

## **VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION POLICY**

Bounce Theatre recognises that it accommodates and provides a service to vulnerable members of society within the community it serves, as beneficiaries as well as volunteers. Bounce Theatre aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps to ensure the protection, safety and welfare of its beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers.

The Executive Directors, staff, and volunteers recognise and accept the responsibility to develop and raise awareness of the issues involved with vulnerable adults.

Vulnerable adults are those who are aged 18 and over who are, or who may be, in need of support services because of mental or other disabilities, age or illness who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

### **1. Objectives**

- To provide an environment in which vulnerable adults feel safe and valued, and to endeavour to prevent abuse occurring in our organisation.
- To ensure the Executive Directors, staff and volunteers take responsibility to protect vulnerable adults from harm at all times.
- To exercise a duty of care and to follow procedures to ensure there is a consistent and effective response to any concerns, allegations, or disclosures of abuse.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with, or have responsibility for, vulnerable adults produce an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check dated no more than a year ago.
- To develop a time specific induction period when all new staff and volunteers are introduced to our guidelines for working with vulnerable adults, policy, and procedures.
- To regularly monitor and evaluate Bounce Theatre's own practices.

### **2. Abuse**

Abuse may be defined as the wrongful application of power by someone in a dominant or authoritative position. It involves an imbalance of power and exploitation without a full and informed consent. Abuse can take several different forms and may a single act or repeated acts.

- **Physical abuse** – includes slapping, pushing, hitting, kicking.
- **Sexual abuse** – includes sexual assault, rape, or sexual acts where the vulnerable person has not given (or could not give) consent or was forced into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** – includes threats of harm, emotional abuse, humiliation, verbal abuse, intimidation, harassment, coercion, isolation, and deprivation (physical and sensory).
- **Material/financial abuse** – includes theft, exploitation, fraud, and financial transactions.
- **Neglect** – includes ignoring physical care, and medical needs e.g. a safe and warm environment.
- **Discrimination** – includes harassment and or/exclusion because of race, creed, culture, ability, gender, and any slur deemed abusive or offensive.

### 3. Procedures

- Bounce Theatre recognises that steps to safeguard and protect staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries from abuse do not solely include procedures for reporting and investigation suspicions of abuse. It is therefore essential all staff and volunteers treat vulnerable adults with respect and sensitivity at all times.
- The professional relationship must always focus on the needs of the beneficiary and vulnerable adult volunteers. All Bounce Theatre staff and able volunteers must recognise the imbalance of power in this relationship, generated by the needs of the beneficiaries (and vulnerable adult volunteers) for assistance, guidance, and support.
- Staff and volunteers must ensure that the safety and dignity of those vulnerable adults in their care is maintained at all times.
- It is the duty of staff and volunteers to ensure that vulnerable adults in their care are aware that there are designated members of staff to help them with any worries and or difficulties.
- All staff and volunteers should be aware of the Vulnerable Adults Policy during induction and of the procedure to follow for reporting possible/alleged cases of harm or abuse.

### 4. Reporting Procedure

It is the responsibility, under a duty of care of any member of staff or adult volunteer, to take action if they suspect the abuse of a vulnerable adult. Abuse may be witnessed or a disclosure may have been made by the vulnerable person themselves or by someone else who has been told about it or witnessed abuse.

If you do suspect abuse, you should:

- Make sure the person is safe.
- Inform the Safeguarding Officer (Louise Pendry).
- Record any observations or conversations in the person's own words.
- Preserve any evidence.
- Ensure the record of concern is given to the person responsible for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults (**Louise Pendry 07980 210705**).
- The person responsible for safeguarding vulnerable adults will liaise with the relevant agencies and forward the record of concern for information. A copy should be kept securely on file to which designated staff members only have access.

It is important for staff and volunteers to avoid making assumptions and discussing concerns indiscriminately. Confidentiality and respect for the vulnerable adult(s) involved, is of the utmost importance.

The vulnerable Adult has the right:

- To be made aware of this policy.
- To have alleged incidents recognized and taken seriously.
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout.
- To be involved in any process as appropriate.
- To receive information about the outcome.

Bounce Theatre is committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

**Date Reviewed: November 2023**

**Next Review Date: November 2024**