

Arts Council of Wales

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales



Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Arts Council of Wales operates an equal opportunities policy.

Arts Council of Wales Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Our vision is of a creative Wales where the arts are central to the life and wellbeing of the nation.

We know the value of involving young people in creative activity. We support a wide range of projects that bring children, young people and vulnerable adults into contact with the arts.

In doing so we take our responsibilities seriously:

“Our aim is to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults participating and engaging with the arts and ensure that our client/partner organisations commit to good practice which protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm. In doing so, we will take account of and comply with current legislation and best practice.”

Safeguards not only protect and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, they also enhance the confidence of trustees, staff, volunteers, parents, carers and the general public.

This Policy is aimed at two audiences:

- Arts Council of Wales staff, who will need to use and understand the policy; and
- arts organisations and other bodies who receive funding from the Arts Council of Wales.

We want to encourage a better general understanding of safeguarding and child protection in the arts community throughout Wales. We will:

- reduce the risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults by highlighting the relevant issues
- provide guidance on creating a safe working environment and appropriate reporting structures (in effect creating a culture of safeguarding within all organisations)
- ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, appropriate action will be taken

In implementing these procedures, we will take every reasonable step to ensure that children and young people and vulnerable adults are protected where:

- our own staff, including those individuals contracted by us, are directly involved in the delivery of arts related activity
- our staff recruit or broker relationships between an artist or arts facilitator and a third party
- we fund an arts organisation for a programme of work
- we seek to promote a positive ethos of collaborative work between the professional Arts sector and children or young people

Background and Legal Context

We are all aware of a number of high profile incidents of child abuse which for a long time went undetected. Lessons have been learnt from these cases and public bodies are continually reviewing and improving policy and practice to reduce the danger of these kinds of incidents being repeated. The Arts are no different.

The majority of people who are employed or volunteer with children, young people and vulnerable adults do so for the right reasons. But a small minority do not.

By adopting some basic safeguards we can all do more to ensure that we build up and maintain a culture of protection in our organisation.

Over the last few years a growing awareness has led to a range of new policies. These include:

- the establishment of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOPC) with its focus on protecting children and young people from exposure to the Internet for the purpose of sexual abuse
- the guidance on dealing with professional abuse
- The Safeguarding of Vulnerable groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 which resulted in the formation of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which strengthens powers for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in Wales
- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international treaty that defines the universal rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the role of governments in ensuring those rights. As the main providers of facilities and services that affect children and young people, Local Authorities, Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies and voluntary organisations have an important role to play in this.

The Welsh Government has identified ways in which public service providers can improve the lives of children in Wales.

Children and young people should be able to:

- have a flying start in life
- have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities
- enjoy the best possible health and be free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation
- have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
- be listened to, treated with respect and have their 'race' and cultural identity recognised
- have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing are not disadvantaged by poverty

The UNCRC defines a child as anyone up to the age of 18 years. The protection of children deals with the exploitation of children at work; physical, sexual and psychological abuse and other mistreatments that many still suffer. The Convention makes it a duty to protect children wherever necessary.

The overriding principle that governs all areas of work with children and families is that the child's welfare should be the paramount consideration. This principle applies at all stages of working with children, whether making a referral, being involved in child protection conferences or reviews, or working directly with children and families.

Anyone working with children requires official certification. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for undertaking criminal record checks on individuals applying to work in roles that bring them into contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Arts Council of Wales cannot assist with these checks and is not responsible for the actions of any funded organisation that does not respond to the requirements of this legislation.

Further information about the Disclosure and Barring Service can be found at:

<http://www.ukcrbs.co.uk>