



Safeguarding Policy

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Safeguarding policy

1. About this policy

- 1.1 The Heart of England Forest is committed to ensuring that the people we work with (including staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and supporters) are kept safe from harm.
- 1.2 The Heart of England Forest is also committed to improving the wellbeing of our communities. In delivering our charitable objectives we are making a positive contribution to improving the health, achievement, enjoyment, mental & economic wellbeing of our audiences.
- 1.3 When delivering our charitable objectives and services to our audiences we will work to ensure that no child, adult or group of children/adults is treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs.
- 1.4 The Heart of England Forest believes that the welfare of the child is paramount and that all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.
- 1.5 Trustees have overall responsibility for safeguarding and should proactively safeguard and where appropriate promote the well-being and welfare of their charity's beneficiaries. They must take reasonable steps to protect these beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and others connected with the activities of the charity from harm. This should be a key governance priority. Trustees should be familiar with the Charity Commission's policy document annex [Trustee Safeguarding Duties explained](#).
- 1.6 This policy will sit alongside other policies including the Whistleblowing, Anti-harassment and Bullying, Data Protection and Health & Safety policies, along with more specific and detailed safeguarding procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.
- 1.7 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, interns, casual workers agency workers and volunteers.
- 1.8 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, or contract of engagement concerning any other member of staff, and we may amend it at any time.
- 1.9 This policy will be published on the Heart of England Forest website.

2. What is safeguarding?

- 2.1 The Charity Commission defines safeguarding as:
 - 2.1.1 protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
 - 2.1.2 protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable them to have the best outcomes (as defined in the statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2013\)](#)).
- 2.2 The [Charity Commission guidance](#) and [strategy](#) makes it clear that safeguarding goes beyond child protection and preventing physical or sexual abuse, and includes protecting people from harm generally, including neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, and the consequences of the misuse of personal data.

3. Your responsibilities

- 3.1 Safeguarding children and adults and protecting them from harm is *everyone's* responsibility.
- 3.2 Employees are expected to act appropriately at all times to safeguard the physical and emotional wellbeing of the children and adults they come into contact with during the course of their employment and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions, and in their personal lives.
- 3.3 Employees are also expected to ensure they do not place themselves in a situation where they themselves may become vulnerable. Only employees with an advanced DBS certificate may work with children under the age of 18, unless another responsible adult is present (such as a parent, carer, teacher or another member of staff who holds an advanced DBS certificate).
- 3.4 Employees should exercise extra care and responsibility when dealing with adults who they know or suspect to be vulnerable (this includes adults with special educational needs or learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health conditions including depression or addiction).
- 3.5 Senior managers are also responsible for reinforcing an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding, so that it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled sensitively and properly.
- 3.6 The Heart of England Forest will follow statutory guidance around safeguarding the children and adults we work with, recruiting staff and volunteers safely and ensuring that staff/volunteers coming into planned regular contact with children or vulnerable adults receive a DBS check at the appropriate level.
- 3.7 The Heart of England Forest will supply all staff with training in order to embed an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding, where everyone is aware of their responsibilities and feels safe to report any concerns.
- 3.8 The Heart of England Forest will appoint a team of trained Designated Safeguarding Leads who be responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are implemented.

4. How to raise a concern

- 4.1 Employees should report any concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of priority.

5. Protection and support for those involved

- 5.1 Staff who raise concerns or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

6. Record-keeping

- 6.1 Information about all reported concerns will be treated confidentially and recorded on a 'green form' along with a record of any action taken, or other documents compiled during the process. A record of the outcome and any notes or other documents compiled during the process will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Employee Data Privacy Notice.

6.2 Any concern reported which includes a complaint by or about an employee should be reported using the Green Form, to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Chief Executive, and dealt with following the procedures set out in other relevant policies (including the Whistleblowing, Anti-harassment & Bullying and Grievance Policies). A record of the outcome and any notes or other documents compiled during the process will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Employee Data Privacy Notice.

6.3 Safeguarding incidents will be confidentially reported to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that the privacy of those involved is protected.

7. External disclosures

7.1 The Designated Safeguarding Leads will be responsible for reporting safeguarding concerns to external agencies such as schools, social care services, the local safeguarding board, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Charity Commission or the police if they feel this is appropriate.

7.2 The aim of this policy is to provide a mechanism for reporting concerns about children or adults to be acted on by the Designated Safeguarding Leads and to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases individuals reporting concerns should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally, however anyone can escalate safeguarding concerns and report to the relevant authorities themselves if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

7.3 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. If you feel this is appropriate, please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.