**
Market Harborough Story Centre Safeguarding Policy Date revised: 12th May 2023**

**Designated Safeguarding Officer: Sarah Smyth**

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1. **Organisation** Market Harborough Story Centre (MHSC) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Charity Nos. 1198936) with the following objects:
* For the public benefit, the relief of those in need by reason of physical or mental ill health, disability, social disadvantage in Market Harborough and the surrounding area primarily by providing opportunities to participate in storytelling and story making activities.
* The promotion for the public benefit of the art of storytelling by the provision of opportunities for public education and participation.
1. **Purpose and Aims** The purpose of the policy is to ensure anyone involved with the organisation as a trustee, volunteer or participant in any activities organised by the organisation are protected from abuse, bullying, exploitation or discrimination. The procedures also outline the responsibilities of all those involved in the organisation to contribute to the protection of children and other vulnerable groups where they are alerted to abuse, bullying or discrimination in other settings or any activities organised by the MHSC.

In the event of concerns the complaints procedure clearly articulates process with transparency around how investigations are undertaken and governed.

1. **Vulnerable Groups**

For the purpose of this policy the following groups are determined as being vulnerable:

* Children and young people under 18 years.
* Adults with physical and learning disabilities.
* Older people with cognitive impairment.
* Adults with mild to moderate mental health issues.
1. **Equality** The organisation is also mindful of the additional risk associated with discriminator practice and is committed to equality irrespective of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or identity, race, culture, religious faith or none. There is a commitment to treating everyone with dignity and respect and without bias or favouritism.
2. **Guidance and procedures** The organisation’s policies and procedures are underpinned by the relevant legislation and a code of conduct adhered to by all those representing the organisation in different settings.

**Market Harborough Story Centre Safeguarding Procedures**

1. **Who?** These procedures apply to all trustees and volunteers who engage or deliver any activities under the auspices of the organisation particularly any activity undertaken with vulnerable individuals.

**Vulnerable groups include:**

**Child and Young People**: The Children Act (1989 and 2004), states the legal definition of a child as 'a person under the age of 18 years old'. Therefore, for the purposes of this policy, the term 'child' relates to anyone who is 18 years old or under. Please note that throughout this policy children and young people will be referred to as CYP which will refer to anyone age 18 years or under, unless otherwise stated.

**Vulnerable adult**: For the purposes of this policy, the term 'vulnerable person' is used to indicate a person over the age of 18 and will be referred to as VA. Section 115(4) of the Police Act 1997 states that a person can be considered vulnerable if they are 'substantially dependent upon others in performing basic functions, or their ability to communicate with those providing services, or to communicate with others is severely impaired'. This can be as a result of a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, (including an addiction to alcohol or drugs), or a reduction of physical or mental capacity.

1. **What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding is about recognising and reporting abuse; seeking to prevent abuse and promoting well-being.

 **Abuse**

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons.

 All or any of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent,

 negligence, omission or ignorance.

 Safeguarding legislation include (not exclusively) the following categories:

* + - Physical
		- Sexual
		- Emotional/Psychological
		- Neglect
		- Financial
		- Discrimination
		- Modern slavery

 **Well-being** is threaded through UK Legislation and includes our mental and physical health,

 our relationships, connection to community and our contribution to society.

1. **What is our responsibility?**
* All MHSC trustees and volunteers have a responsibility to be aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures and attend any training as required.
* Each person is responsible to alert the designated safeguarding lead if they are aware or suspect anyone involved or participating in events is at risk of abuse, neglect or having their well being threatened.
* In the event there are concerns about the behaviour or attitude of the designated lead this should be reported to one of the trustees. If there are concerns not being addressed by the trustees, the Charity Commission should be involved.
* Appropriate checks will be made in relation to the activities in which volunteers are engaged. This may include DBS Standard or Enhanced Checks.
* Current DBS checks undertaken for another organisation will be acceptable.
* Concerns relating to children, young people or vulnerable adults should be reported in the first instance to the designated safeguarding lead who will be responsible for contacting the appropriate statutory organisation where the abuse or neglect is not within the power of the organisation to resolve.
* Written records will be kept of any complaints and where an investigation is necessary this will be conducted by an independent person/organisation.
* Where activities are being undertaken with children they should be accompanied by a parent, their representative or a responsible adult if working in other settings.
* Work with vulnerable adults should normally include at least two volunteers and where this is not possible another independent adult.
* Volunteers should not contact children, young people or vulnerable adults they have met through MHSC on social media, telephone or meeting privately.