

Musical Connections Safeguarding Policy

The core beneficiaries of Musical Connections' work are vulnerable adults at risk of social isolation. As part of our efforts to relieve social isolation, we run an intergenerational programme of projects and events in collaboration with local schools, some of which involve working with children and young people under the age of 18. In addition, although rare, we may find ourselves in contact with the children/grandchildren of people who get involved with our project. As a consequence, our Safeguarding Policy relates to both adults and children.

Safeguarding risks are split across four areas:

- Vulnerable adults
- Children
- Contractors / Volunteers
- Digital

1. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

The Care Act 2014 placed safeguarding adults on a statutory footing with new duties and responsibilities. Each local authority is required to have a set of guidelines and procedures which will demonstrate how they will respond to allegations of abuse and neglect. It is a multi-agency policy which sets out the framework for how all agencies will work together and the response they will make.

Safeguarding adults is more than a set of guidelines or procedures; it is part of what we all do in our everyday work and practice in our communities to prevent abuse and promote the well-being of people with care and support needs. Safeguarding works to support people in how they choose to live their lives and enables them to make their own decisions about their own welfare. In the event that the person lacks the mental capacity to make these decisions, then the decisions must be made in their best interests with due regard to their wishes, feelings, beliefs and values in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

The definition of an 'adult at risk' is any person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect him/herself against serious harm or exploitation. This definition applies to the majority of the people with whom Musical Connections works.

1.1 Aims of safeguarding adults

The aims of safeguarding adults are to:

- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control over how they want to live
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned
- Raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect

- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and how to raise a concern about the safety and wellbeing of an adult
- Address what caused the abuse or neglect

1.2 Types of Adult Abuse

The Care Act identifies 14 different categories of abuse, some of which are not deemed to be relevant to our work eg: modern slavery, forced marriage and radicalisation. The main risk areas for Musical Connections are as follows:

- Physical: hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking, misuse of medication, burning, scalding, restraint, or inappropriate sanction
- Sexual: rape, grooming, sexual assault or acts without consent, i.e. inappropriate touch, voyeurism or exposure to pornography
- Psychological: threats, intimidation, humiliation, controlling, coercing, harassment or isolation
- Neglect: ignoring medical or care needs, withholding medication, nutrition, heating or stimulation
- Financial: improper use of an individual's property, finances or assets without informed consent
- Discrimination: racist, sexist, ageist language or behaviour that is based on an individual's gender, age, religion, cultural background or disability
- Institutional: lack of individual care, inappropriate confinement or restrictions, sensory deprivation, lack of personal possessions or clothing or misuse of medical procedure
- Self-neglect: This covers a wide range of behaviour, but can be defined broadly as neglecting to care for one's hygiene, health, or surroundings. An example of self-neglect is behaviour such as hoarding
- Mate crime: A "mate crime" is when "vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them" (Safety Net Project, ARC). It may not be an illegal act, but it still has a negative effect on the individual. A mate crime is carried out by someone the adult knows, and it often happens in private. In recent years, there have been a number of Serious Case Reviews relating to people with a learning disability who were seriously harmed, or even murdered, by people who purported to be their friend
- Domestic abuse: This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family. It also includes so-called "honour" based violence.

2. Safeguarding Children

Musical Connections believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them and follows the **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026** guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

2.1 Aims of Safeguarding Children

Specifically, we seek to protect:

- children and young people who take part in the intergenerational programme delivered by Musical Connections in collaboration with schools
- the children/grandchildren of adults who get involved with our project

In doing so, we recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989 and 2004
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, parents and their teachers is essential in promoting their welfare

2.2 Types of Child Abuse

Government guidance outlines a range of different types of child abuse. Due to the limited work that we do with children, and the fact that most of it is undertaken in partnership with schools, the key ones that Musical Connections is at risk of identifying are outlined below:

- Physical: hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or fabricating the symptoms of illness
- Sexual: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, rape, oral sex, masturbation, kissing, rubbing or touching clothing, grooming
- Emotional: threats, intimidation, humiliation, controlling, coercing, harassment or isolation
- Neglect: persistent failure to meet basic physical or psychological needs resulting in the impairment of health or development
- Discrimination: racist, sexist, ageist language or behaviour that is based on a child's gender, age, religion, cultural background or disability

While much less likely to become apparent through our work, other types of abuse to be aware of are as follows: honour-based abuse eg female genital mutilation and forced marriage, up-skirting, county lines, modern slavery, homelessness, radicalisation, peer-on-peer abuse, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, cybercrime, and domestic abuse.

3. Safeguarding Contractors and Volunteers

We are committed to ensuring that our contractors and volunteers are never subjected to bullying or harassment from other members of the team, from charity beneficiaries or from outside agencies linked to our work. Our Code of Conduct provides clear detail on Musical Connections' values and culture, and specifies the expectations we have of everyone working on behalf of the charity – respect, professionalism, integrity and politeness are integral to our way of working with each other. Where anyone believes this code has been breached, they are encouraged to share their concerns with the Project Managers, one of whom is our Designated Safeguarding Lead or, if the complaint concerns a Project Manager, with our Deputy Safeguarding Lead – they will then be treated in the same way as our beneficiaries (see Section 5)

4. Digital Safeguarding

4.1 Charity security

Our website and social media are managed by our two Project Managers, who are the only members of the Musical Connections team to know the password to access these platforms. Carefully vetted volunteers occasionally take on this role, under the supervision of the Project Managers, and are provided with the password, which is then changed when the volunteer leaves.

4.2 Beneficiary security

Safeguarding concerns associated with digital spaces relate to 3 key categories:

1. **Content:** eg content that may be unsuitable or illegal, including pirated content, violence, offensive language and behaviour, and content that promotes worrying or harmful behaviour eg suicide or self-harm
2. **Contact:** eg unwanted or inappropriate contact such as pestering, sexual contact, scams/hoaxes, fraud and identity theft
3. **Conduct:** eg oversharing personal information or bullying

We therefore ensure that:

- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 are carefully observed, with personal data stored in password-protected spaces and deleted when no longer required
- Permission to display images on our website and social media is recorded in writing, and is always pre-checked with any intergenerational partners
- The project managers monitor public activity on our social media sites, and remove any comment deemed to be inappropriate or offensive

Musical Connections has provided some of its members with tablets, most of whom now have internet access. Given the lack of internet experience of many of these beneficiaries, we seek to ensure they are adequately safeguarded by:

- Making them aware of the risks of accessing the internet
- Encouraging them to seek support in using the internet from carers/families where they can, and to develop their own 'risk management' strategies eg ignoring requests for passwords, money, bank details
- Encouraging responsible and respectful behaviour in relation to other users
- Encouraging them to report any concerns to a member of the Musical Connections team, who should respond as detailed in Section 5

5. Musical Connections and Safeguarding

In order to ensure that Musical Connections meets its safeguarding aims and adheres to local and national policy, the following requirements are in place:

- All musicians and volunteers involved in the project must be aware of the need to be vigilant in identifying and responding to issues of abuse. Indications may be:
 - Direct allegations
 - Suspicious injuries
 - Helplessness or unwillingness to talk openly
 - Sudden anger/changes of behaviour

- Agitation
- Withdrawn, non-communicative
- Inadequate clothing, malnourished, dirty, smelling of faeces/urine
- Change in ability to pay for services
- Witnessing treatment that is humiliating, intimidating, degrading or hostile
- People's needs not being met
- Lack of choice or privacy
- Reluctance to seek help, avoidance of eye contact
- Establishments/centres where the sessions take place must have their own safeguarding policies in place. i.e. schools, sheltered accommodation, community venues, residential and nursing homes and GP surgeries
- Safeguarding issues should be always be discussed with project partners as part of planning for intergenerational and community-based events
- All individuals involved with the sessions must be able to recognise the signs of harm and abuse in adults and children, and are aware of how to respond effectively and know how they should report their concerns.
- All safeguarding concerns should follow the reporting procedures detailed at 5.1.4 below
- All project personnel having direct contact with vulnerable adults and children must have an up to date enhanced DBS (with children's barred list information) in place
- All transport providers (ie taxi companies/other charities whose transport we may use) involved in assisting with adults and children must:
 - have a knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and the responsibility this places upon them
 - provide us with a copy of their safeguarding policy
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead, plus all musicians, must undertake local authority training on safeguarding vulnerable adults and children annually
- All volunteers should undertake regular reviews of their responsibilities for safeguarding and understand the safeguarding risks they may come across
- Safeguarding must be on all trustee, volunteer and steering group meeting agendas
- Safeguarding is included in our core and intergenerational risk assessments

5.1 Specific Procedures intended to support our Safeguarding Policy

5.1.1 Recruitment and Selection

Our Project Managers are responsible for ensuring that the following actions are completed in relation to all new musicians and volunteers

In the case of new musicians and volunteers, the following actions are required:

- Completion of an application form – any gaps in employment history are queried
- Volunteers undertake an interview with our volunteer manager and, in some instances, with a trustee
- Musicians/artists undertake an interview with a Project Manager and, in some cases, with a trustee
- Potential musicians are required to run part of a regular MC session
- Request for 2 references, one professional, one personal

- Enhanced DBS (with children's barred list) checks
- An application from someone who does not pass their DBS check must be reported to the police

5.1.2 Training and Induction

New musician and volunteer recruits will have an induction meeting with a Project Manager, and will be made aware of Musical Connections' Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy (including risk assessments), and training that they will be asked to undertake during their time with us.

Musical Connections is currently supported by the local authority in accessing appropriate safeguarding training. Musicians, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead and a Project Manager (who is also a musician) undertake annual training. Learning from this training is shared with all volunteers and trustees annually and when updates are made.

5.1.3 How to respond

Where abuse is suspected, the following guidelines should be observed in communicating with the person at risk:

- Make sure you have the person's full attention and address them by name
- Listen without investigating allegations or asking probing questions (you could jeopardise a court case)
- Let people know you're taking their concerns seriously
- Repeat things slowly and clearly, and never raise your voice
- Don't tell them to calm down, relax or stop panicking
- Reassure them that you will try to help them (but don't investigate the allegation yourself)
- Try and communicate warmth, and a willingness to listen and understand, regardless of your own feelings on what is being disclosed
- Do not promise complete confidentiality
- Do not make any judgements
- Record your concerns in writing - brief, factual and relevant. Do not offer opinions unless you make it very clear that it is your own personal opinion. Record alleged abuse, dates and times, who was involved, any observed injuries, appearance of the victim and what they have said in their own words
- Digital safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

5.1.4 How to report

In the case of emergency:

- Call 999 if:
 - A person is in immediate danger (if they are with you and fear going home, take them to the nearest police station)
 - They are in danger of repeated significant harm
 - Have been the victim of a serious crime
 - Need urgent medical attention

If the person is not in immediate danger, call 101.

If the situation is not an emergency:

- Report the incident as soon as possible, sending a written record of your concerns, using full names, to your group's musician and a Musical Connections Project Manager, who will, in turn, convey the information to MC's Designated Safeguarding Lead (contact details below):
 - Use the words of the person affected
 - Make a note of who else was involved
 - Include the date and location of the incident
 - Include your name, signature and the date of submitting the information
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead considers it necessary to escalate the complaint by involving the local authority, they should fill in a City of York Council report form - see link to website below and call the appropriate agency using the telephone numbers shown below
- Any wider safeguarding concerns about the operations of Musical Connections should be raised with our Designated Safeguarding Lead

USEFUL CONTACTS

In case of emergency or concern, contact:

- the police on 999 (or 101 if the danger is not immediate)
- Musical Connections Designated Safeguarding Lead, Abigail Noble-Coates, on 01904 373011
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Trev Broughton, on 01904 373011
- Local authority contacts - Adult Social Care/City of York Safeguarding Adults Board 01904 555111 (8.30am-5pm Monday to Friday). Out of hours number: 0300 131 2131 or find a report form and further details at: <https://safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/raise-concern>
- Local authority contacts – Child Protection - MASH: 01904 551 900 (8.30am-5pm Monday to Friday) Out of hours number: 0300 131 2131, or email: mash@york.gov.uk or out of hours edt@northyorks.gov.uk

5.1.5 Low level safeguarding concerns

It may be that a volunteer, audience member, contractor, beneficiary or other person connected to Musical Connections acts in a way that does not cause direct risk to our beneficiaries, but is, however, inappropriate. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on a personal mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Using inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

These concerns may arise 'in the moment' eg beneficiaries taking photos of children at an intergenerational event where consent has not been given. The incident should be immediately flagged to all Musical Connections representatives and school staff present, in order to reach a speedy decision on how to resolve the issue to ensure minimal risk to everyone involved. An awareness of the documents listed below should help to inform quality decision-making in these circumstances.


SAFEGUARDING LOG

All safeguarding concerns are logged in a central database outlining concerns, the action taken, and the outcome. The log is accessible to all musicians and shared in trustees' project monitoring reports, to ensure that everyone is aware of them and they can be monitored over time.

5.2 List of related documents to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy

These can be found on our website <http://www.musicalconnections.org.uk/about-us/our-policies/>

1. Volunteering
2. Volunteer Induction checklist
3. Contractor Recruitment Policy
4. Contractor Induction Checklist
5. Musical Connections Code of Conduct
6. Health and Safety Policy
7. Data Protection Policy
7. Core and intergenerational risk assessments

Last reviewed	Chair of Trustees	Signature
29th April 2026	Steven Burkeman	

APPENDIX ONE: ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) acts as the main source of support, advice and expertise for safeguarding in our organisation. Responsibilities include:

- Playing a lead role in maintaining and reviewing our safeguarding arrangements
- Coordinating the distribution of policies, procedures and safeguarding resources
- Advising on training needs and development, providing training where appropriate.
- Providing safeguarding advice and support to staff and volunteers
- Managing safeguarding concerns, allegations or incidents reported to your organisation.
- Managing referrals to key safeguarding agencies (eg social services or police) of any incidents or allegations of abuse and harm.