



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Poetic Unity abides by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

1.2 Poetic Unity has put in place all safeguards to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.

1.3 Poetic Unity has also put in place safeguards to avoid putting their workers in positions where abuse might be alleged, and to ensure that all workers know exactly what to do should abuse be suspected.

1.4 Poetic Unity believes it is important to not only protect the vulnerable from abuse but to actively promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults - not just to protect, but to safeguard.

1.5 This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Poetic Unity, including volunteers and Trustees, sessional staff and external contractors. Failure to comply with this policy will be addressed without delay and could result in disciplinary action.

2. Our Safeguarding values

2.1 Poetic Unity recognises the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount to all the work we do and decisions we take, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation - everybody has an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

2.2 It is everybody's responsibility to promote and act to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

2.2.1 As outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and 'successful outcomes for children depend on strong partnership working between parents/carers and the practitioners working with them. Practitioners should take a child-centred approach to meeting the needs of the whole family'.

2.3 Everybody has the right to engage in a caring and safe environment that works in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults and parents and carers to promote their welfare.

2.4 Everybody has the right to be protected from abuse of all types, and to expect that adults in positions of responsibility will do everything possible to foster those rights.

2.5 The protection of children and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse is seen as our primary responsibility.

2.6 Poetic Unity recognises the importance of, and respects, individual choice, confidentiality and consent, within our legal and moral safeguarding remit.

2.6.1 All employees and volunteers of Poetic Unity will maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

2.6.2 Fully consenting adults have the right to choose, within legal remits, how to respond to matters of harm against them. Poetic Unity should always encourage the safest responses whilst respecting the rights of adults to choose, and supporting their decisions.

2.7 Poetic Unity believes deeply in upholding dignity and respect for all, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults. This includes valuing and promoting diversity, fulfilment, and independence.

2.8 Poetic Unity has a responsibility to inform children, young people and vulnerable adults of its duty to follow up any safeguarding concerns and report suspected cases of abuse to the appropriate body, when disclosed or observed.

3. Definitions

3.1 The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or are in hospital.

3.2 The Care Act 2014 defines a vulnerable adult (adults at risk of harm) as: anyone over the age of 18 who is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make decisions relating to their safety and is in need of care and support to do so. This limited capacity could be because of, non-exclusively, a disability, mental health need or long-term health condition.

3.3 Child and Adult Abuse: Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Domestic abuse and adolescent relationship abuse (ARA)
- Child trafficking
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Grooming and radicalisation
- Historical abuse
- Elder abuse
- Financial abuse
- Online abuse.

4. Training and awareness

4.1 It is the responsibility of senior leadership to ensure that all staff and volunteers of Poetic Unity understand these categories of abuse and their safeguarding duties in working to prevent harm and/or intervene safely.

4.2 Safeguarding training is mandatory for all staff and volunteers, and will be provided by Poetic Unity.

4.3 For all employees working with children and vulnerable adults, they are required to, as a minimum, have awareness training that enables them to: understand what safeguarding is, their role and responsibilities, feel confidently able to recognise a child in need of safeguarding and how to take action, and know how to report a safeguarding concern and who to.

4.4 Reading this policy is a condition of employment with Poetic Unity and support can be provided to assist with understanding the content and implementation of this policy to a high standard.

5. Responding to Safeguarding concerns

5.1 Poetic Unity has a zero-tolerance policy to all forms of violence and abuse, and anybody found to have used violence or abuse both within, in connection to, or towards other community members of Poetic Unity, will not be able to engage in our services, at least until community repair, accountability and/or mediation measures are in place.

5.1.1 For more information on this, see Poetic Unity's Grievance and Complaints Policies.

5.1.2 Included in Poetic Unity's zero-tolerance violence policy is the use of harmful and oppressive language, including racism, misogyny/ misogynoir, ableism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia.

5.1.3 If any abusive and harmful language or behaviour, including online, is witnessed, this should be addressed immediately by removing the person or people causing harm from the physical or virtual space.

5.1.4 For more information on digital harm responses, see Poetic Unity's Digital Safeguarding Policy.

5.2 If violence or abuse is witnessed within Poetic Unity's programmes, where safe, this should be intervened in by senior staff to avoid harm escalation.

5.2.1 Poetic Unity staff are not trained to use physical restraint, and therefore this is not required of staff to perform. However, staff are encouraged to use their professional and personal judgement to determine whether it is appropriate and safe for them to intervene in a physical altercation, in order to preserve life and prevent harm.

5.2.2 Any staff member holding trusted relationships with those involved in conflict, violence or harm, should try to utilise communicative opportunities for deescalation.

5.2.3 If violence is considered so extreme that intervention would pose a risk to life, for example if there is the use of a weapon, and a community approach no longer feels manageable, then staff should contact the police on 999.

5.3 As a mental health organisation, Poetic Unity supports community members who may have experiences engaging in self harm.

5.3.1 If physical self harm (i.e cutting or self hitting) is witnessed in the space, the person should be removed from proximity to other young people and remain with a trusted member of staff who can regulate and de-escalate the harm.

5.3.2 Emergency contacts should be informed immediately.

5.3.3 Remove all tools that could be used for self harm from the proximity of the child or vulnerable adult.

5.3.4 The child or vulnerable adult should be assessed for medical treatment and a trained First Aider should support with any mild, surface wounds, or 999/ 111 should be contacted if the harm is more urgent.

5.3.5 If the child or vulnerable adult is not able to calm down or continues to harm themselves, contact the local Crisis Team or 111 for advice. Mental Health Crisis Support in Lambeth can be found [here](#) or contacted on 0300 123 1922.

5.3.6 As a Black-led organisation, we recognise the escalated risk of harm to Black people from the police when they are responding to a mental health crisis. We do not want to expose young people to a further risk of harm. We will attempt as a community of trusted, trained and professional staff to intervene, desescalate, calm and care for the young person in crisis. However, if harm becomes unmanageable, and a risk to life is identified, then staff should contact 999.

5.4 Once the risk of harm has been managed, all young people involved in or witness to incidents should be supported.

5.4.1 Referrals to specialist services should be made, including for domestic abuse, exploitation, mental health, sexual violence, and violence perpetration support. Refer to management for a list of local support services.

6. Reporting Safeguarding concerns

6.1 It is the responsibility of all staff to report abuse. Staff must inform management at the earliest opportunity.

6.1.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Poetic Unity is: Ryan Matthews Robinson who can be contacted on 07581266706 or ryan@poeticunity.org.uk.

6.1.3 Should reporting to the DSL not be considered appropriate, has a conflict of interest, or requires escalation, the complaint should then be directed to Lauryn Wyse (The Board of Trustees Safeguard Lead) available on info@poeticunity.org.uk or Talia Kensit (Safeguarding Advisor) available on talia@poeticunity.org.uk. The primary route of contact should otherwise always be Poetic Unity's DSL.

6.2 If the child or vulnerable adult is in danger, first ensure they are safe and if immediate help is needed, call the emergency services on 999.

6.3 If abuse of a child or vulnerable adult is disclosed or suspected, a safeguarding referral should be made to the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for the borough the child or vulnerable adult lives in.

6.3.1 Contact details for the local MASH agency can be found on each respective local authority's website.

6.3.2 Where there is already involvement from Children or Adults Safeguarding Teams, staff can obtain (if not already aware of) the contact of social workers from the MASH team and report the concern to them directly. Staff can also request a Team Around The Child or Serious Incident meeting with the

team of professionals involved in the care of children and young people.

6.4 If a safeguarding concern is related to the behaviour of a member of Poetic Unity's team, this should be reported in line with Poetic Unity's Whistleblowing Policy.

7. Recording Safeguarding concerns

7.1 When engaging with children, young people and vulnerable adults in disclosures of harm and abuse, this should always be done with absolute care, compassion and sensitivity for the experiences of each child.

7.2 To reduce the risk of retraumatisation or distress, staff should ensure young people are being spoken to in a safe, comfortable and confidential space.

7.2.1 To ensure they feel safe, children and vulnerable adults can be spoken to with a trusted friend or adult present.

7.2.2 They should only be asked sufficient questions to establish what has happened. Staff should listen carefully and take notes to avoid having to ask repetitive questions.

7.2.3 Staff should try to obtain as much information as possible, including the time of an incident, who was present, where it occurred, when, why and how.

7.2.4 Staff should try to determine what other professionals, if at all, are involved in supporting the child or vulnerable adult, and seek to engage in them in support plans moving forward - if deemed necessary, appropriate and where possible with the consent of each young person.

7.3 If the safeguarding matter is related to an incident that occurred within Poetic Unity's programmes or spaces, an Incident Report form should be completed.

7.4 All safeguarding concerns and incidents should be recorded on Upshot within 24 hours of an incident occurring.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 Poetic Unity ensures all records are securely kept on the Upshot database, only accessible to the DSL and recording staff member.

8.2 Confidentiality comes second to the need for protection and safety, so the sharing of information is vital in cases where to withhold from sharing such information would place the young person in immediate, or more danger.

8.3 Everyone working with children has a 'duty of care' to keep children safe and protect them from harm. This means that all adults have a duty to report child protection or welfare concerns to Children's Services or the police.

8.4 Always ensure the child or vulnerable adult is aware of your need to disclose certain information for their own safety and always seek consent, unless bound to report regardless. Make sure children and vulnerable adults are aware of your duty to report prior to them disclosing. This ensures that they are disclosing to you with absolute and fully informed consent.

8.4.1 If a member of staff or volunteer feels seeking consent (from the individual directly, or parent/

carer if regarding a child) would put themselves or the individual concerned at further risk, they must confer with the DSL and announce their concerns clearly and transparently with the relevant agency.

9. Other general measures

Poetic Unity ensures safeguarding is not compromised, but encouraged within our culture, practice and procedures. To maintain this standard of care, we also:

- Operate within strict safer recruitment practices - see our Safer Recruitment Policy for more details.
- Provide robust and regular reviews of all our policies, by Trustees and senior staff
- Have clear and careful Health and Safety and Fire Safety policies in place
- Embed staff wellbeing into our practice, creating and maintaining a culture of care for all
- Operate our programmes and events with staff ratio guidelines, ensuring our team has the capacity to safeguard to a high standard
- Engage in regular and diverse training opportunities to ensure our staff and volunteers are confident, understanding, knowledgeable and ready to deliver high quality, life changing work with our community.

Agreed by: Board of Trustees

Last review: 3rd June 2026

Next review: 3rd June 2027