



BUDLEIGH SALTERTON LITERARY FESTIVAL

The Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy Statement 2025

1. General Principles

As adults and professionals and/or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, so aiding and promoting their welfare. At Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival ("BSLF") we take very seriously the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with us and we aim to keep everyone safe but particularly children and vulnerable adults through this policy.

Vulnerable adults

Examples of vulnerable states include Lost children, Lone persons, Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol, Persons displaying erratic behaviour, Persons showing early signs of distress, Persons with special or additional needs

Safeguarding refers to an activity which is undertaken to protect children and vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm or exploitation; safeguarding involves reducing or preventing the risk of significant harm to them from neglect or abuse. As children and/or vulnerable adults may come into contact with us, strict safeguarding policies must be in place. **Every person should live their lives without harm, no matter their age, gender, ethnicity or religion.** It's vital that every child and vulnerable adult is kept safe.

2. Scope

The BSLF is committed to keeping safe any children and vulnerable adults with whom it works or who come to any of its events ("Visitors"), including events at the main annual Festival in September and spring Festival in March ("Festivals"). The BSLF acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse, and to promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.

The policy applies to the trustees and committee members of the BSLF, its volunteers and its artistic director (all of whom are referred to in this Policy as 'BSLF Members').

All BSLF Members have a responsibility to follow the 5 R's (Recognise, Respond, Report, Record & Refer) during Festivals and otherwise whilst engaged on BSLF business, and must immediately report any concerns about children and vulnerable adults' welfare to the BSLF's Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy referred to in section 5 below.

3. Preventing abuse

The BSLF is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults from harm and these procedures serve to ensure that BSLF Members act appropriately in response to any concern around abuse.

The BSLF will put in place these safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within its Festivals.

Safeguarding Principles

We believe that:

- no Visitor or BSLF Member should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation.
- we all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of Visitors and BSLF Members to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
- we all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which Visitors and BSLF Members not only feel safe, but are also able to speak up if they have any concerns.
- The BSLF is committed to safer recruitment policies and practices for BSLF Members including, where necessary, DBS disclosures, references and adequate training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- The BSLF is committed to ensuring that the Designated Safeguarding Officer and others named in section 5 below have appropriate access to training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- The BSLF will work within the current legal framework for reporting anyone who is an abuser.
- This Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy Statement will be provided to all BSLF Members and their acknowledgement will be requested. An annual briefing on this Statement will be provided to LitFest volunteers, normally shortly before the main Festival in September.

4. Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

Abuse can take many forms, such as physical, psychological or emotional, financial, sexual or institutional abuse, including neglect and exploitation.

Abuse includes:

- discriminatory abuse: including abuse based on a person's race, sex, gender or disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- psychological or emotional abuse: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation
- institutional or organisational abuse: including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practices, lack of person-centred care or treatment
- financial or material abuse: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- neglect and acts of omission: including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs
- physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint, overly aggressive or intimidatory behaviour

- sexual abuse: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material

5. Designated Safeguarding Officer

The BSLF will appoint an individual who is responsible for dealing with any Safeguarding concerns relating to children and vulnerable adults (the 'Designated Safeguarding Officer'). In their absence, a deputy will be available for BSLF Members and Visitors to consult. Should either of these named people be unavailable, or should the concern relate to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or their deputy, then BSLF Members and Visitors should contact the Chair. The following are these persons:

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Hilary Shiels
Contact details: 07970 973044, hilary.shiels@budlitfest.org.uk

Deputy: David Marston
Contact details: 07932 067010, david@budlitfest.org.uk

Chair: Sue Briggs
Contact Details: 07786 292453, suebriggs@budlitfest.org.uk

The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer and, in their absence, the deputy are:

- to ensure that all BSLF Members are aware of what they should do and who they and Visitors should go to if they have concerns that a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing or has experienced abuse or neglect
- to maintain a Log of all concerns notified to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or their deputy, including a record of the concern, information given by the person reporting it, the investigation carried out, persons contacted and information provided, whether or not any action is recommended and any action taken
- to ensure that concerns are investigated and any appropriate action taken, are clearly recorded and that the issues have been addressed
- to keep up to date with current legislation and recommendations from regulatory bodies governing the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- to ensure that BSLF Members are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security relating to safeguarding
- to ensure that BSLF Members and Visitors will be given support and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome).

6. Responding to people who have experienced or are experiencing abuse

The BSLF recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

How to respond if BSLF Members have a concern or receive an allegation from another BSLF Member or Visitor:

- Reassure the person concerned and, if necessary, alleviate guilt
- Listen to what they are saying
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously

- Don't ask leading questions but open questions
- Don't start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions
- Don't promise confidentiality or to keep it a secret
- Tell the person what happens next and who you will raise the concern with
- Notify the Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy as a matter of urgency

If a BSLF Member witnesses abuse or abuse has just taken place the priorities will be:

- To call an ambulance if required
- To call the police if a crime has been committed
- To preserve evidence
- To keep yourself and other BSLF Members and Visitors safe
- To inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy as a matter of urgency
- To make a note of the date, time, place, concern reported and the words used by the person involved (do not paraphrase), making a record of statements rather than interpretations or assumptions and give this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy
- For the Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy to record what happened in the log where safeguarding concerns are recorded

All situations of abuse or alleged abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or their deputy as a matter of urgency after they are raised. If a BSLF Member feels unable to raise this concern with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or their deputy then concerns should be raised directly with the Chair. The alleged victim will be told that this will happen.

7. Procedure for handling safeguarding concerns

These procedures apply where there is a safeguarding concern raised against a BSLF Member, where a BSLF Member has a safeguarding concern and where a Visitor raises a safeguarding concern with a BSLF Member. BSLF Members themselves may also feel vulnerable and consider that someone else, whether a Visitor another BSLF Member, is abusing them.

All such allegations and concerns should be reported as soon as possible (and within no longer than one working day) to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy. If the allegation or concern relates to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy, it should be reported to the Chair. Their contact details are set out in section 5 above.

You will be informed by them of any further action you should take or any assistance you can provide. You should not do anything that is not agreed in advance with them. Only they should make contact, if necessary, with any of the bodies referred to in section 10 below.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy will consider the matter and, if they consider it appropriate, discuss it with the Chair to determine what steps should be taken and, where necessary, obtain further details of the allegation and surrounding circumstances. They should also consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the authorities is required and/or whether other actions are appropriate.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the deputy will complete details of the matter in the Log referred to in section 5 above, including a record of these considerations and discussions. This will be done as soon as possible so that the record is contemporaneous.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to Devon's Safeguarding Adults Social Care Information and Support Service or, for those under the age of 18, to Devon's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and/or the Police whose contact details are set out in section 10 below.

8. Trustees' Safeguarding Responsibilities

These will include:

- Creating a culture of respect, in which everyone feels safe and able to speak up
- An annual review of safeguarding, with recommendations to the Board of Trustees
- Carrying out regular reviews to ensure this and related policies are being applied consistently
- Providing oversight of any lapses in safeguarding
- Ensuring that any issues are properly investigated and dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively, and any necessary reporting to the Police/statutory authorities is carried out
- Leading the organisation in way that makes everyone feel safe and able to speak up
- Ensuring safeguarding risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks, as part of our risk management processes
- Ensuring that all relevant checks are carried out in recruiting BSLF Members
- Planning programmes/activities to take into account potential safeguarding risks, to ensure these are adequately mitigated
- Ensuring that all appointments that require DBS clearance and safeguarding training are identified, including the level of DBS and any training required
- Ensuring that a central register is maintained and subject to regular monitoring to ensure that any necessary DBS clearances and training are kept up-to-date
- Ensuring that safeguarding requirements (e.g. any necessary DBS clearances) and responsibilities are reflected in job descriptions, appraisal objectives and personal development plans, as appropriate
- Listening and engaging BSLF Members and involving them as appropriate
- Responding to any concerns sensitively and acting quickly to address these
- Ensuring that personal data is stored and managed in a safe way that is compliant with data protection regulations, including valid consent to use any imagery or video
- Making BSLF Members aware of:
 - our safeguarding procedures and their specific safeguarding responsibilities on induction, with regular updates/reminders, as necessary
 - the signs of potential abuse and how to report these.

9. Safeguarding Online

BSLF Members should identify and manage online risks by ensuring:

- they understand how to keep themselves safe online; for example, high privacy settings and password access to meetings online
- the online services provided are suitable for users; for example, use age restrictions and offer password protection to help keep people safe
- the services used and/or provided are safe
- they protect people's personal data and follow GDPR legislation
- permission to display any images on our website or social media accounts, including consent from an individual, parent, etc. are obtained
- it is clear to all BSLF Members how users can report online concerns. Concerns may be reported using this policy.

10. Lost or found child or person policy

If a lost child/person is found:

- The lost child point will be located at the **Information Desk in the Festival Marquee**
- There will be 2 volunteer stewards on each shift and they must work in pairs at all times.
- If a lost child/person is reported to a member of the festival team, 2 volunteers should go together and wait with the child/person for 10 minutes where they are found in case their parents/ guardian come back. The other two volunteers must stay at the lost children point.
- Try and find out the child's/person's name and age and check if they have a mobile phone with an emergency contact number. This information should be recorded on the incident form you have been provided with along with how you were notified about the lost child/person, the time and the location on site.
- After 10 minutes return with the child/person to the lost children/person point and contact the Marquee manager who will make an announcement via the team management emergency WhatsApp using the following code:
 - 'We've found a Disney' (for a lost person)
 - or 'We're looking for a Disney' (if a parent or carer loses contact)
- Only the first name of the parent or carer will be included in the message.
- When an adult comes to collect the child/person ask them the name and age of the child/person they have come to collect and make sure they are who they say they are. You may ask for identification and must get the parent/guardian to sign the incident form.
- You must ask for identification if you are not sure if the person is who they say they are or the child's/persons behaviour or attitude gives you any reason to doubt this.
- When a child/person is successfully reunited with the responsible adult please inform everyone involved in the search using the team management emergency WhatsApp.
- If no one collects the child after 15 minutes, if the child/person is visibly upset about leaving with someone or if you have any concerns because the child is very young or the parent/ carer has been drinking alcohol and is unfit to look after the child/person then contact DSL Hilary Shiels or Sue Briggs and they will inform the police.

If a parent/guardian reports a child/person missing:

Fill in the front sheet of the incident log form being careful to get a clear description of the child/person and the circumstances under which they went missing.

If the child/person is not located after 15 minutes, if the child/person is visibly upset about leaving with someone or if you have any concerns because the child/person is very young or the parent/ carer has been drinking alcohol and is unfit to look after the child/person then contact Hilary Shiels or Sue Briggs and they will inform the police.

NB: If an incident is underway when a shift change is meant to occur, the volunteers who began the incident report should continue to handle the situation until it is resolved.

11. Important contact information for reporting safeguarding concerns

FOR CHILDREN: Devon County Council Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Tel 0345 155 1071 or email mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

The following organisations can also offer advice and information if there is a concern about a child:

- NSPCC – Help and advice Tel. 0800 800500
- Childline – Tel 0800 1111
- REACH – is a specialist service in Devon which supports young people. Tel 0345 155 1071

FOR ADULTS: Devon County Council, Adult Social Care Information and Support – Care Direct County Hall, Topsham Rd, Exeter, EX2 4QD, Tel 0345 155 1007 or email adultsc.safeguardingadultservices-mailbox@devon.gov.uk. Outside normal working hours, call the Emergency Duty Service on 0345 6000 388.

Devon and Cornwall Police

If life is in danger, or a crime is taking place, call 999. If it is not an emergency, call 101

11. Reviewing this Policy

This policy will be reviewed following any major safeguarding incident and, in any event, every year; this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Signed by:

Sue Briggs **Chair**

Sue Briggs

Date: 19.06.2025

Hilary Shiels **Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Hilary Shiels

Date:

1.07.2025