the Young Person or Vulnerable Adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or not valued. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse, though it may also occur alone.

### **Domestic Abuse**

The Home Office (March 2013) defines domestic abuse as: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological; Physical; Sexual; Financial; Emotional. Domestic Abuse includes controlling and coercive behaviour.

### **Self Neglect**

Where an individual demonstrates lack of care for themselves and/or their environment, and/or refuses assistance or services. It can cover a wide range of behaviour for example, neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviours such as hoarding.

### **Human Trafficking/modern slavery**

Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking (which comes from the Palermo Protocol).

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs through exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

This form of abuse comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

### **Radicalisation**

This refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. (Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales, issued on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and revised on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015).

### **Forced Marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent.

### **Peer on Peer abuse**

Abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence.

## **Child criminal exploitation: County lines**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

## **Abuse and Behaviour**

Because of the link between abuse and some types of poor behaviour, where a child or young person's behaviour is violent, bizarre or dangerous, including acts of vandalism or fire setting, staff will be alert to the possibility that this is an indicator of abuse.

**If a worker has a concern that a young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of any of the above, this should be raised to a Designated Person in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.**

## **External Key Contact Numbers**

### **Reading Borough Council**

Concerns about a child or young person: 0118 937 3641

### **Wokingham Borough Council**

Concerns about a vulnerable adult: 0118 937 3747 (01344 786 543 out of hours)

Concerns about a child or young person: 0118 908 8002

### **West Berkshire Council:**

Concerns about a vulnerable adult: 01635519056

Concerns about a child or young person: 01635503090

### **Bracknell Forest Borough Council**

Concerns about a child or young person: 01635 503090

Concerns about a vulnerable adult: 01344 351500

### **Slough Borough Council**

Concerns about a child or young person: 01753 690924

Concerns about a vulnerable adult: 01753 475111

### **Windsor and Maidenhead**

Concerns about a child or young person: 01628 683150 (01344 786543 out of hours)

**This safeguarding policy is updated annually in January.**

**Last update: 26/01/2026**