

*Policy 4*

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with Maidstone Museums' Foundation (MMF). This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of trustees of MMF;
- The design and implementation of MMF's programmes and activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by MMF, and informs trustees of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

### **What is safeguarding?**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our trustees or programmes.

### **Scope**

- All trustees of MMF;
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to MMF, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

MMF believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. MMF will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding as appropriate: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

MMF commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

## **PREVENTION**

### **MMF responsibilities**

MMF will:

- ensure all trustees have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy;
- design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with MMF. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated (see also Policy 3 GDPR);
- implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying trustees and associated personnel;
- ensure trustees receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization;
- follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

### **Trustee responsibilities**

#### **Child safeguarding**

MMF trustees and associated personnel must not:

- engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 16;
- sexually abuse or exploit children;
- subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect;
- engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

#### **Adult safeguarding**

MMF staff and associated personnel must not:

- sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults;
- subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

#### **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**

MMF trustees and associated personnel must not:

- exchange employment or goods for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance;
- engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Additionally, MMF trustees and associated personnel are obliged to:

- contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy;
- report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a MMF trustee or associated personnel to the appropriate trustee (Hon Secretary) or Chairman.

### **Enabling reports**

MMF will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to trustees, members and the communities we work with.

MMF will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

### **HOW TO REPORT A SAFEGUARDING COMPLAINT**

Trustees or members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Chairman. If the trustee or member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Chairman (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate trustee.

The Chairman will determine who will investigate the complaint, to be presented to Board of Trustees (investigating person).

### **RESPONSE**

MMF will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to these procedures. The investigating person recommends the next steps. These could be (but are not limited to):

- no further action (for example if there is insufficient information to follow up, or the report refers to incidents outside the organisation's remit);
- investigation is required to gather further information;

- immediate disciplinary action if no further information needed;
- referral to relevant authorities.

MMF will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to trustees found in breach of policy.

MMF will offer support to survivors of harm caused by trustees or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

### **Confidentiality**

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

*Agreed by Board – 9th January 2019*

*Reviewed and Agreed by Board – 9th March 2023*