

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

A) Policy Statement

Make a Melody Ltd. is committed to the safeguarding and well-being of children and vulnerable adults both in society as a whole and in our own operations and activities. We will champion and promote the safety of children and vulnerable adults above all else and expect all staff, volunteers and trustees to share this commitment and to create an open environment where everyone feels able to raise concerns, knows that concerns are listened to with a readiness to involve other agencies as necessary. As an agency working with children and vulnerable adults, Make a Melody forms part of a wider safeguarding system as described in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and we work with partners as appropriate, in accordance with our statutory responsibility, to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm.

We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children and vulnerable adults receive effective support, protection and justice. We will act promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or vulnerable adult, or about the behaviour of a child or vulnerable adult, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into abuse is necessary.

We will set best practice standards for working with children and vulnerable adults within the company's own operations and activities and will promote best practice in the wider community. We will work with all agencies including statutory, private and voluntary organisations to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. We will seek to provide a safe and welcoming environment where all children and vulnerable adults are respected and valued.

B) Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; and in line with government publications: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) (KCSIE).

C) Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is defined for statutory purposes as

“Protecting them from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health or development; ensuring that they live in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable them to have the best outcomes”.

The term **child** or **children** refers to anyone under the age of 18.

The term **vulnerable adult** refers to a person over the age of 18 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 or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Vulnerable adults may:

- Be older people
- Have mental health needs
- Have a physical disability or sensory impairment
- Have a learning disability
- Have a chronic disabling illness
- Misuse substances or alcohol
- Have dementia

D) Ethos

The company is part of a community and all those directly connected (staff, volunteers, trustees, parents, carers, other support agencies, and service users) have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. We welcome suggestions and comments that will contribute to this process.

The company recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment that will help children and vulnerable adults to feel safe, secure and respected; encourage them to talk openly; and enable them to feel confident that they will be listened to. We recognise that some children and vulnerable adults who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. We aim to provide a stable, secure and predictable element in children and vulnerable adults' lives.

E) Aims

The company will endeavour to support the welfare and safety of all people we work with through:

- Maintaining people's welfare as our paramount concern including when we develop and deliver activities
- Ensuring the content of activities includes aspects of social and emotional development
- Ensuring that we help children/vulnerable adults to stay safe by providing support that helps them to recognise when they don't feel safe and identify who they can talk to
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that children/vulnerable adults have a range of supportive adults to approach if they are in difficulties
- Ensuring all steps are taken to maintain physical safety
- Working with parents, carers and other agencies to build an understanding of the company's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children/vulnerable adults including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the company's procedures and lines of communication
- Monitoring children/vulnerable adults who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns; keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals
- Developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies
- Providing all staff, volunteers and trustees with the necessary information to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults
- Demonstrating that the company's top priority is to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and promote their welfare by consistently modelling good practice

F) Named Staff with Safeguarding Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

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G) Responsibilities

Everyone who comes into contact with children/vulnerable adults and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding. The company forms part of the wider safeguarding system.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to identify people who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff and volunteers then have a responsibility to take appropriate action as the company's policy and to support working with other services as needed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for the day to day oversight of safeguarding practice and procedures within the company. This includes:

- Acting as a consultant for staff, volunteers and trustees to discuss concerns
- Maintaining a confidential recording system
- Co-ordinating safeguarding action for individual children/vulnerable adults
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals
- Ensuring that locally established procedures are followed and making referrals as necessary
- Representing or ensuring the company is appropriately represented at inter-agency safeguarding meetings when invited to do so (including Child Protection conferences, FGCs, Case Reviews) and managing/monitoring this participation
- Organising training for all company staff, and volunteers.

The welfare and safety of young people and vulnerable adults however are the responsibility of all the company's staff and volunteers and ANY concern for a child/vulnerable adult's welfare MUST be reported to the Designated Child Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

In order to protect confidentiality, safeguarding information about individual children/vulnerable adults is shared on a need to know basis and thus, what may seem to be a minor issue to one staff member, may be highly significant to the bigger picture of risk.

H) Safeguarding Procedures

Procedure to be undertaken when risk of harm is alleged or suspected.

Suspicion or an allegation of risk of harm or abuse may arise through one of the following sources:

- An individual therapist's own observations including physical indication and/or behavioural indicators. Therapists should be aware that they may be in a position to observe indicators of harm earlier than others.
- An observation of a parent/carer/staff/volunteer about something he/she has seen or heard
- An oral report from another therapist or member of staff within the company
- A disclosure from a service user alleged abuse against him/her or another person
- A request by a service venue that the service user is observed as there is concern that they may be exhibiting behaviours or present with physical indicators

It should be noted that while some clients may be verbally articulate, the majority of clients are non-verbal and may rely on other methods to communicate their concerns. Staff must act promptly on any suspicion they have that a child or adult may be at risk of harm or abuse, as well as any disclosure or allegation made directly. If staff are in any doubt whatsoever as to whether a report of concern should be made they should consult with their line manager and/or with parents, carers, staff members or key workers in venues provided that they are not directly involved in the concern itself.

I) How to respond to Disclosure

In case a service user discloses abuse or risk of harm to a staff member or volunteer, they should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Staff will not respond except for clarification. Comments or leading questions could affect the quality of any report and indeed hinder official investigations.
- Checking out – there needs to be some initial ‘checking out’ with the person who has disclosed information to you in order to ensure his/her safety. For example, if a staff member notices a bruise on a person’s arm, it would be appropriate to ask ‘how did that happen?’ However, be careful not to start investigating.
- It is important to have understood the clear distinction between ‘checking out’ and an investigation. Staff should not begin to investigate alleged or suspected abuse by asking questions that relate to the detail, or circumstances of the alleged abuse, beyond initial listening, expressing concern and checking out.
- Stop reassure the person who is disclosing information that he/she is doing the correct thing in telling especially if that person is the child or adult affected.
- Staff cannot and will not promise to keep the information secret, but will assure the person that only those who need to know will be informed.
- Staff will record in writing (date & your report) and ensure that the information is shared with the designated person within the unit concerned and within the company at the earliest possible time (see below).
- If urgent medical/police help is required, call the emergency services.

Do

- Stay calm
- Listen and hear
- Express concern and sympathy about what has happened
- Let the person know that the information will be taken seriously and give information about what will happen next
- Ensure the safety of the person
- Be aware that medical and forensic evidence might be needed
- Act without delay

Do not

- Stop someone disclosing to you
- Promise to keep secrets
- Press the person for more details or make them repeat the story
- Gossip about the disclosure or pass on the information to anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Attempt to investigate yourself
- Leave details of your concerns on a voicemail or by e-mail. If necessary, you should state that you need to speak to someone urgently about a report of concern.

There may be emergency situations where it is appropriate to contact the police immediately. This should be the responsibility of the service venue, but the company staff should check that they have been contacted. Should the emergency occur in someone’s house or home this will become the therapists responsibility if the parents/carer’s are directly involved in suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm. In this case, the company staff must contact the company’s designated officer as soon as possible. Whatever the circumstances of the concern, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, it is vital that the staff member records the details on reports to the designated officer in the service venue and within the company without delay. It is essential that all concerns, disclosures, allegations and suspicions are recorded on the company’s proforma Report of Concern, and records kept in the clients clinical file.

J) Recording and Reporting Concerns Guidance

- An accurate record should be made in the clinical notes of the date and time that the member of staff or volunteer became aware of the concerns, the parties who were involved, and any action taken, for example, if first aid was administered any questions that staff or volunteers ask in ‘checking out’ the concerns should also be recorded verbatim.
- The record should be clear and factual, since any information you have may be valuable to professionals investigating the incident and may at some time in the future be used as evidence in court. This kind of information please be kept in a secure place and shared only with those who need to know about the concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- It is also good practise for staff to record in the clinical notes the fact that they made a report, on what date and to whom the report was made.

K) Procedures to be undertaken when reporting concerns

Designated Person

As stated above, any concern, suspicion, allegation or disclosure should be brought to the designated member of staff in the unit concerned (unless this person is the subject of a complaint), as this facility holds the primary duty of care, and also to the designated officer in the company. Should the concern arise during a home visit the matter should be brought directly to the designated officer in the company immediately.

The Report of Concern procedure is as follows:

- Concerns or suspicions are reported to the designated person in a service venue and to the designated person in the company.
- On a home visit, concerns or suspicions are reported to the designated person in the company.
- details are to be written down as soon as possible. As standard Report of Concern form is available to assist in this. This is to be given to the designated person at the company.
- The confidential report of concern form will be kept by the designated person at the company, and they will contact the unit and agencies with a statutory function for investigation.
- Within two days, the music therapy manager will acknowledge, in writing, the receipt of the report. A copy will be kept on file
- Within two weeks of the receipt of their initial report, the music therapy manager will report in writing as to the proposed steps to be taken. A copy will be kept on file.
- Within one month of the receipt of the initial report, the music therapy manager will report in writing as to the steps that have been taken. A copy will be kept on file.
- If such community not received from the music therapy manager, the original signatory should make renewed contact. This is to be recorded.
- If the original signatory is not satisfied with what has been done, he or she has the right to take their complaint directly to one of the statutory agencies. All therapists have full details of the local community Health and Social Services Trusts.

L) Procedures to be undertaken by a member of staff within the company if a complain is made against him/her

- The member of staff is required to report the allegation without delay to the music therapy manager.
- The music therapy manager will produce a written report of the alleged incident for the chief executive officer.
- in the case of a formal allegation against a member of staff, the chief executive officer will decide whether the staff member should be suspended with pay as a precautionary measure. this will not be, and depending on the circumstances of the case, some preliminary investigation by social services and/or the police may be necessary before our decision will be properly taken to suspend, even as a precautionary measure. The section concerning gross misconduct, should be read in conjunction with this policy.
- the member of staff concerned will be advised in writing of the nature of the allegation and the chief executive officers decision and the reason for any precautionary suspension and will be advised to seek professional help before making any form of response. The right of the member of staff to consult with your representative will always be respected.
- the person making the complaint will be informed immediately, in writing, of the decision of the company.
- the company will then other appropriate and in association with the relevant statutory agencies, take forward the investigation of the alleged incident.
- the company has the responsibility to monitor and review the above procedures.

Staff members who fail to comply with this policy will be subject to the company's disciplinary procedure.