



## SOMERSCIENCE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Last updated August 2025

A person may abuse or neglect a child/vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has taken place, however, each person has a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about someone's behaviour towards a child or vulnerable adult. It is important that the recipient of any complaint or accusation that a child or vulnerable adult has been or is being abused listens carefully without making or implying any judgment as to the truth of the complaint or accusation.

Anyone who is worried about sharing concerns about abuse are encouraged to speak with an appropriate agency for further advice (for example, Childline on 0800 1111 or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.)

**The Somerscience Trust** believes that a child, young adult or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young adults and vulnerable adult and to keep the safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

The Somerscience Festival will prevent and reduce harm to children and vulnerable adults when they are in contact with Festival staff, partners, volunteers or audience members with the aim to:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults
- Provide assurance to parents, carers and other parties that the Festival takes reasonable steps to manage risks and keep children and vulnerable adults safe
- Ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with the necessary information, training and support on safeguarding matters, including preventing interaction where appropriate
- Ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of any allegations or suspicions regarding harm to children or vulnerable adults arising from contact with Festival staff, partners, volunteers or audience members.
- Recognise that the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the child act 1989
- Recognise that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, the level of dependency, communication needs and other issues.

The Festival will do this by:

- Completing a risk assessment process which involves festival content providers being required to identify risks and means of reducing or eliminating these
- Implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process, reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis and highlighting this Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy to new Festival employees, volunteers and partners. This will be achieved by means of the pre-festival training session and video which all volunteers will be required to attend/view.
- Appointing a designated safeguarding lead for children, young people and vulnerable adults on the board of trustees
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for volunteers
- Requiring all partner/content providers to the Festival to provide confirmation of their own safeguarding procedures and DBS checks where appropriate for all personnel representing them at the Festival
- Providing effective management of Festival volunteers through supervision, support and where appropriate training
- Recruiting volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made where appropriate
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice where appropriate
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against volunteers appropriately
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- In the event of an incident at the festival itself, volunteers will first ensure a calm and safe environment to deal with the incident and then contact the Festival Director and/or safeguarding lead by telephone for guidance on appropriate next steps.
- As soon as possible after the event, any volunteer handling an incident will complete an incident card and submit this to the Festival Director and Safeguarding Lead.

This policy requires that any further suspicions and allegations involving harm to children and vulnerable adults be referred to the Operations Director who will enrol Trustees to determine what action, if any, must be taken. This will enable each situation to be investigated thoroughly, while treating the parties involved fairly and with sensitivity. Suitable steps will be taken as a result of any investigations, which may include contacting the police and fulfilling the legal duty to refer information to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as required. The procedure for managing suspicions and allegations aims to strike a balance between the need to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and the need to protect staff, partners and volunteers from false or unfounded accusations.

A child is any person under the age of 18. Adults have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations. An adult may be vulnerable if he/she has a learning or physical disability, has a reduction in physical or mental capacity, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs or is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation. It is recognised that it may be impossible to identify whether vulnerability exists in relation to an activity or event involving adults.

## **Risk assessments**

A risk assessment should consider the nature, length and frequency of contact and if it would be supervised or unsupervised to highlight whether any children and adults may be at risk. It should identify any potential areas for harm, evaluate the risks and determine actions to prevent harm occurring, which might include consideration of alternative working practices, and prompting individuals to ensure that they are implemented. In addition to other points, a risk assessment might include:

- safe methods of working/activities, the result of potential allergies or specific visible or non-visible mental or physical characteristics of the individual
- the environment of the activity, eg. work in an open environment with children where they can be seen by others and avoiding unnecessary physical contact
- the provision of First aid, or escorting anyone to the toilet or any other private location, to involve more than one adult
- the potential for misinterpretation of emotional, suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun
- the possibility that inappropriate behaviour can also occur over the telephone, email, social media or internet
- the requirement for children who visit the festival to be accompanied by an adult

Notices will be clearly displayed at every venue to the effect that general photos may be taken for marketing and publicity purposes at the event, and that consent is implied, asking adults alone or accompanying children and vulnerable adults who do not wish their images to be used to inform a steward. Personal details and photos, which clearly identify an individual, will only be published where he/she (or his/her parent/guardian) has given specific agreement.

### **Contact details:**

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead

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#### Operations Director

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