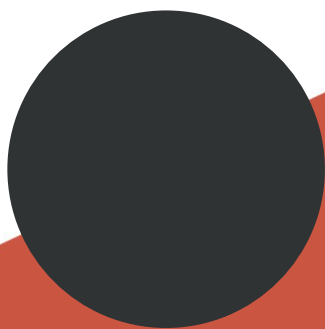


Safeguarding Policy

April 2026



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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Overview

Live performance has the power to fire the imagination, uplift and connect us. It creates moments that touch hearts and minds like nothing else. It makes memories that last lifetimes.

For over 30 years, we've been promoting, supporting and producing some of the most extraordinary events in the UK. We've brought live performance to unexpected places – town centres, village squares, beaches and hilltops – for everyone to enjoy.

In everything we do, we have just two rules: anything's possible and everyone's invited.

Vision

Extraordinary moments connect and uplift us all

Mission

We create opportunities for everyone through the performing arts

Purpose

Artistic talent: We enable outstanding artists in the performing arts to create inspiring work.

Togetherness: We strengthen communities through shared experiences that are remembered and talked about for decades.

Opportunity: We break down barriers that stop people getting involved in performing arts, be that rural isolation, ill health, social deprivation or other obstacles.

Place: We celebrate our natural landscape and sense of place.

Our Governing Documents are available on request. Activate is a charity and a company limited by guarantee with a voluntary board of directors.



Context

Analysis by the NSPCC estimates that half a million children a year suffer abuse in the UK. Based on 2.5% of under 11s and 6% of 11- to 17-year-olds who had experienced maltreatment by a parent or guardian in the previous year. (Radford, 2011) and child population data for 2011 (Harker et al, 2013 - How safe are our children?).

Children and young people may be abused regardless of their age, racial origin, social class, gender, culture, religious belief, disability or sexual identity. Most abuse is committed by those who are known to the child/vulnerable adult (VA) and who are trusted by the child or young person. This can be from within or outside the family.

As an organisation with responsibility for children and young people, we have both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure the highest possible standard of care for those who use our services.

Activate is committed to providing safe, enjoyable activities and opportunities for our participants. To this end the following Safeguarding Policy Document has been compiled.

The purpose of the policy is to safeguard children and young people placed in our care and to facilitate the best possible professional practice from Activate staff and volunteers. For clarity, this includes young people in The Remix who are disabled, up to age 25.

[The Children Act 1989](#) defines a child as someone under the age of 18.

In recognition that in some cases, a child or young person's principal guardian may not be a parent, the principal guardian for a child is referred to throughout as parent/carer. For children who are disabled, where multiple carers may be involved in their care – it is the principal carer who acts as their legal guardian whom this policy refers to with the term parent/carer.

Throughout this policy, where the word Staff is used, this also refers freelance contractors who are paid to work with children or young people, by Activate.

Policy Statement

Activate is committed to ensuring that children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated to Activate.

We will endeavour to achieve this by:

- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Ensuring that any organisation/group working with children or young people or who work in partnership with or are supported by Activate, has a robust safeguarding policy.
- Providing clear procedures for parents/carers and children or young people to voice their concerns



or lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about any issue. In addition, Activate will make reasonable adjustments to support parents with learning disabilities, work jointly with Adult Social Care to ensure coordinated help, and always ensure parents fully understand decisions that affect them.

Policy Aims

This Safeguarding Policy is provided as part of an induction package to all those employed, whether paid or unpaid, who will have direct contact with children and young people. The aims are:

- To create a healthy and safe environment at all activities.
- To ensure children are listened to and kept safe from harm.
- To support and encourage parents/carers to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children/young people.
- To ensure staff and volunteers who administer sessions are well informed, supported and enabled to provide the best possible practice.

Objectives

The objectives are:

- To raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about child abuse and its various forms.
- To raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about what children/young people are entitled to be protected from.
- To ensure that all staff can recognise signs which could signify the abuse of a child or young person.
- To promote the general welfare, health, and full development of children/young people during all sessions.
- To develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.
- To define the update process for this policy and who is responsible.

Review:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Kate Wood, Executive Director and Deputy DSL is Jen Walker-Myles, Executive Producer. This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with legislation changes (whichever is sooner).



Employment

Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers

All dance/theatre leaders/volunteers, Activate employees who will provide or supervise activities for children or young people will be police checked to ensure that there are no irregularities in their background which may give cause for concern. This includes those who will have access to confidential and sensitive information e.g. administrative staff. All new employees whether paid or unpaid will be provided with the Safeguarding Policy and asked to sign to confirm that they will abide by it.

Advertising for any jobs will be clear about qualifications and experience required to minimise ineligible applications and a statement about Activate's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people. Adverts will reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check where appropriate.

Job descriptions/application packs will be clear about the main duties of the post; the extent of contact/responsibility for children and young people; the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children and young people they are responsible for or will come into contact with. Activate's Safeguarding Policy will be provided to candidates as part of the application process.

Application forms will be used for all staff who will be working with children and young people and are designed to ascertain as much information as possible, such as but not limited to:

- Past career: full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education: Including explanation of any gaps in employment/education and reasons for leaving, National Governing Body and First aid qualifications.
- A statement of any academic and/ or vocational qualifications with details of awarding body and date of award.
- A statement should explain that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and form should request information about any previous - including spent - convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings or 'bind-overs'. 'Binding over' orders are a civil disposal available in the Criminal Courts and can, in the right circumstances, provide an effective means of dealing with low-level disorder. In summary, they act as a means of postponing a sentence on conditions.
- Consent for police and social services checks. If the candidate is to be employed, Activate will register for the Update Service within 30 days of the certificate being issued and pay for this to be renewed annually.
- Two references are taken up, and where relevant followed up by letter or telephone, with responses to the questions in Activate's Reference Request template recorded. References taken up will ascertain the person's suitability to work with children and young people. One reference must be from the current or most recent employer/line manager or HR (not from a colleague within the organisation). Where an applicant is not currently working with children and young people, but has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is also obtained from that person/organisation in addition to the current or most recent employer.



- It is made clear that all information remains confidential.
- That where necessary, dance/theatre leaders and artists hold adequate professional indemnity and/or personal liability insurance to cover their teaching role.

Interviews & Selection:

- The same selection panel should short list and interview the candidate. At least one member of the panel should have undertaken safe recruitment and selection training. Any discrepancies or gaps in employment and the reasons for this should be noted, so that they can be taken into consideration of whether to short-list the applicant, as well as a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression or a mid-career move from a permanent to temporary post. The panel should meet before the interview to discuss any issues identified in the application form, and notes of the applicant's interview answers should be collated by chair of the panel and stored (by HR).
- Interviews should assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and person specification, and their suitability to work with children and young people covering: attitude towards children and young people; ability to support the organisation's agenda for safeguarding and promoting welfare; any gaps in the candidate's employment history, any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee; motivation to work with children and young people; ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries; emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours; attitudes to use of authority.
- The interview should stress ID will be checked and prior to appointment candidates will need to complete an application for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure; if the candidate is appointed, Activate will ask them to opt in or register for the Update Service within 30 days of the certificate being issued and pay for this to be renewed annually.
- All candidates should bring with them evidence of their right to work in the UK and their identity. Right to work evidence should be as prescribed by Home Office: <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work>
- Candidates should bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualification(s). If this is not possible, written confirmation must be obtained from the awarding body. Also, documentation of registration with appropriate professional body.
- Staff who lead on recruitment at Activate must undertake safer recruitment training.

All staff details will be recorded including name, address, date of birth, details of identity check, right to work in the UK check, emergency contact, and for those working with children and young people: date of Enhanced DBS check along with who it was requested by and reference number, and confirmation of 2 references having been checked. A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications must be kept for the personnel file. Disclosure and Barring Service checks should be treated as confidential, kept secure, and destroyed as soon as no longer required. For volunteers: name, address, date of birth and emergency contact will be recorded, and if they will be working with, children and young people: date of Enhanced DBS check along with who it was requested



by and reference number.

During recruitment process if any of the following 1) – 3) occurs, these facts should be reported to the police and/or Disclosure and Barring Service (if they are not already aware). Anyone who is barred from work with children is committing an offence if they apply for, offer to do, accept or do any work which constitutes Regulated Activity. It is also an offence for an employer knowingly to offer work in a regulated position, or to procure work in a regulated position for an individual who is disqualified from working with children or fail to remove such an individual from such work.

- 1) The candidate is found to be on the Barred Lists, or the Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure shows they have been disqualified from working with children by a Court.
- 2) The applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, their application.
- 3) There are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children or young people.

If the DBS check reveals a criminal record, employers must make a judgement about suitability, taking into account only those offences which may be relevant to the post in question. In deciding the relevance, the following should be considered:

- The nature of the appointment.
- The nature of the offence.
- The age at which the offence took place.
- The frequency of the offence.

Induction & Training

The recruitment and selection process is followed up by relevant induction and training. The purpose of the induction is to:

- Provide training and information about the organisation's safeguarding and child protection.
- policies and procedures. This training should be at a level appropriate to the member of staff's role and responsibilities with regard to children and young people.
- Support individuals in a way that is appropriate for their role.
- Confirm the conduct expected of staff.
- Provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities.



- Enable the line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.
- Ensure that the person receives written statements of policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding; introduction to staff and their responsibilities; identifying designated safeguarding responsibilities; safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected; other relevant personnel procedures e.g. whistleblowing, equality and diversity, and disciplinary procedures.
- Staff will be made aware that child abuse can and does occur and that it could be perpetrated by colleagues, who are members of staff or volunteers within Activate.
- It is made clear that most abusers are not the 'monsters' most people picture them to be, but ordinary men and women, and at the extreme, clever, manipulative and powerful.
- Staff are made aware that children and young people can find it very difficult to talk about abuse. They need to be listened to, taken seriously, and have their concerns acted upon.
- Staff are made aware of what they need to do in response to concerns reaching their eyes and ears.
- Training needs for Safeguarding should be reviewed by the DSL and Deputy DSL annually. The DSL and Deputy DSL should have updated Safeguarding Training every 2 years. All other staff should have updated safeguarding training every 3 years. New personnel who will be working with children and young people will receive training in Safeguarding and child protection as part of their induction.
- For new Staff employed who subscribe to the DBS update service, the relevant project manager will login to the update service to check for any updates at least once a year.

Supervision

In general, people work most effectively where there is a supervisory structure that ensures they are supported, managed and developed. Activate will ensure that supervisors are sensitive to any concerns about abuse, act on them immediately, and offer support to those who report.

It is the responsibility of the dance/theatre leader to monitor good practice, this can be done in a number of ways, for example:

- Observation of dance/theatre leadership practice.
- Provide feedback on performance against work programme.
- Feedback from participants attending activities.



Information to give to Employees

Recognition of abuse

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place even for those experienced in working with child abuse. Activate acknowledge its staff, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, are not experts at such recognition. It is important therefore to recognise that it is not their responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place, but to report where they have concerns or suspicions where an allegation has been made.

The concern that the child may have been abused could relate to something which has happened whilst the child is engaged in an activity provided by Activate, or it may be a disclosure made by the child to a staff member or volunteer or a concern about something the child has experienced outside of the activity provided by Activate. Either would require a proactive response.

There are many ways in which abuse may manifest itself for a child or young person. They often show rather than tell that something is upsetting them. There may be many reasons for changes in their behaviour, but if we notice a combination of worrying signs, it may be time to call for help or advice. for example:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- the child or young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- someone else, a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- unexplained changes in behaviour over time e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- inappropriate sexual awareness.
- engages in sexually explicit behaviour in games.
- is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected.
- has difficulty in making friends.
- is prevented from socialising with other children/young people.
- displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- loses weight for no apparent reason.



- becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

In addition, indicators of Self-harm and Suicidal behaviour can include:

- eating distress (anorexia and bulimia)
- low self-esteem and/or expression of feeling hopeless.

For a child or young person who is disabled, in addition to the universal indicators of abuse/neglect, the following abusive behaviours must be considered:

- Force feeding.
- Unjustified or excessive physical restraint.
- Rough handling.
- Extreme behaviour modification including the deprivation of food medication, or clothing.
- Misuse of medication, sedation, heavy tranquillisation.
- Invasive procedures against the child's will.
- Neglect of personal care needs.
- Deliberate failure to follow medically recommended regimes.
- Non-compliance with programmes or regimes.
- Failure to address ill-fitting equipment e.g. callipers, sleep boards which may cause injury or pain, inappropriate splinting.

This list is NOT exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the above is NOT proof that abuse is actually taking place.

Main Forms of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Where adults physically hurt or injure children or young people by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting or by giving them alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison. In a dance or theatre situation physical abuse can occur when the type of training or activity exceeds the capacity of the child's physical capability.



Sexual Abuse

This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, fondling and the showing of pornographic material. Physical contact with children or young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The role of a dance/theatre leader, in an activity situation, could provide the means of an abusive situation occurring.

Emotional Abuse

This may be caused by a persistent lack of love and affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted. It may also occur when there is constant overprotection (which prevents children or young people from socialising), or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse. Emotional abuse might occur if children or young people are subjected to excessive criticism, inappropriate personal or sexual remarks, bullying, being exposed to undue or inappropriate pressure or exposed to danger.

Neglect

This occurs where adults fail to meet the child/young person's basic needs such as food or warm clothing, failing or refusing to give them love, affection and attention. Children/young people might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised. Neglect could include not ensuring children/people are safe, exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk of injury. Neglect could occur during organised activities if children/young people are exposed to the risk of injury or there is a failure to ensure their safety.

Effects of Abuse

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that, if untreated, they may follow an individual into adulthood. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain a stable, trusting relationship, become involved with drugs or prostitution, attempt suicide or even abuse a child in the future.

There have been a number of studies that suggest children/young people with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. Children/young people from ethnic minorities who could also be experiencing racial discrimination may feel doubly powerless.

Child on Child Abuse

Everyone should be aware that children can abuse other children. Child-on-child abuse can happen both inside and outside of a setting, face-to-face and online. This occurs when children are abused by adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs. It can also occur between a child and another child. Inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, exploitation, sexual harassment, all forms of bullying, coercive control, hazing/initiation rituals between children and young people, both on and offline (including that which is within intimate personal relationships). Adapted from: Keeping Children Safe in Education.



Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a serious form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. It involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons and has no health benefits. FGM is illegal in the UK and must be treated as a safeguarding concern. All staff have a duty to be vigilant for signs that a child may be at risk, including planned travel, changes in behaviour, or disclosures, and must follow safeguarding procedures immediately to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.

Bullying

Bullying is in effect another form of abuse and can be either physical, psychological or verbal in nature and is frequently undertaken by a young person. In dance/theatre activities the bully can be

- A parent/carer who pushes the child too hard.
- A dance/theatre leader with a "train at all costs" attitude
- Another dancer/actor who intimidates.

Bullying can take many forms.

- Physical: pushing, hitting etc
- Verbal: name calling, teasing, sarcasm
- Emotional: tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
- Racist: taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or abusive comments

Internet abuse may also include cyber-bullying or online bullying. This is when a child is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child using the internet and/or mobile devices. In the case of online bullying, it is possible for one victim to be bullied by many perpetrators. In any case of severe bullying, it may be appropriate to consider the behaviour as child abuse by another young person.

There are various ways in which bullying shows itself.

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration, clingy, depressed, tearful, reluctance to attend training or club activities.
- A reduction in the standard of performance
- Physical signs such as headaches, stomach aches, difficulty in sleeping, damaged clothes



- A shortage of money or frequent loss of clothing.

Children and Young People who are disabled

Children and young people who are disabled are particularly vulnerable to abuse for several different reasons depending on their impairment.

Reasons include:

- A dependency on others for their primary needs such as feeding, clothing and intimate care may make a young person feel powerless to report abusive treatment and might mask abusive behaviour, as well as making it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries.
- Different communication methods, ability or lack of appropriate vocabulary might provide a barrier for a child wanting to communicate their concerns.
- Social isolation
- Staff and volunteers must be vigilant about the possibility of such children and young people being abused and establish ways of working that safeguard these vulnerable children and young people.
- They can be especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation and more willing to accept bullying due to lack of recognition of those issues.
- Be more vulnerable than other children and young people to abuse by their peers.

Attitudes and discrimination can mean that only their disability is seen rather than the full picture. Activate will work closely with other agencies to ensure effective communication planning for each child, monitor behavioural changes that may indicate harm, and ensure staff do not misattribute signs of abuse to a child's disability.

Additional factors may be:

- The child/young person's dependence on carers could result in them having a problem in recognising what is abuse. The child/young person may have little privacy, a poor body image or low self-esteem.
- Carers and staff may lack the ability to communicate adequately with the child/young person and may not be trained appropriately to meet their needs.
- A lack of continuity in care or multi-disciplinary working which leads to an increased risk that behavioural changes may go unnoticed.
- Lack of access to 'keep safe' strategies available to others; and overprotectiveness of carers/services so the child or young person cannot identify what abuse is.



- Parents'/carers' own needs and ways of coping may conflict with the needs of the child/young person; pressure on family carers with limited support can be a risk factor for the disabled child/young person.
- adult abusers may target disabled children and young people in the belief that they are less likely to be detected; evidence indicates a disabled child, or young person is less likely to be seen as a reliable witness when they do disclose.
- Signs and indicators can be inappropriately attributed to disability, such as normalisation or overuse of restraint. Issues around abuse and mental health issues may be ignored or not seen due to the focus on disability; Services do not have the expertise to support a child or young person with disabilities with other needs such as trauma, neglect etc.
- Disabled children and young people are less likely to be consulted in matters affecting them and as a result may feel they have no choice about whether to accept or reject sexual advances.

Protecting Children and Young People on Planned Activities

Making arrangements for the proper supervision of children/young people is one of the most effective ways of minimising opportunities for them to suffer harm of any kind whilst in your care.

Planned Activities

- All journeys/visits are planned carefully and a detailed programme of activities for children/young people who are involved in the project is prepared.
- Ensure there are responsible adults who are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children/young for the whole time they are away from home.
- Young people are not left to their own devices, unless there are clear boundaries and arrangements for meeting up.
- All children/young people are adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times.
- In circumstances when planned activities are disrupted, e.g. due to the weather conditions, then we will have a number of alternative activities planned.
- Parent/carer consent is obtained, in writing, for all organised trips.
- Parents/carers are given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events, the activities in which the children/young people will be engaged and the supervision ratios.

Supervision of Children and Young People

- Leaders in charge ensure that all staff and volunteers who accompany groups are fully



competent to do so.

- Children/young people must be supervised at all times, preferably by two or more adults.
- Children/young people must not be left unsupervised at any venue whether it is indoors or outside.
- Staff and volunteers should know at all times where the children/young people are and what they are doing.
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision.
- Dangerous behaviour by children/young people should not be allowed.

Protecting Children and Young People Online

Activate recognises its duty of care for children and young people in its charge to ensure their safety whilst using the Internet and protect them from 'Internet Abuse'. The areas of risk are as follows:

Child sex offenders – the Internet is an ideal medium for sex offenders. It provides anonymity as well as access to child pornography, contact with other offenders and a means to access children and young people.

Contacting – there are increasing instances of sex offenders using the Internet to make contact with children and young people. They can target them through chat rooms, newsrooms or groups, email lists and using interactive games accessed easily on mobile / smart phones, laptops, computers, tablets and games consoles. They usually pretend to be someone else of a different age and sometimes of a different gender. They will 'groom' children and young people by establishing trust in much the same way as they do face to face. They will attempt to establish a 'special' friendship, pretending they are offering the childcare and affection. Once they have gained the trust, they will try to plan a meeting.

Unsuitable material for children and young people – children and young people can be exposed to pictures or written material that is pornographic, upsetting or offensive. Sometimes inoffensive material, such as pictures of children/young people engaged in sporting activities, maybe wearing swimming costumes can be downloaded and used by paedophiles. If a club posts pictures of children/young people who have national profiles related to their sport or activity, sex offenders could easily locate a child or young person, given sufficient identifying material, such as their school or sporting timetable.

The internet can be used, in particular social media sites, to engage children and young people in extremist ideologies or to promote gang related violence. Radical and extremist groups may use social networking to attract children and young people into rigid and narrow ideologies that are intolerant of diversity: this is similar to the grooming process and exploits the same vulnerabilities.

Internet abuse may also include cyber-bullying or online bullying. This is when a child or young person is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another child or young person using the internet and/or mobile devices. In the case of online bullying, it is possible for



one victim to be bullied by many perpetrators. In any case of severe bullying, it may be appropriate to consider the behaviour as child abuse by another young person.

Sexting is a term which many young people do not recognise or use, therefore it is important that when discussing the risks of this type of behaviour with children and young people the behaviour is accurately explained.

Sexting is when a person under the age of 18 shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sends sexually explicit messages. These can be images, videos or words can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, laptops - any device that allows images and messages to be shared. The legal age for sexual consent in the UK is 16. The Protection of Children Act 1978 states that

It is an immediate offence to obtain, possess or share indecent images of anyone under the age of 18 even if the images were received with the consent of the young person involved. This also means that it is against the law for anyone under the age of 18 to possess, share, or send explicit or sexual images, even of themselves. Activate recognises "sexually coerced extortion" as an emerging online safeguarding risk where children may be blackmailed or pressured into sharing further sexual content under threat. Staff must treat any indication of this behaviour as a serious safeguarding concern, respond immediately using established reporting procedures, and ensure the child receives appropriate support.

Sexting may or may not be criminally motivated and can be consensual, but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it, is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend.
- Share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age.
- Possess, download, or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

Use of the Internet – in particular social media sites or apps - must be monitored. Any computers should be kept in an open and accessible area. Children and young people must be asked to immediately exit any chat room or shut down from a site that has violent, obscene or suggestive messages or images. Any misuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

We have created a specific Online Safety Policy Statement that should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

Where there are concerns about a child being groomed, exposed to pornographic material or contacted by someone inappropriately, via the internet or other ICT tools like a mobile phone, referrals should be made to the Police and to Children's Social Care in line with the Referrals Procedure on page 22. The Serious Crime Act (2015) introduced an offence of 'sexual communication with a child'. This applies to an adult, who communicates with a child and where the communication is sexual or, if it is intended to elicit from the child a communication, which is sexual, and the adult reasonably believes the child to be under 16 years of age. The Act also amended the Sex Offences Act 2003, so it is now an offence for an adult to arrange to meet with someone under 16 having communicated with them on just one occasion, previously it was on at least two occasions.



All such reports should be taken seriously. Referrals will normally lead to a Strategy Discussion to determine the course of further investigation, enquiry, and assessment. Any intervention should be continually under review especially if further evidence becomes known.

Due to the nature of this type of abuse and the possibility of the destruction of evidence, the referrer should discuss their concerns with the local Safeguarding Team before raising the matter with the family. This will enable a joint decision to be made about informing the family and ensuring that any child's welfare is safeguarded.

* Children who are disabled may already have been assessed as a child in need by the child Health and Disability team. Therefore, if a child already has a social worker, then they should be directly contacted, if possible, regarding the referral.

Filming & Photography

At all activity for children/young people, we seek parent/carers' permission for us to take photographs of their child/young person as part of the sign-up process. The Project Manager – or for Remix sessions The Remix care manager - is the only person permitted to take photographs as part of sessions for use on social media by Activate, these are then deleted from their phone.

We will keep children/young people safe by:

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children.
- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published.
- changing the names of children whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo)
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
- only using images of children in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)
- avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused.



- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

If a Photographer is commissioned by Activate we will:

- provide the photographer with a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour.
- ensure the photographer wears identification at all times.
- inform children, their parents and carers that a photographer will be at the event and ensuring they give written consent to images which feature their child being taken and shared.
- not allow the photographer to have unsupervised access to children
- not allow the photographer to carry out sessions outside the event or at a child's home
- report concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography following our child protection procedures.

Parent/carers/Children photography:

If children themselves, parents, carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at our events and the images are for personal use, we will publish guidance about image sharing in the event programmes and/or announce details of our photography policy before the start of the event. This includes:

- reminding parents, carers and children that they need to give consent for Activate to take and use their images.
- asking for photos taken during the event not to be shared on social media or asking people to gain permission from children, their parents and carers before sharing photographs and videos that include them.
- recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share.
- reminding children, parents and carers who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

Radicalisation, Terrorist and Extremist Ideology

Children and young people can be drawn into violence, or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet via social media or other websites. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to lead to the child or young person suffering significant harm'. Those closest to the individual may first notice the following changes of behaviour:

- General changes of mood, patterns of behaviour, secrecy.



- Changes of friends and mode of dress.
- Use of inappropriate language.
- Possession of violent extremist literature.
- The expression of extremist views.
- Advocating violent actions and means.
- Association with known extremists.
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.
- Spending an increased amount of time online
- Planning to take long term holidays and visits out of the UK.

Holding radical or extreme views is not illegal, but inciting a person to commit an act in the name of any belief is an offence.

Gang Activity, Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation affecting Children and Young People

A street gang can be described as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of children and young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

A street gang will engage in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical for example it could include an illegal economy territory). They have some form of identifying structure featuring a hierarchy usually based on age, physical strength, propensity to violence or older sibling rank. There may be certain rites involving antisocial or criminal behaviour or sex acts in order to become part of the gang. They are in conflict with other similar gangs.

An organised criminal group is a group of individuals normally led by adults for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). This involves serious and organised criminality by a core of violent gang members who exploit vulnerable young people and adults. This may also involve the movement and selling of drugs and money across the country, known as 'county lines', because it extends across county boundaries and is coordinated by the use of dedicated mobile phone lines. It is a tactic used by groups or gangs to facilitate the use of vulnerable people or children to sell drugs in an area outside of the area in which they live, which reduces their risk of detection.

Be aware that children who are Looked After by the Local Authority can be particularly vulnerable to becoming involved in gangs and being criminally exploited. Children involved in gangs may be known to other services for offending behaviour or school exclusion.

Girls and young women involved with gangs can be affected by sexual violence, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, school exclusion and going missing from home.



Children may be coerced, manipulated, or forced into opening bank accounts, transferring funds, engaging in online transactions, or acting as financial “mules.” This form of exploitation may occur alongside criminal or sexual exploitation and requires immediate safeguarding referral.

Good practice

It is possible to reduce situations where abuse may occur. The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working within a dance/theatre context with children.

You should:

- Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid any situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Where possible, children should not be left unattended, however this will depend on age and circumstances.
- If any form of personal contact is required, it should be provided openly. Parents/carers today are becoming increasingly sensitive about physical contact, so their concerns must be considered and an appropriate response taken to inform them of your actions.
- Where possible, parents/carers should take on the responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, ensure that you work in pairs, and do not enter changing rooms of the opposite sex.
- Where there are mixed groups, supervision, where possible, should be by a male and female member of staff.
- You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally.
- You must place the well-being and safety of the performer above the development of performance.

You should never:

- Engage in sexually provocative games.
- Share a bedroom with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate contact.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon



- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.
- Enter the changing rooms of the opposite sex.

Failure to follow these guidelines may well result in formal action under Activate's disciplinary procedures.

Occasions may arise where a member of staff or volunteer does things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or have disabilities. These duties should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers/carers and the children involved. Where personal care must be provided by an employee, two members of staff must be present at all times, and the child should not be left alone with one person.

If a child is accidentally injured as a result of your actions, seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, such incidents should be reported as soon as possible to another colleague and a written report made. Parents/carers and supervisors/managers should be informed of all incidents.

Everyone should be aware that it is not good practice to:

- Spend any time alone with children away from others. When talking to children on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you.

If exceptionally any of these situations are expected to occur, plans on how to ensure the child is safe and sound must be made with your supervisor and enacted with the knowledge of the parents/carers.

What to do if you have concerns

It is not your role to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by referring your concerns to the appropriate agency, which is the local Social Services office, who can then make enquiries and take any necessary action. Social Services will take responsibility for informing the police. Where there is an immediate need to protect the child from danger the police must be advised. Where there are concerns about a child being groomed, exposed to pornographic material or contacted by someone inappropriately, via the internet or other ICT tools like a mobile phone, referrals should be made to the Police or Children's Social Care in line with the Referrals Procedure on page 29

There should always be a commitment to work in partnership with parents/carers or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations it would be important to talk to parents/carers or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced a family bereavement.



However, there are circumstances in which a child may be placed at even greater risk if such concerns were shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse, or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In such situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the person in charge as soon as possible.

Once the incident/allegation has been reported it is the responsibility of the person in charge to inform the social services (see useful contacts) without delay. It is important to note that if a child already has a social worker, then they should be directly contacted, if possible, about the referral. If the person in charge is not available, the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately contact the social services, who will decide how and when parents/carers/carers will be informed and ultimately become responsible for what steps to take next.

IT IS YOUR ROLE TO REPORT NOT TO JUDGE

What to do in responding to a child

Children who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening to, and taking seriously what a child is telling you, you will already be helping to protect them.

Guidelines

Create a safe environment by:

- Staying calm, not showing shock, horror or disbelief and not rushing into actions which may be inappropriate.
- Confirming you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you and that they have done the right thing. Reassuring the child and stressing he/ she is not to blame.
- Listening to what the child says. Show you are taking what is being said seriously
- Where possible remain in view, do not go somewhere on your own.
- Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain you will have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening.
- Ensure you are quite clear about what the child says so you can pass it on to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults professionals. Use open questions to encourage the child to use their own words but do not press for detailed information N.B. The law is very strict, and a child abuse case can be dismissed if it appears the child has been led or words have been suggested.
- Record exactly what the child has said to you, in a legible and accurate format, as soon as possible after the incident. As far as possible use the child's own words. Stick to the facts and do not give your opinion.
- Note the child's name, address, date of birth, the nature of the allegation, a description of any visible bruising or other injuries, your observations (e.g. a description of the child's behaviour and physical and emotional state), exactly what the child said and what you said.



- Record the child's account of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred, any action you took as a result of your concerns (e.g. who you spoke to and resulting action, including any contact with parents/carers, managers or social services). Include names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Sign and date what you have recorded and store the information in accordance with relevant procedures.
- Do not take sole responsibility - consult someone else (e.g. a senior colleague or someone you can trust) as soon as possible so you can begin to protect the child and gain some support for yourself.

NB: In determining your actions, remember that only experienced and specifically qualified and trained professionals should deal with cases or suspicions relating to child abuse.

Dealing with Allegations against Staff/Volunteers

Should a member of staff or volunteer become aware of an allegation (against a colleague) of an incident of child abuse taking, or having taken place, it is vital that the following procedures are followed:

- Take the allegation seriously. It is your duty to consider any allegation to be potentially dangerous to the child and therefore report it.
- Make a written record of any details of which you are aware, as part of your report.
- Report the allegation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, giving details of the allegation, how you became aware of it and any other relevant details. In a case where the senior member of staff may be involved, report to another senior colleague or staff member you can trust.
- Do not judge or investigate. As an employee or volunteer, it is important not to lose focus of our role. By reporting an allegation quickly, any necessary investigations and/or judgement can then be made by trained professionals.
- Maintain confidentiality. It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed. (unless absolutely necessary) as any breaches could be damaging to both the child and to any investigation that may follow.
- Any requests for information from members of the public (including parents/carers) or the media should be directed to a designated member of staff and should be given the 'no comment' response.

The DSL or Deputy DSL should ensure that a record of any referral that is made to Social Services or to the police is made, containing details of any discussion, any decisions made, whether parent/carer consent was obtained (and if not, why not). The DSL or Deputy DSL must also ensure that a confirmation of the referral to children's is received from social care, in writing, within 48 hours of the referral having been made. If 72 hours the confirmation has not been received, the DSL or Deputy DSL must contact Social Services again.



Confidentiality

When dealing with any case/suspicion/allegation relating to child abuse, you must be made aware that any breaches in confidentiality can be very damaging to the child, family and any safeguarding children and young person's investigations which may take place.

It is important that the rights of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator are protected by ensuring that only those who need to know are given the relevant information.

This will mean, at the very least, informing:

- Your supervisor or the most senior staff member available, who must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Kate Wood or Deputy DSL Jen Walke-Myles.
- The local Social Services team.
- The parent/carer of the child (only if Social Services ask for this to be done).

Informing the parents/carers of a child about whom you are concerned will be handled in a sensitive way and only undertaken in consultation with the local social services.

Depending upon the outcome of initial inquiries, staff and other agencies who have contact with either the child concerned, or the alleged perpetrator may need to be given brief details of the incident and subsequent action. The statutory agency will provide advice as to who should be told, when they should be told, and the kind of information which it is appropriate to share.

It is important that practitioners are aware the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. The Data Protection Act 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent, if it has not been possible to gain consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.

Note: The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Off Duty Contact between Staff/Volunteers and Children

Members of staff/volunteers must maintain a professional relationship with children during any off-duty contact, continuing to follow the guidelines and policies set out for working contact.

Staff/volunteers should be particularly careful to limit and, if possible, eliminate any one-to-one contact. This should also include driving children to and from activities. Where an arrangement is made in an emergency, it is important to ensure there is a second adult in the vehicle.



Designated Persons

At Activate there are three people responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. They are the Director Kate Wood (Designated Safeguarding Lead), Jen Walke-Myles (Deputy Safeguarding Lead) and the Board Member responsible for Policies, Rowan Prescott- Headley

Responsibilities of the designated person are:

- To be familiar with the Area Safeguarding children Committee Procedures as followed by the local Social Services Department.
- To be familiar with any safeguarding children procedures produced by Activate.
- To obtain training on safeguarding children and their responsibilities.
- To have responsibility for safeguarding children and child welfare issues in Activate and keep the Board appropriately informed.
- To liaise with Social Services Department and other agencies regarding the safeguarding children and welfare issues of the children and young people within work organised by Activate.
- To hold information and contact details on child abuse and safeguarding children safeguarding procedures, consultation, referral and support services available.
- To be available to offer advice and information within Activate on safeguarding children and welfare issues – making it clear how they can be contacted.
- To ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organization, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.
- To be able to offer information and advice regarding counselling services (or other) available if required by staff or child.
- To advise Activate of Safeguarding Children training needs.

Activate's Designated Safeguarding Lead should report a safeguarding allegation to the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer (LADO):

For Dorset local authority: 01305 221122 or email lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

For BCP local authority: 01202 817 600 or email LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Suspected online terrorist material can be reported through www.gov.uk/report-terrorism. Reports can be made anonymously, although practitioners should not do so as they must follow the procedures for professionals. Content of concern can also be reported directly to social media platforms – see [Safety features on Social Networks](#).



Useful Contacts

Dorset Council, Family Support and Advice Line: 01305 228558

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP Council) Children’s First Response Hub: 01202 123334 childrenfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Helpline 24 hours, call free: 0800 800500

Dorset Police:

Team / Function	Email	Telephone
Emergency (child in immediate need)	N/A	999
Non-emergency number	N/A	101
Safeguarding referral unit	mash@dorset.pnn.police.uk	01202 123334

Pan-Dorset (Dorset and BCP) directory of contacts:

<https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/8114/104f-local-directory-24082023.docx>

Dorset Local Authority Safeguarding Officer (LADO)

For Dorset local authority: Tel: 01305 221122 or email lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

For BCP local authority: Tel: 01202 817600 or email LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

A Practical Guide for Parents/carers and Carers whose children are using social media:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>

Declaration

Activate is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm and neglect.

As an employee of Activate it is therefore important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the



Safeguarding Policy. By being made aware of the policy, it is our intention to ensure that all employees are pro- active in providing a safe environment for the children and young people in their care. Any disciplinary measures required as a result of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by Activate' s Safeguarding Policy.

Signed.....Date.....

Safeguarding Referral Report

- Has the child/young person been spoken to?
- Who by?
- What was said to the child/young person and what did they say?
- Is there an alleged abuser?
- Who is this?
- Has this person been approached?
- Has anyone else been consulted?

Name of reporting person



Signature

Date

This form must now be passed to: Kate Wood, Executive Director, Activate, 7-9 The Little Keep, Barrack Road, Dorchester, DT11SQ. Tel 01305 260954.

You will receive written confirmation of its receipt.

Making a Referral

Here are some questions you need to think about when you are concerned about a young person and are considering making a referral:

- What could you say to the young person?
- How should you record your concerns?
- What information, if any, should be given to the parent/carer(s)?
- With whom could you discuss your concerns within your own work setting?
- To whom should you make an official report of your concern?
- In what format should the referral be made?
- What do you think will happen when the referral is made?

Questions you may need to ask Social Services on referral:

- Who am I talking to?
- Who is the team leader?
- Who is the social worker dealing with the case?
- What do I say to the young person?
- What is the likely timescale of further action?
- What is the likely course of action?



- When are you likely to be contacting the parent/carer(s)?
- When will you contact me again?

Next review

Due June 2027.

