



## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Every child or vulnerable adult deserves to be safe and secure in their activities. Their parents or carers (if they have them) need to feel sure that the people in charge of these activities are trustworthy, responsible and will do everything they can to keep the vulnerable adult or child safe from harm. Unfortunately, sometimes people who work or volunteer may pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults and may wish to harm them.

- **Poetic Unity** has put in place safeguards to protect children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- **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.
- **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.

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult is defined in the 'No Secrets' government report as a person "who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."

### 2. Poetic Unity Values for Safeguarding Children & Young People

- The needs of the child are paramount and should underpin all child protection work working to the London Child Protection Procedures.
- Responsibility for safeguarding children and young people must be shared as they can only be protected effectively when all the relevant agencies and individuals accept responsibility and co-operate with one another.
- All children and young people have the right to grow up in a caring and safe environment.
- Children and young people have 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.
- The protection of children and young people from abuse is seen as part of the general responsibility of **Poetic Unity**.
- **Poetic Unity** has a responsibility to promote non-abusive relationships and create anti-abusive environments.

- The primary duty of staff, whatever their nominated role, is to protect children and young people from significant harm.
- **Poetic Unity** has a responsibility to inform parents, children and young people of its duty to follow up any safeguarding concerns and report suspected cases of abuse when disclosed or observed.

### 3. Poetic Unity Values for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults:

- **Privacy:** The right of individuals to be left alone or undisturbed and free from intrusion or public attention into their affairs.
- **Dignity:** Recognition of the intrinsic value of people regardless of circumstances by respecting their uniqueness and their personal needs; treating with respect.
- **Independence:** Opportunities to act and think without reference to another person, including a willingness to incur a degree of calculated risk.
- **Choice:** Opportunity to select independently from a range of options.
- **Rights:** The maintenance of all entitlements associated with citizenship.
- **Fulfilment:** The realisation of personal aspirations and abilities in all aspects of daily life.
- **Valuing Diversity:** Respect for different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions, ages, genders, and sexual preferences.

**Poetic Unity** has a responsibility to inform vulnerable adults and carers (where appropriate), of its duty to follow up any safeguarding concerns and report suspected cases of abuse to the appropriate body, when disclosed or observed. Staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with Lambeth's Safeguarding Adults - policies and protocols and, in particular, the document <https://beta.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/adults-and-older-people>

### 4. Categories

There are four categories of abuse: emotional, neglect, physical, and sexual in relation to a child or vulnerable adult:

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional and behavioural development.
- Neglect is the persistent or severe neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, or the failure to protect a child or vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment on health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.
- Physical abuse can and does manifest through the hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult whom they are looking after.

- Sexual abuse is the forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening, including physical contact including sexual acts; non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at pornography or sexual acts; or encouraging children or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- In addition to the above categories, vulnerable adults may also experience financial or material abuse which includes theft, fraud, pressure around wills, property or inheritance, misuse or misappropriation of benefits.

5. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is defined as protecting such groups and people from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring that children and vulnerable adults have equitable opportunities to be provided with consistent safe and effective care; and undertaking that role so as to enable children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully and vulnerable adults to live their lives protected from abuse and have opportunities for reparation if appropriate.

## 6. Action to be taken

- It is responsibility of all staff to report abuse. The safeguarding lead is Ryan Matthews-Robinson who can be contacted on 07581266706.
- If the child / vulnerable adult is in danger, first ensure they are safe and if immediate help is needed, call the emergency services on 999.
- If abuse is discovered or suspected, the abuse must in all cases be reported at the earliest opportunity to Social Services at Lambeth Council Tel: 0870 280 5830
- Then follow the detailed reporting procedure set out below.
- Action will then be taken to ensure the child / vulnerable adult is protected in the future.
- Staff who abuse will be dealt with through **Poetic Unity** disciplinary procedures.
- Where appropriate the police will always be informed.

## 7. Reporting procedures for cases of alleged/suspected abuse

- Only ask the person sufficient questions to establish what has happened i.e. accident or possible abuse.
- Inform the Project Manager or other senior member of staff at the earliest opportunity
- If danger exists, ensure the person and any other child/vulnerable adults are protected.
- If the person is seriously injured seek immediate medical treatment. Immediately report the incident to your Supervisor/Project Manager and adhere to existing policies e.g. Health and Safety and to Lambeth Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Procedures. Concerns about children should be reported to the Duty Social Worker 0207 926 5555
- Be careful not to destroy or contaminate evidence.
- As soon as possible detailed notes should be made including when and to whom in Lambeth Council Social Services Department the abuse has been reported. Documentation is vital as evidence might be required for criminal proceedings at a later date.

- If the suspected abuser is a member of staff, the matter will be dealt with through **Poetic Unity's** disciplinary procedure. The police could be involved and s/he could be suspended pending an investigation.

## **6. Confidentiality**

People have the right to expect that all staff and volunteers will deal sensitively and sympathetically with their situation. It is important that information remains confidential and that only those with a 'need to know' should be privy to it.

## **7. Safe Recruitment Procedures**

**Poetic Unity's** recruitment policy stipulates that all paid staff will have to complete an application form, detailing past work history and references. Individuals are then interviewed, and references requested. Only on receipt of satisfactory references will a formal offer of employment be made.

Those working directly and having regular, sustained contact with children and vulnerable adults are required to have an enhanced check through the Government's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before any commencement of work which involves substantial client contact.

Copies of all returned DBS checks and documentation relating to any children and vulnerable adult issues will be kept confidentially and securely locked within the organisation.

Staff can undergo training and induction whilst waiting for the checks to clear but cannot undertake any unsupervised face-to-face work until satisfactory checks have been received.

**Agreed by: Board of Directors**

**Date: 01/01/18**

**Last review: 03/09/23**

**Next review: 04/09/24**