

# Godalming Theatre Group

## Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure

Approved date:	January 2024
Review due date:	January 2025

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out GTG's policy and procedures to ensure a safe environment for children and adults at risk.
- 1.2. This policy aims to ensure children and adults at risk, and all those who work with them, are safe and supported within the group and when participating in its organised activities.
- 1.3. GTG believes all individuals have a right to engage in all its activities within a safe environment and is committed to protecting children and adults at risk from harm. GTG is not however 'in loco parentis' (in the place of the parent) and cannot accept the responsibilities of a guardian to any member of its community.
- 1.4. GTG also recognises its responsibilities to protect creatives, performers, contractors, committee members, consultants and volunteers against unfounded allegations of abuse.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all GTG trustees, officers, members, volunteers, and visitors. It applies to all activities involving contact with children or adults at risk, including where those activities are delivered virtually via an online environment.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1. "Children" are people under the age of 18 years.
- 3.2. The term 'adult at risk' is used in this policy in place of 'vulnerable adult'. We use 'adult at risk' as a replacement for 'vulnerable adult', as 'adult at risk' is used throughout existing government [guidance](#).
- 3.3. 'Adults at risk' are people aged 18 years or over, who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who are or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
- 3.4. Abuse is a violation of an individual's rights through the inflicting of harm or, through omission resulting in harm. Types of abuse are defined in **Appendix B**.
- 3.5. Neglect / Self-Neglect is the persisting failure to meet an individual's basic physical or psychological needs. This includes failure to provide access to appropriate healthcare, support, or educational services; the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, nutrition, and heating.
- 3.6. 'Creatives' refers to the Director, Assistant Director, Production Manager,

Production Assistant, Choreographer, Musical Director, Stage Manager and any other person undertaking a named role in the rehearsal and production phases of a production

## **Policy statement**

GTG safeguards children and adults at risk in the following ways:

- 3.7. By seeking to make GTG safe and welcoming for all. A balanced relationship based on mutual trust will be built which empowers the children to share in the decision making process.
- 3.8. By ensuring that enthusiastic and constructive feedback will be given rather than negative criticism and that bullying will not be accepted or condoned.
- 3.9. By ensuring that all adult members of GTG provide a positive role model for dealing with other people and that action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- 3.10. By prioritising, specifically, the welfare and protection of children and adults at risk.
- 3.11. By nominating key people with specific responsibilities regarding safeguarding (see section 5).
- 3.12. By giving creatives information, training and guidance about how to recognise potential abuse, how to respond appropriately and report it, and by making creatives aware that they have a responsibility to report any concerns they are aware of regarding a safeguarding matter to the appropriate person (see sections 5, 9 and 10).
- 3.13. By providing an outline of safeguarding measures and procedures and the start of the rehearsal period and at the start of the period in the venue.
- 3.14. By adopting a broad approach to its safeguarding responsibilities which encompasses well-recognised forms of abuse (see Appendix B).
- 3.15. By ensuring all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously, investigated and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- 3.16. By consulting potential victims of abuse and, where possible and appropriate, taking their views into account as part of deciding an appropriate course of action.
- 3.17. By sharing information appropriately, working in partnership with relevant agencies, and ensuring that all parties recognise their responsibilities to each other, including acting upon them and accepting collective responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.18. By ensuring that all creatives adhere to this policy and that all committee members ensure that the policy is an integral part of induction and training. This includes emailing a copy of this policy and the rehearsal and production procedures to all cast, creatives, parents/guardians and volunteers at the start of the rehearsal period and as the show moves to the venue,
- 3.19. By ensuring that the Designated Safeguarding Lead attends regular training. Creatives working closely with adults at risk and children should also have regular training. Mandatory online safeguarding training will be available for all creatives to complete every two years.

## **4. General good practice for creatives**

- 4.1. Everyone at GTG shares a responsibility for making GTG a safe and secure environment for all its members and visitors.
- 4.2. Safeguarding over-rides confidentiality, data protection, internal hierarchies and other objectives. Creatives should not collude with a parent, a child, or another creative member to keep concerns secret in areas of safeguarding.

- 4.3. All creatives who are involved in a show which includes adults at risk or children will be vetted by an enhanced DBS check before the start of the rehearsal period and are obliged to notify GTG of any subsequent criminal convictions that may impact upon their future work with GTG.
- 4.4. GTG considers that intimate or sexual relationships between creatives and children under the age of 18 or who are adults at risk to be an abuse of trust, and notes that such relationships may also constitute a criminal offence.
- 4.5. One-to-one meetings with children under the age of 18 or adults at risk, or other meetings outside the normal rehearsal / production environment, should be conducted with due regard to the potential sensitivity of the situation. Ideally meetings should be conducted in an area where at least one other member of the creative team is present, including online meetings and auditions.
- 4.6. Unnecessary physical contact with children or adults at risk should be avoided. Whilst these gestures may be well intentioned, such acts are sometimes not welcomed by the recipient or misinterpreted by third parties.
- 4.7. Chaperones may support children to get changed, being aware that informed consent should be sought at all times.
- 4.8. Creatives administering first aid should ensure, wherever possible, that another member of creatives is present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued. However, creatives should not hesitate to issue first aid in an emergency.
- 4.9. Care should be exercised in the use of language. For example, unnecessary comments which have or could be interpreted as having an inappropriate sexual connotation should be avoided.
- 4.10. The personal telephone number, personal email or home address of any creative should not be given to children or adults at risk and vice-versa
- 4.11. There will be occasions when children and adults at risk are placed in settings outside of their normal place of rehearsal and performance (e.g. a concert or promotional event). Organisers must ensure that appropriate DBS checks have been made, risk assessments are conducted, and procedures are in place to protect children and adults at risk from harm.
- 4.12. In the case of any child or adult at risk making a disclosure of abuse or where there is cause for concern, explain to them that this information will have to be reported and follow the advice in Section 10 of this policy. Do not attempt to resolve any concerns alone and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- 4.13. If a creative feels that they, or other members of GTG, may be at risk from being the subject of or exposed to unwarranted accusations in connection with children or adults at risk, they should alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead through as detailed in Section 5
- 4.14. There will be a monitored email address, reports to which will, if necessary, result in the invocation of this policy and procedure. Any individual can contact [chair@godalmingtheatregroup.co.uk](mailto:chair@godalmingtheatregroup.co.uk) to raise a safeguarding concern.

## DETAILED PROCEDURES

### 5. Safeguarding Roles & Responsibilities

#### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

One of the GTG committee members will be appointed to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will undertake specific DSL training, which is renewed every two years.

<p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To receive reports of welfare concerns for children or adults at risk.</li> <li>• To investigate allegations of abuse or non-compliance occurring on GTG premises or involving GTG creatives, performers, contractors, committee members, consultants and volunteers.</li> <li>• To ensure this policy and procedure is adhered to</li> <li>• To make adult and child safeguarding referrals to relevant agencies as appropriate.</li> <li>• <b>GTG's Designated Safeguarding Lead is Peter Flew, and he can be contacted on 07798 616114 or <a href="mailto:safeguarding@godalmingtheatregroup.co.uk">safeguarding@godalmingtheatregroup.co.uk</a></b></li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>Production creatives</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that all aspects of the production are compliant with this Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.</li> <li>• To ensure all performers and volunteers are aware of this Policy,</li> <li>• To ensure adequate risk assessments are undertaken.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organisers of activities involving children or adults at risk</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that all aspects of the activity are compliant with this Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.</li> <li>• To ensure creatives are DBS checked as appropriate and in compliance with this Policy,</li> <li>• To ensure adequate risk assessments are undertaken.</li> </ul>
<p><b>All creatives, performers, contractors, committee members, consultants and volunteers</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To report any concerns for the welfare of children and/or adults at risk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Visitors</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All visitors who bring children or adults at risk to GTG activities (unless to participate in a GTG organised activity) are not relieved of their duty of care on GTG premises.</li> </ul>

## 6. Safeguarding for children and adults at risk

### 6.1. Discrimination

GTG does not discriminate on the basis of any of the protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010, for example, age or disability and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure children and adults at risk can undertake GTG activities.

### 6.2. Sexual relationships

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for a person to engage in a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18 when they are in a position of trust with that person. GTG will report any allegations of such an offence to the police. At GTG, all creatives are considered to be in a position of trust for this purpose.

### 6.3. Use of IT facilities

GTG's 'Conditions of Use of Communications and IT Facilities' prohibit their use to access, store or distribute material which is offensive, obscene, indecent, discriminatory, or harassing. Any individual found to have breached GTG's conditions and accessed such material will be subject to further investigation under this or another GTG policy or procedure, and may be reported to the police.

## **6.4. Insurance**

GTG's insurance covers most of the risks likely to be involved in activities involving children. However, specific activity and event organisers should contact the GTG Treasurer for confirmation that their activities are appropriately covered.

## **6.5. Photography and film**

Written consent to take and use images of children should be obtained prior to the taking of photographs and/or video footage. Parents/guardians must be made aware of when, where and how the images may be used and their intended audiences in order that they can give informed consent.

## **7. Recruitment, vetting and training of creatives**

- 7.1. GTG takes all appropriate steps to safeguard children or adults at risk and ensure that creatives are recruited using a safer recruitment approach, including the following:
- creatives complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with barred list check.
  - creatives provide a CV which ensures that there are no unexplained career gaps
- 7.2. GTG complies with its ongoing duty to notify DBS with any relevant information regarding the conduct of any individual which GTG considers having caused harm or posing a risk of harm to groups at risk.

### **7.3. Creatives duty to notify**

All creatives engaged in Regulated Activity undergo compulsory DBS checks, and are obliged to notify GTG of any post-employment criminal convictions that may impact upon their future employment with GTG. If creatives are found to be in breach of this obligation, disciplinary action may be taken with potential sanctions including dismissal from their role.

### **7.4. Training & Support**

- GTG provides a copy of this policy and procedure in induction packs for all new creatives.
- GTG provides training, including regarding child and adults at risk protection and health & safety guidance, to all relevant creatives, students, apprentices and volunteers upon appointment.
- Safeguarding training for all creatives is mandatory, including updates every two years.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead offers advice on request.

## **8. Recognising potential abuse or neglect**

There are a number of ways in which abuse of a child or adults at risk can become apparent:

- A child or adult at risk discloses abuse or neglect.
- A third party discloses that a child or adult at risk has told them that abuse or neglect is taking place.
- A child or adult at risk shows signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child or adult at risk's behaviour leads to suspicion that they are being, or has been, abused or neglected.
- A creative's behaviour in the way in which they relate to a child or adult at risk causes concern.

## 9. Responding to safeguarding concerns

- 9.1. GTG will respond in an appropriate, proportionate and timely way to suspicions or allegations of abuse and neglect.
- 9.2. If creatives, in the course of their work at GTG, have a safeguarding issue brought to their notice, or observe an instance of abuse or neglect themselves, or have cause for concern, they must treat this as a priority and address the issue immediately. All members of GTG have a duty to raise concerns, without prejudice to their own position, about behaviour by creatives, performers, contractors, committee members, consultants or volunteers. Creatives, other than the designated safeguarding leads, should recognise that it is their duty to inform but not to investigate.
- 9.3. Creatives are required to report any incident of abuse or cause for concern which arises in the course of their work with children and adults at risk. This must be done immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. The following list gives examples of incidents which are required to be reported. It is not exhaustive:
  - 9.3.1. A child or adults at risk is accidentally hurt.
  - 9.3.2. There is concern that a relationship is developing which may be an abuse of trust whereby there is a risk of a child or adult at risk being taken advantage of or abused/neglected.
  - 9.3.3. A creative is worried that a child or adult at risk is becoming attracted to them or a colleague; or a creative is becoming attracted to someone in their care.
  - 9.3.4. A child or adult at risk displays inappropriate sexually explicit behaviour or sexual awareness.
  - 9.3.5. A creative believes a child or adult at risk has misinterpreted or misunderstood something that has happened or something that a colleague has done.
  - 9.3.6. A creatives notices any suspicious marks on a child or adult at risk or receives a report/hears of an allegation of abuse from a child or adult at risk regarding events outside GTG.
  - 9.3.7. A creative, or other person, has had to use reasonable physical restraint to prevent a child or adult at risk harming themselves or another, or from causing significant damage to property.
  - 9.3.8. There is suspicion, or an allegation is made, of abuse.
- 9.4. If there is an immediate risk of significant harm and emergency medical treatment is required, security or 999 should be contacted urgently.
- 9.5. Any suspicions or allegations should be reported to a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will investigate the matter and determine an appropriate course of action, including contacting external authorities where this is indicated.
- 9.6. Disclosing abuse is difficult for variety of reasons. Some children and adults at risk do not disclose because they feel they will not be believed or be taken seriously. It is very important that creatives actively listen and respond sensitively. Creating a safe space to talk is crucial in breaking down barriers to disclosure.

DO	DO NOT
Stay calm	Panic or delay
Recognise your feelings, but keep them to yourself	Over-react

Use language that the person can understand	Use jargon or express opinions
Reassure the person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they have done the right thing telling you</li> <li>• they are not to blame</li> <li>• you believe they are telling the truth</li> </ul>	Probe deeply for information  Use leading questions
Listen carefully, record what the person says and keep these notes	Make them repeat the story
Explain what you will do next (i.e. tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead in a simple and clear way)	Promise unconditional confidentiality
Follow the procedure outlined in informing a Designated Safeguarding Lead, and seek advice and support for yourself	Approach the person against whom the allegation has been made or discuss the disclosure with anyone other than a Designated Safeguarding Lead

- 9.7. The procedure below must be followed whenever an allegation is made that a child or adult at risk has been abused or there is a suspicion that this may have occurred, whatever your personal feelings.
- 9.8. The procedure below must also be followed if allegations or suspicions of abuse are made against a creative at rehearsal or in a private capacity; against someone not directly connected to GTG; against another child or adult at risk; or if the suspected or alleged abuse is taking place outside GTG.
- 9.9. Creatives, performers, contractors, committee members, consultants or volunteers should also follow the procedure below for any suspected or alleged abuse, even if it appears insignificant. There may be other undisclosed aspects of abuse which, when considered together, may add up to a more serious concern.

## 10. Procedure

- 10.1. Make a detailed written record of the matter and report it without delay to a Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 10.2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will investigate the matter, consulting with external agencies as appropriate.
- 10.3. If a creative feels that they or other members of GTG may be at risk from being the subject of or exposed to accusations in connection with children or adults at risk, they should immediately alert the chair [chair@godalmingtheatregroup.co.uk](mailto:chair@godalmingtheatregroup.co.uk).
- 10.4. If an allegation is raised against a creative or cast or volunteer member they may be informed of the allegation, on the advice of the Local Authority and/or Police, and may be removed from contact with children and adults at risk.
- 10.5. Any internal disciplinary action arising from an investigation will be handled in accordance with the GTG complaints process.
- 10.6. If the matter is the subject of a criminal investigation or child protection services:
  - GTG is entitled to pursue its own or complementary confidential enquiries and disciplinary action and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult with the relevant agencies in such cases.
  - Following an investigation, disciplinary action may be taken as appropriate.
- 10.7. Information is shared and discussed between creatives and relevant agencies on a need-to-act basis only.
- 10.8. The written record of the matter will be retained by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **11. Compliance with these procedures**

- 11.1. GTG expects creatives and all those contributing to its activities to follow the requirements of this policy and procedure and to promote a safe environment in which the welfare of children and adults at risk is protected and promoted.
- 11.2. Failure to follow this policy and procedure may not constitute abuse but is nonetheless a matter of concern for GTG and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 11.3. If creatives, performers, contractors, committee members, consultants or volunteers are concerned that the guidance and procedures are not being followed, they should raise it with a Designated Safeguarding Lead. If they are not satisfied with the actions of the performers, contractors, committee members, consultants or volunteers they can raise their concern with the police or social services.



## Appendix A: Underpinning Legislative Framework

The guidance and legislative framework that underpins this document includes:

- Children Act 1989, 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding 2011
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage 2014
- Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation 2016
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

## Appendix B: Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

### Child Safeguarding

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take a number of forms, which are not mutually exclusive. It can include direct ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development through neglect. Children may be abused in a family or in an group or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. For the purposes of safeguarding children, there are four categories of abuse: physical; sexual; neglect; emotional.

Creatives, students, apprentices and volunteers should seek advice on and/or report any suspected or alleged abuse, even if it appears insignificant. There may be other undisclosed aspects of abuse which, when considered together, may add up to a more serious concern.

### Adult Safeguarding

Safeguarding adults means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to both prevent and responding to risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure the adult's wellbeing is promoted, including where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding any action. Safeguarding adults at risk involves reducing or preventing the risk of significant harm in relation to neglect or abuse, while also supporting people to maintain control of their own lives.

### Physical abuse

Hitting, pushing, scalding, hair pulling, shaking, pinching, kicking, misuse of medicines, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

*Indicators of physical abuse (non-accidental injuries):*

Injuries in unusual positions (i.e. back, buttocks, behind ears, genitals etc); injuries inconsistent with the age, ability or lifestyle of the person; apparent finger marks, slap marks, bite marks, burns and fractures on the body, etc.

### **Sexual abuse**

Rape and sexual assault, sexual acts to which the adult has not consented, or could not consent, or was pressured into consenting.

#### *Indicators of sexual abuse:*

Detailed sexual knowledge inappropriate to the age of the child; sexually explicit language and behaviour; increased frequency of visits to the toilet and bed wetting; behaviour that is excessively affectionate or sexual towards others; pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, indecent assault, loss of sleep; fear of medical examinations and being alone.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, bullying, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or being prevented/ withdrawn from receiving services or supportive networks.

#### *Indicators of emotional abuse:*

Physical, mental and emotional developmental delays, difficulties with trust and affection; negativity, hopelessness and negative view of themselves, family and society; lack of empathy, compassion and remorse; changes in appetite, poor concentration, difficulty making friends, unexplained fear.

### **Neglect**

Not meeting appropriate medical or physical care needs, or withholding the necessities of life such as food, heating and medicines which causes the person to suffer.

#### *Indicators of neglect:*

Failure to thrive and poor hygiene; constant hunger, tiredness and malnutrition; frequent accidental injuries, illnesses and untreated medical problems; developmental delays, poor state of clothing and low self-esteem; treated differently to others by their carer.

### **Self-Neglect**

Self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviour with a person failing to care for their personal hygiene, health or surroundings.

#### *Indicators of self-neglect:*

Very poor personal hygiene; lack of essential food, clothing or shelter; malnutrition and/or dehydration; neglecting household maintenance; collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions; non-compliance with health or care services; inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury.

### **Financial abuse**

Theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

*Indicators of financial abuse:*

Unexplained sudden inability to pay bills or maintain lifestyle; unusual or inappropriate bank account activity; withholding money; recent change of deeds or title of property; unusual interest shown by family or others in the individual's assets; the person managing financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative; fraud or intimidation in connection with wills and property.

**Discriminatory Abuse**

Any abuse or harassment because of a person's race, gender, sexuality, disability or age.

Indicators of discriminatory abuse:

Lack of respect shown to an individual; signs of a sub-standard service offered to an individual; repeated exclusion from rights afforded to citizens such as health, education, employment, criminal justice and civic status.

**Group/Organisational Abuse**

Abuse as a result of persistently poor care or a rigid and oppressive regime.

Indicators of group/organisational abuse:

Repeated failures on the part of an organisation, despite warnings and agreement to improve; routine acceptance of poor practice; lack of individual care plans; inappropriate physical intervention.

**An act of abuse can often fall under more than one type of abuse.**

**GTG recognises a broad range of safeguarding responsibilities, including abuse as defined above, but also in relation to matters such as preventing radicalisation.**