



Safeguarding Policy

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1. Policy Statement

The Sandcastle Trust is a charity that works towards improving the lives of families affected by rare genetic conditions. It provides special day trips, short holidays and respite breaks to affected families to help them escape, for a short time, the emotional, physical and financial strains of their daily lives and build lasting family memories. Given the nature of our work and the way in which the support provision is delivered to families, it is highly unlikely that any member of staff, trustee or volunteer would have direct and unsupervised contact with a child [1] or vulnerable adult [2], but we recognise our responsibility for promoting best practice with regards to safeguarding [3].

- a) The Sandcastle Trust's safeguarding policy is our commitment to ensuring that all individuals accessing our support and services are treated with dignity and respect, have their choice respected and not be forced to do anything against their will.
- b) This policy applies to all children and vulnerable adults regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.
- c) This policy applies to all Sandcastle Trust staff, trustees and volunteers.
- d) Charity Trustees are responsible [3] for ensuring that those benefiting from or working with their charity are not harmed in any way through contact with it. This policy has been approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees.
- e) An audit of safeguarding concerns, action taken and staff training and support will be conducted annually and safeguarding policy and procedures will be reviewed every three years or in the light of significant changes to best practice or legislation.

The Sandcastle Trust is committed to practices that protect children and vulnerable adults from harm and this Safeguarding Policy outlines how The Sandcastle Trust deals with child and vulnerable adult protection issues and is intended to safeguard the children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with The Sandcastle Trust's staff, trustees and volunteers.

For The Sandcastle Trust this means we will endeavour to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:

- Ensuring all Sandcastle Trust staff and volunteers are subject to careful **safe recruitment** and selection.
- Ensuring **safe environments**, ensuring services are provided in safe environments and that sufficient safeguards are in place.
- Raising awareness of how and when to **signpost vulnerable adults** to appropriate services.



- Raising awareness of **child and adult protection** situations, and our procedures for identifying and reporting concerns or suspected cases.
- Building a **culture** that values and respects all children and vulnerable adults and modelling appropriate conduct in line with our values.
- Setting out clear **roles and responsibilities** for safeguarding

2. Definitions

[1] **Child**

This policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18.

[2] **Vulnerable adult**

For the purpose of this policy a vulnerable adult is defined as

“anyone 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 is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself or is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation” *No Secrets*, DOH (2000).

People who may be included in a definition of a Vulnerable Adult:

- People with learning disability
- People with physical disabilities
- People with sensory impairment
- People with mental health needs including dementia
- People who misuse substances of alcohol
- People who are physically ill or mentally frail

Service users outside these definitions may also be vulnerable due to low self-esteem, social exclusion, offending history, homelessness, domestic abuse, ethnicity, immigration status etc.

[3] **Safeguarding**

The term ‘safeguarding’ refers to inward facing procedures such as awareness raising, reporting concerns, responding appropriately to issues of abuse and exploitation and preventing harm through sound recruitment and safe programming. (*Charity Commission’s Strategy for dealing with safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities*, April 2012)



[3] **Trustee responsibilities**

Trustees of charities which work with children and vulnerable adults have a duty of care to their charity which will include taking the necessary steps to safeguard and take responsibility for those children and vulnerable adults. They must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them. Trustees also have duties to manage risk and to protect the reputation and assets of the charity. [*Charity Commission's Strategy for dealing with safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities*, April 2012]

3. Recruitment, Selection and HR

For all posts at The Sandcastle Trust the following vetting checks are carried out prior to confirming the appointment:

- A Self Disclosure form to disclose previous spent/unspent convictions and disciplinary or capability procedures.
- Identity documents including photographic identity.
- Proof of right to work in the UK.
- References including a professional reference using a pro-forma template.
- Qualification certificates if required for the role.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check if eligible. All appointments to posts involving direct work with children and/or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS, and agreement to re-check every 3 years.

Volunteers and freelance consultants pose the same level of risk to service users as paid staff. Vetting checks include:

- A self-disclosure form to disclose previous spent/unspent convictions.
- References including a professional reference using a pro-forma template.
- DBS check if eligible. All volunteers and freelance consultants working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS, and agreement to re-check every 3 years.

The Sandcastle Trust's Induction Policy ensures a thorough induction for new staff, trustees and volunteers into the organisation. As part of Induction, new staff, trustees and volunteers must read The Safeguarding Policy (and sign the "**Statement of Commitment**" Form Annex 4) as well as other key policies, including the **Data Protection** and **Confidentiality** policies, and understand their personal responsibilities within these, and that any training needs are identified and addressed.

4. Safe environments

a) **Safe Environments**



Given the nature of The Sandcastle Trust's work and the way in which the support provision is delivered to affected families, it is highly unlikely that any member of staff, trustee or volunteer would have direct and unsupervised contact with a child or vulnerable adult. However, should this position change The Sandcastle Trust will ensure that all environments where services or activities are delivered will not cause harm to vulnerable adults or children. As well as ensuring that suitable staff deliver the activities, all service delivery environments will be assessed in line with The Sandcastle Trust's [Health and Safety Policy](#).

b) The Media, Marketing and Communications

Case studies are frequently used to support and illustrate the issues faced by families affected by rare genetic conditions. Images, stories and communications of children or vulnerable adults in The Sandcastle Trust's, marketing fundraising and public communications (print, broadcast or electronic materials) should comply with the following:

- In images children or vulnerable adults should be appropriately clothed and not depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative
- Images and written materials must not include details that could be used to identify a specific child and/or their location as this could cause them to be put at risk.

The Sandcastle Trust's [Use of Images Policy and Consent Form](#) for use of photographs ensures informed consent is given before images can be used.

4. Signposting Vulnerable Adults

A number of staff, trustees and volunteers come into contact with parents by phone or face to face and some staff, trustees and volunteers may come into contact with parents via online forums, social media and other written communication.

Some of these parents may be particularly vulnerable, have additional needs, be experiencing distress or have mental health issues. For the majority of these adults their situation will not be of a nature that requires a member of staff, trustee or volunteer to report a concern. However The Sandcastle Trust believes it is important to recognise the vulnerability of these adults. The Sandcastle Trust does not have appropriate expertise to deal directly with these issues although our intervention may be helpful, nor do we provide counselling support, so it is vital that staff, trustees and volunteers understand how to identify signs and signpost effectively.

The Sandcastle Trust will support staff, trustees and volunteers to recognise the signs of distress, to handle this and their own reactions, and to signpost service users to services that can provide support.



The Sandcastle Trust will provide up to date signposting information for use by staff, trustees and volunteers which details organisations that can be contacted to support families affected by rare genetic conditions.

The Safeguarding Officer will ensure that signposting information is updated regularly.

5. **Child and Adult Protection**

a) Contact with children

Due to the nature of support offered by The Sandcastle Trust staff, trustees, volunteers and are not likely to be alone with a child face to face in situations but they may provide telephone or online services on a one to one basis. Staff, trustees and volunteers will also sometimes observe directly, infer from statements made or hear information that raises concerns about a child's welfare.

b) Contact with vulnerable adults

The Sandcastle Trust has contact with parents online, over the telephone and in writing. These situations include;

- Telephone enquiries and conversations to arrange short breaks or day trips
- Email enquiries and correspondence to arrange short breaks or day trips
- Research interviews
- Case study interviews
- Online – forums, online advice, website enquiry form and other social media

c) Awareness of The Sandcastle Trust's policies

All staff, trustees and volunteers are required to read The Sandcastle Trust's Safeguarding Policy to know their responsibilities in their role and to provide signed confirmation via the **Statement of Commitment Form Annex 3**. At present no staff, trustees or volunteers work directly with children or vulnerable adults in the course of the day to day operation of the charity but should this become the case then they should receive additional training to identify signs of abuse and know how to report concerns.

d) Alert to the signs of abuse

Our role in protecting children and vulnerable adults is to pick up cues that the child or adult may need protecting and pass this information to those who can assess the situation and act when required. Staff, trustees and volunteers are required to be aware of the different types and signs of abuse and the circumstances in which it can occur (see **Guidance: Recognising Abuse Annex 1**).



e) Aware of duty to report concerns

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately (this may require a referral to children's services and / or in emergencies, the Police). Staff, trustees and volunteers have a duty to report concerns in line with The Sandcastle Trust's procedures. Failure to comply with these responsibilities will be seen as a serious matter which may lead to disciplinary action.

f) Confidentiality

Recognising that "the welfare of the child is paramount" Children's Act 1989, considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. The Sandcastle Trust therefore requires staff, trustees and volunteers to act in any situation in which a child or vulnerable adult is at risk.

While all staff, trustees and volunteers should be open to the possible abuse of vulnerable adults in all situations, we envisage that there will be very few instances where staff, trustees or volunteers will need to report adult protection concerns. The situations where this is most likely to happen and where staff, trustees or volunteers will be expected to act are

- An adult has been assessed as being at high risk of suicide (see [Guidance: Acting on Safeguarding Concerns Annex 2](#))
- There is a significant risk that the adult will be seriously physically harm another person.

In respect of vulnerable adults all action, including referrals to Social Services and the police, must be subject to the consent of the service user. In every situation it will be assumed that a person can make their own decisions and action will only be taken in the absence of consent from the service user where;

- They or others are in physical danger.
- After seeking advice from an appropriate agency you have been advised to report the concern as it is believed that the vulnerable adult is unable/incapable of making an informed decision for himself or herself.

Staff, trustees and volunteers should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to anyone wishing to tell them about something serious.

g) Aware of how and when to take action



Staff should follow **Guidance: Acting on Safeguarding Concerns Annex 2** to help them assess the risk of harm and take action if required.

All incidents should be recorded on the **Recording Form Annex 3** and emailed to the Safeguarding Officer and copied to the Chair of Trustees. This form will be stored securely in compliance with relevant legislation.

Allegations of abuse or concerns raised against members of staff, trustees or volunteers will always be treated seriously. Where there is an allegation against a member of staff, trustee or volunteer the Safeguarding Officer and Chair of Trustees should be informed and a disciplinary investigation will be carried out. There may also be criminal (police) investigations.

6. Culture

a) Staff

Staff, trustees and volunteers are encouraged in line with The Sandcastle Trust's **Equality and Diversity Policy** to value diversity and respect the contribution of each individual.

b) Facebook

The Sandcastle Trust works to ensure that our Facebook page is a safe and supportive place where families affected by rare genetic conditions feel comfortable to express themselves and share their experiences.

While we encourage lively debate, we do not tolerate behaviour which makes other users feel uneasy or unable to contribute to the page. As such, we reserve the right to remove posts which are aggressive in tone, abusive towards other users or disruptive to how the forum or page operates. Racist, sexist, homophobic or bullying posts will be removed without delay. This is common practice and corresponds with Facebook's terms and conditions.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and Child Protection Responsibilities are set out as follows:

- a) Trustees are accountable for The Sandcastle Trust and therefore all safeguarding within the organisation and will receive annual reports on safeguarding.
- b) The Safeguarding Officer provides advice and support to staff unsure about how to proceed with a particular case, and take line management responsibility for the safe



delivery, quality and effectiveness of their services. They will also be responsible for assessing at the start of a project whether there are Local Adult Safeguarding Board procedures that should take precedence over The Sandcastle Trust's procedures where there are significant differences.

- c) The Safeguarding Officer will stay abreast of developments on safeguarding best practice, advise on changes to policy and practice and coordinate Safeguarding audits and reporting.
- d) The name and contact details of the Safeguarding Officer and their role description is set out in [Guidance: Recognising Abuse Annex 1](#).

8. Related Policies and Resources

This policy relates to measures in a range of other Sandcastle Trust policies that have been referred to and highlighted throughout this policy. Where relevant they have been annexed to the document.



ANNEX 1

GUIDANCE: RECOGNISING ABUSE

Types of Abuse

1. Children

Physical abuse: hurting or injuring a child, such as hitting, slapping, shaking, scalding, or suffocating. Physical abuse also includes giving a child harmful substances, such as drugs, alcohol or poison,

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It does not necessarily involve violence and the child may or may not be aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse includes grooming a child with the intention of sexually abusing them : all forms of penetrative and non-penetrative sex; the making, looking at and distributing indecent images of a child. Sexual exploitation is part of sexual abuse and involves the commercial sexual exploitation of children (in transactional sex) or manipulation or enticement of children to engage in sexual activities in return for gifts, money, food, affection or favour. It is a form of abuse which is often misunderstood by victims and outsiders as consensual. A child/family may believe it is a loving/consensual relationship but no child under the age of 18 can ever consent to being abused or exploited.

Emotional abuse: is persistent over time and can include verbally abusing a child, rejecting a child, humiliating them, making them feel worthless, inadequate or frightened. It also includes seeing or hearing abuse of others e. g. witnessing domestic violence is regarded as a form of emotional abuse. Some form of emotional abuse is part of any maltreatment but it may occur alone.

Neglect: the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and/or medical attention. It is failing to ensure a child is protected from physical or emotional harm and danger.

2. Adults

Physical abuse: unexplained falls or major injuries, injury/bruises at different stages of healing, bruising in unusual sites, e.g. inner arms, abrasions, teeth indentations, injuries to head or face, very passive.

Psychological abuse: withdrawal, depression, cowering and fearfulness, agitation, confusion, changes in behaviour, obsequious willingness to please, no self-esteem, fear, anger.



Domestic abuse: bruises, black eyes, painful limbs, make up covering bruises, damaged clothes or accessories, patient “walking on eggshells” if partner around, partner belittling or putting down, partner acting excessively jealously or possessively, limited access to money, phone, car etc.

Awareness and Indicators of Abuse

There are various ways in which you may become aware of, or have concerns about actual or potential abuse of a child or vulnerable adult.

- a) A child or vulnerable adult may tell you.
- b) Someone else may tell you.
- c) A child or vulnerable shows signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation or injuries happen repeatedly. Regular unkempt appearance, loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- d) A child or vulnerable adult's behaviour may indicate to you that he or she is being harmed or abused. For example, nervous, mistrustful or fearful of others perhaps reluctant to be with certain people or places; sudden behaviour changes; noticeable aggressive withdrawn from social group or inability to make friends; lack of confidence hinting at secrets.
- e) Use of sexual explicit language or sexualised behaviour/games towards others.
- f) Something in the way that another person relates to a children or vulnerable adults concerns you. This could include:
 - Inappropriate petting or fondling.
 - Inappropriate physical contact
 - Sexually explicit behaviour
 - Suspicious behaviour in changing areas, cubicles or toilet areas or otherwise seem to seek out time alone with children or vulnerable adults.
 - Causing distress to children or vulnerable adults.
 - Use of inappropriate language in the presence of children or vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding Officer

The following person is the The Sandcastle Trust’s designated Safeguarding Officer. Any concerns about child or vulnerable adult protection issues or welfare should be directed to them in the first instance using the details below:

Lesley Dodd, Trustee

The Sandcastle Trust, PO Box 873, Haywards Heath, RH16 9QL

Tel: 07930 933 062

Email: info@sandcastletrust.org



ANNEX 2

GUIDANCE: ACTING ON SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If you have a concern about the safety of a child or vulnerable adult you should: use the Reporting Form with the information you have available and send to the Safeguarding Officer. They will ask you for more information should they need it.



ANNEX 3

CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING FORM

What is this form for?

To report a concern or disclosure of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult. The concern can be from something you have seen or have been told, either directly by the child or vulnerable adult or by another person.

Who should complete this form?

Anyone with a concern. All Sandcastle Trust employees, trustees or volunteers have an obligation under The Safeguarding Policy to report any concern or disclosure of a child or vulnerable adult suffering physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect or sexual exploitation through to The Sandcastle Trust's Safeguarding Officer. You do not need permission before completing this form but you can speak to the Safeguarding Officer if you are not sure.

When should it be used?

As soon as possible but within 24 hours of the incident/conversation that has given you cause for concern. Reporting is not investigation and you are not required to verify allegations or seek more information before using this form. This form will help others make decisions about what should be done. Just complete what information you can.

Who should this form be sent to?

The Sandcastle Trust's Safeguarding Officer. Please put in a sealed envelope marked confidential or write confidential in the message subject line if e- mail.

1. Child's Details

Full Name or "nicknames":

Age :

Gender :

Any Disability:

Address or location:

Family/household members:

School:

Religion:

Does the child appear to be in situation of immediate danger or harm?:

Does the child appear to have immediate medical needs?:



2. Informant's Details

If this concern has arisen from information told to you by another person (i. e. Not the child) then please give details of that person here:

Name:

Contact details:

In what context do they know the child? e. g. Family member, worker, community member etc:

3. Nature of Concern/Abuse

Please write clearly what you have seen or been told that has given you cause for concern. If this information came from the child please use their words where possible.

Dates and places where incidents took place.

What people were present and what were they doing?

Are there any physical signs of abuse seen or reported to you?

What did you observe about the child's behaviour, or changes in the child's behaviour if you have met them more than once.

4. Alleged perpetrator's details

Name:

Relationship to child:

Organisation & Job Title/Role:

Any other identifying information:



5. Advice or Actions Taken

What did you say would happen next to the child or person reporting this to you?

Who else knows about this situation?

Who else have you discussed it with?

What actions have already been taken?

Name and Details of Person making this report

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Job title/role/connection with The Sandcastle Trust:

Date of this report:

Signature:



ANNEX 4

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

I have read and understood The Sandcastle Trust’s Safeguarding Policy and the guidance contained within it. I agree with the principles contained in the Policy and undertake to comply fully with its requirements while working/associated with The Sandcastle Trust. I accept that I am subject to policies and procedures outlined in the Policy document and shall be bound by them.

.....

Print Name

.....

Job title/role/connection to The Sandcastle Trust

.....

Signature

.....

Date