



**Stratford  
Literary  
Festival**



## **Stratford Literary Festival Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy**

Stratford Literary Festival is committed to practices that protect vulnerable adults from harm and treat them with dignity and respect. At the same time Stratford Literary Festival will protect its staff from the risk of unfounded allegations. Stratford Literary Festival will seek to ensure that any vulnerable adult receiving services from Stratford Literary Festival can do so in safety without fear of abuse.

Stratford Literary Festival will seek to implement its policy on the protection of vulnerable adults by:

- Ensuring that all staff who have regular, direct and unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults are carefully selected including a check with the Criminal Records Bureau and at least two written references.
- Ensuring that organisations that work with Stratford Literary Festival in providing services to vulnerable adults (funding or premises) and are involved in direct contact with such individuals have effective policies and procedures in place.
- Ensuring that there is a clear complaint procedure in place that can be used if there are any concerns.
- Sharing information about concerns with appropriate agencies that need to know.
- Involving vulnerable adults and their carers as appropriate.

### Scope

For the purposes of this policy a member of staff covers Trustees and employees of Stratford Literary Festival including casuals and volunteers, work experience placements and trainees. This policy applies to all staff regardless of whether or not they have regular contact with vulnerable adults.

### Definitions

A vulnerable adult is someone who by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness is unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. An adult for the purposes of this policy is anyone over 18 years of age.



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## Procedures

These procedures seek to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities when working with vulnerable adults. The aim of these procedures is to ensure that staff:

- Recognise the signs of abuse and what appropriate course of action should be taken in the circumstances.
- Understand the potential risk to themselves and ensure that good practice is adhered to at all times.
- Recognise signs of improper behaviour from other staff and report it to a Trustee of Stratford Literary Festival at the earliest opportunity.

## What constitutes abuse

### Physical abuse

May involve actions such as hitting, shaking and burning as well as the use of inappropriate restraint. Physical abuse, as well as being a deliberate act, can be caused by an omission or failure to act to protect.

### Emotional abuse

This may include intimidation, humiliation, verbal abuse, harassment or discriminatory harassment.

### Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities whether or not the vulnerable adult is aware of or consents to what is happening. It may also involve non-contact activities such as showing pornographic material or sexual innuendo.

### Neglect

The persistent failure to meet the vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs. These needs include adequate food and warm clothing and also medical care, social care or educational services.

### Financial or material abuse

This could include monies being withheld, property transfer, theft, fraud and pressure in connection with wills, property inheritance or financial transactions.



## Recognising Abuse

This is not always easy and it is not the responsibility of staff to decide whether or not abuse has taken place, or if a vulnerable adult is at significant risk. However, staff do have a responsibility to act promptly if they have any concerns. Indications that a person is being abused include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruises, cuts and burns particularly if situated on parts of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Injuries for which an explanation seems inconsistent.
- Fear of carer being approached about such injuries.
- Sudden loss of assets.
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Fear of being left with a specific person.
- The vulnerable adult being dirty and unkempt.

This list is by no means definitive and it is important to remember that many people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. It is crucial that staff realise that this is only a process of observation, staff's responsibility is to ensure that if they have concerns about the welfare of a vulnerable adult they must report it and must never assume that others will do it.

## Responding to allegations of suspicions of abuse

For all types of responses, it is vitally important to carefully record the details of an allegation or a reported incident regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with a statutory agency.

An accurate record should be made of:

- The date and time of the incident and disclosure.
- The parties who were involved.
- What was said and done by whom.
- The full name of the person reporting and to whom reported.

Where appropriate:

- Any action taken.
- Reasons why there was no referral to a statutory agency.



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Responding to a vulnerable adult making an allegation of abuse against staff  
Staff must:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Find an appropriate, early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared. Not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow the person to continue at their own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all other times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Follow the record keeping advice above.
- Relay this information to a Trustee of Stratford Literary Festival at the earliest opportunity.

Responding to suspicions that other staff may be abusing a vulnerable adult.  
Any member of Staff who suspect that a colleague may be abusing a vulnerable adult should act on their suspicions. These suspicions should be recorded and reported to a Trustee of Stratford Literary Festival at the earliest opportunity.

If a carer makes an allegation of abuse against staff  
These allegations should be recorded and reported to a Trustee of Stratford Literary Festival at the earliest opportunity.

Stratford Literary Festival acknowledges that this is an extremely sensitive issue for staff and everyone working on its behalf. Stratford Literary Festival will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports a concern that a colleague is or may be abusive.

### Confidentiality

The principle of Stratford Literary Festival is that the welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount which means that the consideration of confidentiality that might apply to other situations should not be allowed to override the right of the vulnerable adult to be protected from harm. However, where possible every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all and by all concerned when an allegation is made and whilst it is being investigated. Stratford Literary Festival will seek to balance protecting vulnerable adults from harm whilst protecting its staff from the risk of unfounded allegations.

Approved and adopted by the Trustees of Stratford Literary Festival Aug 2017