

## **Square Pegs Round Holes - Safeguarding Policy**

Square Pegs Round Holes CIC is fully committed to safeguarding and we believe that everyone has the right to be safe. We believe safeguarding is of paramount importance and work tirelessly to ensure Square Pegs Round Holes CIC is at the forefront of safeguarding practice to protect those within our care as well as influence organisations and professionals to promote the safety and well-being of all children, young people and adults at risk.

This policy sets out our expectations of safeguarding at Square Pegs Round Holes CIC and applies to everyone involved with Square Pegs Round Holes CIC. We all share a responsibility for promoting and protecting the safety and welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk.

### **Aims of the policy**

The aims of this policy are to:-

- outline our commitment and expectations
- promote the highest safeguarding standards
- ensure there are effective measures in place to assess the suitability of staff and partners
- ensure that staff are clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries

### **Principles**

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- everyone has the right to be protected from abuse, mistreatment and exploitation;
- we strive to create a culture and environment where everyone is empowered to protect themselves and others
- we actively promote working together to ensure all children, young people and adults at risk are safeguarded
- we have robust and transparent governance arrangements for safeguarding

### **Evaluation and review**

We will assess the implementation and effectiveness of this policy annually, or whenever there are changes in legislation, government or statutory guidance, personal changes within the organisation or after managing a safeguarding concern.

### **Designated Person**

Our designated person holds operational responsibility for safeguarding. Our designated person is:

**Debbie Turner**

**Tel: 078300 38707**

**Email: [info@squarepegsroundholes.org](mailto:info@squarepegsroundholes.org)**

### **Safer recruitment and raising awareness**

We are committed to safer recruitment procedures which include:-

- fair and thorough application processes.
- pre-recruitment checks which include identity verification, references and where applicable, criminal record checks.
- providing effective supervision, training and support.

All staff will receive an induction which will include familiarisation with this Policy and individual safeguarding responsibilities.

### **Partnerships and commissioned services**

We will actively promote safeguarding within all partnerships and commissioned services by:-

- ensuring that safeguarding is a primary consideration.
- actively communicating our safeguarding policies and procedures to partners and service providers.
- assessing the suitability of partners and service providers and the adequacy of their safeguarding and practice.
- ensuring that contractual agreements outline respective safeguarding responsibilities.

When there are incidents, disclosures or concerns of abuse or neglect, Square Pegs Round Holes will encourage the organisation we are working with to follow their safeguarding policy, should Square Pegs Round Holes not believe the adequate steps have been taken by the organisation we may choose to follow the referral process in this policy to safeguard the child, young person or adult at risk.

### **Responsibilities**

**Staff are expected to:-**

- familiarise themselves with this Policy.
- know who the Designated Persons are and how to contact them.
- ensure the safety of children, young people and adults at risk at all times.
- always act in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk.
- build balanced relationships with children, young people and adults at risk based on mutual trust.
- maintain appropriate and professional boundaries at all times.
- treat all children, young people and adults at risk equally, with respect, dignity and fairness.
- ensure that the same professional standards are applied regardless of ethnic origin, colour, nationality, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- respect the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and adults at risk.
- recognise the developmental needs of children/young people and capacity of children, young people and adults at risk.
- help maintain an ethos whereby colleagues, partners, children, young people and adults at risk and their parents/carers feel able to express any concerns

comfortably and safe in the knowledge that effective action will be taken as appropriate.

- promote an environment where poor practice is challenged and reported.
- ensure that any concerns or allegations pertaining to the safety and/or welfare of children, young people and adults at risk are recorded and acted upon in accordance with this Policy.
- encourage and demonstrate consistently high standards of behaviour and understand the types of behaviour that may call into question their suitability to work with children, young people and adults at risk.
- be aware that behaviour outside of work time may impact upon their suitability to work with children, young people and adults at risk.
- be aware that breaches of the law and this Policy may result in criminal and/or disciplinary action being taken against them.

#### **Staff should never:-**

- use their position of power and influence to intimidate, threaten, coerce, exploit or undermine children, young people and adults at risk.
- use their status and standing to form or promote inappropriate relationships. Professional boundaries must be maintained at all times.
- use their position to gain access to information relating to children, young people and adults at risk for their own or others' advantage. Such information should only be used or shared to protect children, young people and adults at risk and to meet their needs.
- carry out their duties whilst under the influence of alcohol, solvents or drugs.
- engage in any discussions relating to sexual behaviour, betting, gambling or related activities in the presence of children, young people and adults at risk, except in a clear educational context
- access, make or distribute indecent content or images of children, young people and adults at risk.

#### **Dealing with a disclosure**

If a child, young people and/or adult at risk discloses that he or she has been harmed and/ or abused or is at risk of such, we will ensure that their immediate needs are met and prioritise their safety and protection from further abuse/harm. Referrals will be made to the designated safeguarding lead or the appropriate authorities. Square Pegs will not investigate the claims, however, we will always act in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk.

We will always explain to the person disclosing what they can expect from the safeguarding process. If we witness an incident or information comes to our attention that causes concern or puts children, young people and adults at risk we will follow the process above.

#### **Recording and reporting disclosures and other safeguarding concerns**

All safeguarding concerns and disclosures will always be taken seriously and every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when dealing with a disclosure or a safeguarding concern. It is important to ensure that information is handled and disseminated on a 'need to know basis' only. Those who

need to know are those who have a role to play in protecting children, young people and adults at risk e.g.

- designated persons (those with specific operational responsibility for safeguarding).
- statutory authorities (Police and Local Authorities).
- the DBS who help employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and adults at risk.

Where a disclosure is made we will ensure that we provide clear and concise written details to include:-

- the date and time of incident or disclosure, parties involved and the details of the disclosure
- factual information only
- the date and time of referring the information and who the information was referred to

### **Referrals**

In the event that staff of Square Pegs:-

- behave in a way that harms or may have harmed a child, young person or adult at risk;
- commit a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or adult at risk; or
- behave towards a child, young person or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm

We will be subject to the same safeguarding process and will make the appropriate referrals.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

The duty to refer to the DBS is met when Square Pegs Round Holes CIC has dismissed or removed a person from regulated activity or would or may have if the person had not left, resigned, retired, been made redundant or moved to another position because the person has:-

- been cautioned or convicted for a 'relevant offence'. A 'relevant offence' for the purposes of referrals to the DBS is an offence that would result in the individual's automatic inclusion in the children's or adults' barred list
- engaged in 'relevant conduct'. 'Relevant conduct' is that which endangers or is likely to endanger children, young people and adults at risk
- satisfied the 'harm test':  
the 'harm test' is met when an employer believes that an individual may harm, may cause to be harmed, may put at risk of harm, may attempt to harm or may incite another person to harm a children, young people and adults at risk

Referrals to the DBS will be made once investigations and disciplinary processes are complete (even if the person has left employment). Referrals will be made even if a significant period has passed between the allegation and the gathering of evidence to support a decision to make a referral.

### **Data protection**

We will maintain confidentiality of all; (i) data collected (in writing or electronically) relating to children, young people and adults at risk, (ii) information and documentation relating to safeguarding allegations, concerns and incidents, and (iii) information and documentation relating to recruitment and selection procedures in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

### **Listening culture**

We believe that children, young people and adults at risk have the right to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them. Square Pegs Round Holes CIC will always act in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk and we will seek their views (and in the case of a child/young person, the views of their parents/guardians where appropriate) as far as is feasible taking their age, understanding and capacity into account when responding to disclosures and safeguarding concerns.

In the absence of consent from an individual making a disclosure or to whom the information relates, we will take proportionate action that does not increase the risk of harm. This may include sharing information where there is an overriding duty to do so for legitimate purposes. This may include taking action and/or sharing information where there is an overriding duty to do so for legitimate purposes.

We are committed to ensuring that safeguarding is person-led and outcome-focused. We will engage children, young people and adults at risk about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving wellbeing and safety.

### **Communication**

Communication with children, young people and adults at risk, by whatever method, should take place within professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology, for example, mobile phones, emails and social media.

#### **This means that staff should:-**

- never share any personal information and should not request any personal information from children, young people and adults at risk.
- be circumspect in their communications with and about children, young people and adults at risk to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or behaviour.
- only contact children, young people and adults at risk for professional reasons and with the express agreement and knowledge of the organisational lead and Square Pegs Round Holes CIC

### **Photography and video footage**

Photography and video footage include the taking of still photographs, filmed and moving images and video recordings by whatever means. We will never take, display or distribute images of children, young people and adults at risk without their knowledge or consent (and parental/guardian consent in the case of children and young people) and without the agreement and knowledge of Square Pegs Round

Holes CIC. Carer consent is not required prior to taking images and/or video footage of adults at risk, however, we will ensure that the adult at risk understands the implications of the image being taken, especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media or on the internet.

### **Interviewing children and young people for the purposes of commissioned services**

Staff should never interview children and young people in relation to a safeguarding incident. However, they may interview children and young people during the course of delivering a piece of commissioned work. Staff should follow the guidelines set out below and seek guidance from the Designated Person when undertaking work of this nature.

**Consent:** Consent to interview a child or young person needs to be obtained from the person with parental responsibility and/or the child or young person if they are of sufficient age and understanding to make this decision.

**Adults accompanying the child or young person:** A child or young person may choose to be accompanied (in addition to the interviewer) during interviews. Anyone accompanying a child should be briefed about their role in supporting the child.

**Interviewers:** Square Pegs Round Holes CIC will ensure that only those with sufficient experience and expertise are appointed to interview children and young people.

#### **Interviewers must ensure that:-**

- they adhere to Square Pegs Round Holes CIC's policies, procedures and guidance.
- interviews take place in safe and appropriate environments.
- they request permission to record interviews if this is required.
- they maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- contact by whatever means and meetings with children/young people should never take place without the agreement and knowledge of Square Pegs Round Holes and the Child/young person's parents/carers.
- they record and report any situation which may place a child/young person at risk.
- information suggesting that children and young people at risk of harm is immediately reported to the Designated Person for Square Pegs Round Holes and/ or the organisational safeguarding lead.