

	<b>THE MORTIMER COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY LIMITED</b> <b>‘MCBS’ or ‘the Society’</b>
	<b>SAFEGUARDING POLICY</b> <b>(to be reviewed and updated annually)</b>

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with the MCBS. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of members, staff and associated personnel associated with the MCBS.
- The design and implementation of the MCBS’s programmes and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by the MCBS, and informs members, staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

## **This policy does not cover:**

Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by the MCBS or associated personnel

## **What is safeguarding?**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, well-being and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect. It is also about being ready to respond safely and well if there is a problem.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

## **4 reasons to do safeguarding well**

1. Abuse, harassment and harm can happen to anyone – people we work with, staff or volunteers. It is not always visible and often not spoken about.
2. Abuse, harm and neglect are wrong. We have a duty to do something about it.
3. When everyone understands safeguarding and their right to be safe, people who have nowhere else to turn are protected.
4. An organisation that does safeguarding well is an organisation which is trusted.

## **Scope**

All MCBS members undertaking work on behalf of the Society and volunteers and any staff contracted by the MCBS.

Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to the MCBS, including but not limited to the following: consultants, volunteers, contractors, visitors of the MCBS, including journalists, celebrities and politicians.

## **Policy Statement**

The MCBS believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, bullying, neglect and exploitation. The MCBS will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by members, volunteers, staff or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding, as appropriate: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them.

The MCBS commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Please also see the MCBS Sexual Harassment Policy.

## **Prevention**

The MCBS Management Committee's responsibilities are to:

- Ensure all staff, members and volunteers have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
- Design and undertake all its programme and activities in a way which protects people from any risk of harm which may arise from their coming into contact with the MCBS. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our organisation is gathered and communicated
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel
- Ensure members and staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

## **MCBS Members' responsibilities:**

### **Child safeguarding**

All MCBS members undertaking work on behalf of the Society, staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

### **Adult safeguarding**

All MCBS members undertaking work on behalf of the Society, staff and associated personnel must not:

- Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults

### **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**

#### **MCBS staff and associated personnel must not:**

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, all MCBS members undertaking work on behalf of the Society, staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment which prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by MCBS members undertaking work on behalf of the Society or associated personnel to the Chair of the Management Committee.

## **Enabling reports**

The MCBS will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistle-blowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by the MCBS.

The MCBS will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

## **How to report a safeguarding concern**

The designated Committee Member responsible for all safeguarding issues is the Vice Chair.

Members, volunteers or any staff associated with MCBS who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Chair of the MCBS Management Committee either by email to [chairman@themortimercbs.org](mailto:chairman@themortimercbs.org) , or by letter c/o Yarpole Community Shop.

Where the person wishing to report a safeguarding concern does not feel comfortable reporting to the Chair of MCBS Management Committee (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if the chair is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate member of the committee of MCBS.

This can be done by emailing [themortimercbs@gmail.com](mailto:themortimercbs@gmail.com) or by letter as above

MCBS will maintain a Register of complaints and concerns raised.

## **Response**

The MCBS will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns by referral to the Management Board.

The MCBS will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to members, volunteers, contractors or employees found in breach of policy.

The MCBS will offer support to survivors of harm caused by members, volunteers, staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

## **Confidentiality**

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only and should be kept secure at all times.

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Beneficiary of Assistance**

Someone who directly receives goods or services from the MCBS. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that MCBS serves and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

### **Child**

A person below the age of 18

### **Harm**

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

### **Psychological harm**

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

### **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

### **Safeguarding**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, well-being and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff, volunteers, contractors and members.

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across MCBS, its staff, volunteers and contractors. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding

against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

### **Sexual abuse**

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

### **Sexual exploitation**

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

### **Survivor**

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

### **At risk adult**

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

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