

Safeguarding Adults Policy

Harwich Festival and Harwich Arts & Heritage Centre

Policy 02 | Version 2.0 | Revised 25 October 2026

Owner: General Manager and Safeguarding Lead | Scheduled review: 25 October 2027

Purpose and scope

We are committed to safeguarding adults and to enabling people to take part in Harwich Festival and HAHC activities free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This policy applies to trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors and people delivering activities on our behalf, including wellbeing and movement sessions. Independent hirers must have appropriate arrangements for their own activities and cooperate with ours.

An adult is a person aged 18 or over. An adult at risk may have care and support needs, be experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and, because of those needs, be unable to protect themselves. Disability, age or a diagnosis alone does not establish that a person lacks capacity or is unable to protect themselves.

Safeguarding responsibilities and contacts

Our safeguarding lead is Christopher Berwick, General Manager: 01255 319191; contact@harwichfestival.com. Our postal address is Harwich Arts & Heritage Centre, Main Road, Dovercourt, Essex, CO12 4AJ. The trustees oversee safeguarding and must ensure that an alternative person is briefed to provide cover when the lead is unavailable.

If the lead is unavailable, is the subject of a concern, or an internal response is inadequate, contact Essex Adult Social Care directly. You may also write privately to the Chair of Trustees at the centre address. Do not send sensitive allegations about the lead to a shared mailbox that they may access. Internal reporting must never delay external help.

- Immediate danger or a serious medical emergency: call 999.
- Essex Adult Social Care: 0345 603 7630.
- Out-of-hours emergency duty service: 0345 606 1212.
- Suspected crime without immediate danger: contact the police through their appropriate reporting route, including 101 where suitable.

Recognising harm

Concerns can include physical, sexual, psychological, financial or discriminatory abuse; domestic abuse and coercive control; neglect; self-neglect; organisational abuse; modern slavery and exploitation. Harm can occur online, in relationships, in an organisation or in the community. Changes in behaviour, unexplained injuries, fear, missing money or direct disclosures may indicate concern, but nobody needs proof before raising a reasonable concern.

Responding to a concern

Ensure immediate safety and obtain urgent medical or police help when needed. Listen calmly, take the person seriously and explain what you will do. Do not investigate, confront the person alleged to have caused harm, promise secrecy or ask leading questions. Clarify only what is necessary to understand immediate safety and referral needs.

Record the person's words as accurately as possible, distinguishing observation from opinion. Include the date, time, location, people involved, action taken and who received the report. Report to the lead without delay. The lead must assess immediate risks, consult Essex Adult Social Care where appropriate and make any necessary referral promptly. Any person can refer directly if waiting for an internal decision would expose someone to harm.

Choice capacity and information sharing

Seek the adult's views and involve them in decisions. Presume capacity unless there is reason to question it; capacity relates to a particular decision at a particular time. Support the person to understand their options. Do not make clinical or legal capacity determinations beyond your competence; obtain appropriate advice.

Normally seek informed consent to a referral, but lack of consent does not always prevent necessary sharing. Consider risk to others, coercion, serious crime, a legal duty and the person's ability to make the decision. Share relevant information lawfully and proportionately, record the basis and reasons, and explain the decision where safe. A family member does not automatically have authority to decide for the adult.

Allegations and prevention

Refer allegations about people working with adults to the appropriate Essex safeguarding route and obtain advice before an internal investigation could interfere with statutory enquiries. Consider temporary protective arrangements fairly; removal from duties is not a finding of guilt. Consider DBS referral duties, police reporting, insurers and Charity Commission serious-incident reporting separately.

Use appropriate recruitment checks, role boundaries, induction and regular safeguarding training. Avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations, financial dealings and personal communications outside the role. Staff and volunteers must not exploit a relationship of trust or accept inappropriate gifts or benefits. Make reasonable adjustments to help adults report concerns.

Records and review

Keep safeguarding records securely with access restricted to authorised people. The lead must record referral decisions, follow-up, outcomes and lessons. Apply the safeguarding retention arrangements in Policy 20 and preserve records needed for enquiries or legal proceedings. Trustees must review safeguarding at least annually, after a serious incident and when activities or requirements change.

Prepared for adoption. Record authorised approval in the master register. Review sooner after a significant change or incident.

Reference guidance

[gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) - safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees
[essex.icb.nhs.uk](https://www.essex.icb.nhs.uk) - safeguarding essex