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**St Mary’s Millennium Centre (Liverpool) Limited**

*(Registered in England Number: 3559818 and registered Charity Number: 1071799)*

Meadow Lane, West Derby, Liverpool L12 5EA

Telephone: 0151 256 0022 Email: smmcwestderby@outlook.com

[www.stmarysmilleniumcentre.co.uk](http://www.stmarysmilleniumcentre.co.uk)

**Policy Document**

**SAFEGUARDING**

**(Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Adults)**

**Reviewed / Updated: 1st November, 2021**

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| **CONTENTS** |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Purpose | 2 |
| Definition of safeguarding  | 3 |
| Aims and objectives  | 4 |
| StMMC's responsibilities | 5 |
| Safeguarding vulnerable adults  | 6 |
| Definition of abuse of vulnerable adults | 7 |
|  |  |

1. **INTRODUCTION:**

StMMC has overarching responsibility for safeguarding and is a key governance priority for the Trustees. Together with Staff and Volunteers, everyone has a role to play in safeguarding and are fully committed to:

***Ensuring best practice safeguarding is enshrined within the organisation and for creating a welcoming and secure environment, where everyone is respected and valued with particular focus on the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.***

This policy aims to assist and support everyone associated with StMMC to ensure it is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect.

All user groups and clients at StMMC are encouraged to produce their own specific safeguarding policy and procedure. A sample template policy is available for download from our website, which can be tailored to meet the needs of individual organisations.

StMMC will ensure it is ready to respond safely if there is a problem that comes to light. Moreover, StMMC will not hesitate to bring to the attention of the Local Authority Social Services Department and the Police any concerns or allegations identified concerning safeguarding.

1. **PURPOSE:**

This document outlines StMMC’s policy on identifying and responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and young people and includes a specific section on the protection of vulnerable adults. This policy particularly provides guidance for all staff who may come across concerns of this nature within the context.

1. **DEFINITION OF SAFEGUARDING:**

These include:

* all members of StMMC’s workforce
* Trustees and
* other individuals, consultants and agencies contracted by StMMC.

StMMC facilitates activities for children, young people and adults, some of whom are vulnerable adults. The policy and procedure for responding to concerns regarding the protection of vulnerable adults are incorporated in this document. Although the legislative and policy base is different when responding to the safeguarding needs for adults, most of the principles and procedures for staff and Trustees, are the same as those for children and young people.

In relation to children and young people, StMMC adopts the definition used in the Children Act 2004 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance document: *Working Together to Safeguard Children* 2018 (paragraph 2) which define safeguarding and promoting children and young people’s welfare as:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing impairment of children’s health or development

The above statutory guidance defines child protection as part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Child protection is the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

For the purpose of this policy, StMMC’s responsibilities cover:

* identifying specific safeguarding concerns that need to be raised with a responsible staff member or Trustee. Such concerns could include but may not be limited to:
* no designated senior person for child protection within the Centre
* inadequate safeguarding arrangements
* incomplete records of serious incidents
* inadequate response to bullying
* incomplete records of recruitment checks/inadequate recruitment checking processes
* lack of clarity about the safeguarding needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults
* concern about the presence of radicalisation and/or extremism, or the failure to address such issues appropriately.
* failure to share information on children and young people on child protection issues with relevant providers.
* responding to specific child protection concerns about children at risk of significant harm that are likely to need to be referred through to social care services and possibly the Police.
1. **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

SMMC will ensure that there is a clear focus on the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

SMMC will maintain a focus on continuous improvement and provide clarity about the roles and responsibilities of staff and Trustees, in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

StMMC will have appropriate measures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and that they will bring matters requiring local attention to the relevant authorities.

All StMMC staff and Trustees will be required to complete an online basic safeguarding training and assessment programme, supplemented by a refresher module after three years, and to attend safeguarding training focussing on what constitutes safe settings. Staff and Trustees are therefore expected to have a good understanding of safeguarding concerns, including potential abuse and neglect of children and young people, which may come to light in the workplace as well as in the settings we manage.

StMMC staff who work in areas involving vulnerable adults are also required to complete an online training and assessment module on this aspect of safeguarding.

At whatever level we identify risks, StMMC will highlight them and seek to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to safeguard the individuals concerned.

All StMMC employees, and those who undertake work on StMMC’s behalf, must maintain a proper focus on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, and this must be reflected both in sound individual practice and in our internal policies and guidelines. All permanent and contracted staff working with children and young people (including people who are perceived as vulnerable adults) must:

* give the highest priority to their safety and welfare
* recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
* respond appropriately to disclosure by a child, or young person, of abuse
* respond appropriately to allegations against staff, other adults and against themselves
* understand and implement the safe practice in carrying out their duties
* be alert to the risks that abusers, or potential abusers, may pose and vigorously pursue concerns to ensure that providers can demonstrate a similar level of commitment
* contribute, as necessary, to all stages of StMMC’s safeguarding and protection processes.
1. **StMMC’s RESPONSIBILITIES:**

StMMC requires that all Trustees and Staff should follow the procedures to ensure that all allegations or suspicions of abuse or significant harm to any child are reported to the children’s services department of the relevant local authority. The reasons for the action taken, or not taken, will be recorded.

StMMC will ensure that it fulfills its responsibilities to work jointly with others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and, where necessary, to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children or young persons.

StMMC will also fulfill its own responsibilities and take whatever enforcement action is deemed necessary to protect children.

Fulfill their own statutory responsibilities and comply with their own internal procedures.

1. **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS:**

The legal and policy basis for responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and welfare of vulnerable adults is different from that of children and young people under 18. *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013* only applies to children and young people until they reach the age of 18. Any incidents or concerns relating to a young person of 18 years and over, even if still at school, are not covered by Local Safeguarding Children Boards or their procedures.

Government guidance in relation to adults is contained in the document ‘No Secrets’ and the previous Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) guidance (now Adult’s List guidance). Good practice guidance is also available through the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) publication – *Safeguarding Adults: A national framework of standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work*.

However, it is important to be aware that following amendments to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, adults are no longer deemed vulnerable because of their personal attributes, characteristics, or abilities. An adult is considered ‘vulnerable’ if they receive a health, personal or social care service from a professional.

 Personal services would include, for example, help with financial matters, feeding, washing, or dressing.

In this policy, the term ‘vulnerable adults’ is used for any persons over the age of 18 who meet the statutory definition.

1. **THE DEFINITION OF ABUSE OF VULNERABLE ADULTS:**

The definition of abuse of adults is contained in ‘No Secrets’ (para 2.5). Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse may consist of single or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal, or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

##  Within this context, abuse can take the form of:

* physical abuse – including hitting, pushing, kicking, misuse of restraint, or inappropriate sanctions
* sexual abuse – including sexual assault or acts to which the adult did not, or could not, consent
* psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats, deprivation of contact, humiliation, intimidation, coercion, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services
* financial or material abuse – including exploitation and pressure in connection to wills, property, inheritance, or financial transactions
* neglect or acts of omission – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, withholding of medication or adequate nutrition and failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care, or educational services discriminatory abuse – including racist, sexist and other forms of harassment.