

Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

This Safeguarding Policy sets out our commitment to ensure that whenever and wherever we work with children, young people and adults at risk, we do so safely, respectfully and well.

Definitions

Abuse – any action by another person that causes significant harm to a child, young person or adult at risk. This could be physical, sexual, emotional or the result of neglect.

Adults at risk – anyone over the age of 18 who

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service, they may still be an adult at risk. An adult at risk may therefore be a person who:

- is old and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long term illness/condition
- misuses substances or alcohol

- is a carer, such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse
- is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support

FormidAbility recognises that anyone can be at risk of abuse or exploitation. All people have the potential to be vulnerable in ways that are not always obvious; for example that may be connected to mental health issues and/or episodes, neuro-differences, identity and/or innate power structures.

Children / Young people – anyone up to the age of 18.

Neglect – the ongoing failure to meet the basic needs of a child, young person, or adult at risk.

Place of work - any location (physical or digital) where formidAbility is operating. This includes (but is not limited to) any location where we are holding meetings, rehearsals, workshops or performances.

Project - a time-limited piece of work that may include (but is not limited to) rehearsal and public performances of a theatrical or musical production; community workshops; educational workshops in schools, performing arts colleges or universities.

Safeguarding - the responsibility to ensure and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

Safeguarding incident – witnessing or becoming aware of an actual or potential instance of abuse or neglect.

Staff - anyone working for or with formidAbility on a permanent or temporary basis, including employees, self employed people, interns and volunteers.

Scope

Everyone at formidAbility has a responsibility to promote the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults at risk who are taking part in our activity and / or working with us as staff members. This includes being aware of the possibility of abuse or neglect, and knowing what to do if you suspect abuse, or if it is disclosed or reported to you.

Responsibility

Everyone is responsible for safeguarding at formidAbility. Staff are required to complete mandatory training and understand how to report concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for receiving and responding to any reports of safeguarding incidents, and report on safeguarding to the Board. They take the lead on ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place across formidAbility's work for keeping children, young people and adults at risk safe. They consider what safeguarding means for each project, ensure that staff complete training, are aware of their responsibilities and hold current DBS certificates where needed. They will additionally support members of staff who make disclosures, and signpost them to external sources of advice and support if appropriate.

Protecting Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

FormidAbility aims to be an opera company for everyone. That vision includes children, young people and adults from a wide range of backgrounds with different needs who may be involved in our work in-person or online:

- As performers, creative and production team members, workshop leaders and access support staff
- As audience, participants and learners
- As interns and volunteers

Everyone has the right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Everyone at formidAbility is expected to:

- Help provide a warm and inclusive welcome to the children, young people and adults at risk who engage with our work.
- Read this policy and complete any training required.
- Understand their individual responsibilities and not assume that safeguarding is someone else's job.
- Think about the risks that must be planned for in their work.
- Be aware of the possibility of abuse or neglect and know what to do if they suspect abuse or if it is disclosed or reported to them.
- Speak up immediately if they see or hear of a safeguarding issue, however trivial, and know who to speak to.
- Protect themselves and formidAbility. This includes not trying to resolve problems beyond their level of knowledge or experience.
- Be responsible for any children, young people or adults at risk they invite into formidAbility's places of work, ensuring they are safe, supervised, and do not access unsafe areas, materials or information unsuitable for their age or understanding.

If a child, young person or adult at risk discloses information that worries you, your responsibility is to report it.

Act in accordance with the "4 R's" Recognise, Respond, Record, Report

- **Recognise:** You should be alert to the possibility of abuse and be able to recognise the signs of abuse.
- **Respond:** You should listen carefully and not ask any leading questions. When you respond, never agree to keep anything you have been told secret or try to handle the issue by yourself.

- **Record:** Write down and record what you have seen or heard immediately after the incident or conversation. If recording a disclosure, try to use their words.
- **Report:** Report what you have seen or heard to the person responsible for the child or adult at risk (e.g. a parent or carer) unless the information refers to that individual. Also report what you have seen or heard to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in writing by emailing joanne@formidability.org
- In an emergency, or if someone is at immediate risk, dial 999.

The same principles apply if you witness or hear about a situation which causes you to have a safeguarding concern or had the potential to do so (a “near miss”).

Managing Safeguarding at formidAbility

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Joanne Roughton-Arnold (CEO and Creative Director). You are welcome to raise any safeguarding concerns with her, however minor they may seem. You can contact her on joanne@formidability.org

A Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead may be appointed for the duration of individual projects. Their name and contact information will be communicated to everyone working with formidAbility on that project as part of their induction.

When planning a project or event, we will plan for safeguarding and complete a risk assessment. We will consider:

- Are children, young people and/or adults at risk likely to be involved? If so, how?
- What are the potential risks? Who may pose a risk? What situations may increase risk?
- Who is responsible for safeguarding?

- Who is working on the project? How are they recruited and trained? Is a DBS check required?
- Do we have a plan to manage safeguarding on this project?
- What safeguarding training is needed by staff working on this project?

Further Information

Further detailed guidance and training is provided to all FormidAbility staff on aspects of safeguarding. In addition, we ask all staff to read and abide by our Social Media Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy.

FormidAbility supports the ISM-MU Code of Practice and expects everyone we work with to adhere to its principles.

If you are a member of staff responsible for, or engaged in a project, please ensure you read and follow the relevant guidelines.

Policy Updated: February 2025

Review Period: Annual

Date of next review: February 2026