SP-12 Solas Safeguarding Policy

Document Type	Policy
Scope	All Staff
Approved Date	26 September 2022
Approved by	Solas Management Team
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Review Date	September 2027
Document Owner	Assistant Director (Operations and Communications)
Purpose	Outlines the principles and procedures relating to the safeguarding of vulnerable groups and staff

1. Policy statement

1.1. Solas is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards of integrity and openness as an organisation.
1.2. Solas staff, volunteers and representatives are obliged to conduct themselves in keeping with these high standards.
1.3. As Christians, we believe that every human has immeasurable value and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.
1.4. Solas does not undertake any regulated activities in respect to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act (Scotland) 2007, or the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.
1.5 This policy has been checked by Christian Safeguarding Services in October 2024 (along with other policies relating to safeguarding issues).

2. Purpose of this policy

2.1. Solas does not work directly with children, young people or adults at risk, in situations which permit or require any unsupervised contact in providing services to our customers and partners.
Solas often works with host organisations and groups under whose care individuals are placed. Solas will always comply with any specific safeguarding requirements of the host whilst adhering strictly to this policy.
Solas will always use its best endeavours to support those with whom it works to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.
2.2. This policy applies to any of our staff, volunteers or representatives including associates and contractors.
2.3. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to assist in promoting the security and wellbeing of beneficiaries, volunteers, staff and representatives and to provide overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

3. Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up with reference to guidance issued by The Office of the Scottish Charity regulator (OSCR), the Charity Commission in England and Wales, and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

4. Who operates this policy?

4.1. The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Solas is the Assistant Director (Operations and Communications).

4.2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Solas may be reached by telephone (07767 747106) or by email (safeguarding@solas-cpc.org).

In the event that a complaint involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the complaint should be directed to the designated safeguarding back-up lead, who is the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees, who may be contacted using the details on the Solas website.

5. Policy framework

5.1. There are a number of other documents, policies and procedures which seek to manage and minimise safeguarding risks.

5.2. Depending on the specific circumstances, the following documents should be consulted in order to understand in more detail how these risks are managed by the organisation:

- Articles of Association
- Complaints Process

- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary and Code of Conduct Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Risk Management Policy.

6. Code of Behaviour for Safeguarding

6.1. The following Code of Behaviour applies to all staff, volunteers and representatives and is in addition to our Code of Conduct.

Do:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Set an example for others to follow
- Treat people equally
- Respect personal privacy
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues
- Keep in mind how actions can be represented or misrepresented, however well-intentioned
- Allow people to talk about their concerns and listen
- Report incidents of bullying to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Take allegations or concerns about safeguarding seriously and refer them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ask for training or more information about safeguarding if required
- Promote awareness of our safeguarding policy.

Do Not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact
- Exhibit inappropriate behaviour or language
- Exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues
- Jump to conclusions about any issue without checking facts, or make any assumption based on age, ability or appearance.

7. Recruitment

7.1. Solas is committed to the following safe recruitment procedures and will adhere to the following principles:

- We will develop a clear role profile, person specification and application form (or when an application form is not used, a detailed CV will be required)
- All applicants will be asked to complete an application form or submit a detailed CV and include the names of two referees giving consent for Solas to approach the referees directly
- Shortlisting of applicants will be carried out by at least two people, including the line manager directly overseeing the role being recruited for
- Interviews will be carried out by at least two people
- All staff (including sub-contractors) recruited to relevant posts will receive a copy of this policy as part of the induction process.

8. Training

8.1. Solas training requirements are as follows:

- All new staff must sign to record that they have received and understand the Safeguarding Policy
- Additional safeguarding training will be made available to all staff on request.

9. Risk Assessment

9.1. Risk assessments can look different due to the nature of the project or event being assessed. A risk assessment will be carried out in relation to any new project or event.

9.2. The principle of risk assessment is to consider, in any project or event, that the response to risk can fall into one or more of the following six options as follows:

- **Accept** the risk and just monitor it to ensure we have not miscalculated and that we notice if the risk changes
- **Avoid** the risk by stopping the activity
- **Transfe**r the risk by taking out insurance cover or contracting out an aspect of the activity
- **Develop** response plans to mitigate the effects of an adverse risk event, or to take advantage of an unplanned opportunity
- **Reduce** the likelihood of an adverse risk event by putting controls in place
- Take **management action** to increase the chances of success.

10. Reporting

10.1. Solas ensures and emphasises that everyone in the organisation understands and knows how to share any concerns.

10.2. Concerns or allegations may be raised in the following way:

- Your own observations and concerns
- Being told by another person that they have concerns about a staff member, volunteer or representative
- A staff member, volunteer, customer, partner or representative tells you
- The person of concern tells you.

10.3. Solas will deal with concerns or allegations using the following system:

Obtaining Information

- Stay calm, listen carefully and allow the staff member, volunteer, customer, partner or representative to continue at his or her own pace
- Make the staff member, volunteer, customer, partner or representative aware that you will probably have to share the information disclosed with others
- Ask questions for clarification only and avoid 'leading' questions that will suggest a particular answer
- Re-assure the staff member, volunteer, customer, partner or representative that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record the conversation in writing as accurately as you can using the staff member's, volunteer's, customer's, partner's or representative's own words, as soon as you can. Ensure the record is signed and dated
- Where possible note the following:
    - date
    - time

- names mentioned
- to whom the information was given.

Reporting the concern

- Make a report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within 24 hours
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead's contact details are detailed in the Safeguarding Policy for ease of reference.

Further Action:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must make a written record of the incident as soon as possible after the event.

- The record must where possible include the following:
  - name
  - date of birth
  - address of the staff member, volunteer, customer, partner or representative
  - nature of any concerns
  - description of any injuries that have been noticed
  - an exact record of what the staff member, volunteer, customer, partner or representative has said using their own words where possible
  - any action taken so far

- The record must be signed and dated
- The record must be kept secure and confidential and will only be accessible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and others responsible for safeguarding other than where it is necessary to share the record to ensure that the matter is investigated and appropriate actions taken in response
- If the allegation has been made by, or on behalf of, a child or adult at risk the Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer the concern to the local Children/Adult Social Care Services and/or the police within 24 hours of receiving the report
- Incidents of bullying may be reported in line with the safeguarding procedures. However, it is important to distinguish bullying from other behaviour, such as respectfully challenging or disagreeing with someone else's beliefs or behaviours, setting reasonable expectations with regard to work deadlines and activities or taking legitimate disciplinary action
- If the alleged person of concern is staff, a volunteer or a representative then an investigation into their alleged conduct will take place in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy
- Solas will consider any recommendation made by any statutory authority in application of our disciplinary or grievance procedures

11. Records

11.1. All personal information that is collected in the course of working with staff members, volunteers, customers, partners or representatives should be treated as confidential. All records will be securely kept

11.2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have authority to determine who can access any particular records, unless the person of concern is the Designated Safeguarding Lead and then the Trustee Safeguarding Lead will be authorised to have access to such records.

11.3. Records will only be kept as necessary and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.