



Thames Festival Trust

Procedures for Reporting Abuse

1. What is CYPVA abuse?

An abused **CYPVA** is a person who has suffered from, or is likely to suffer from, significant harm. Abuse can take the form of:

- **Abuse and Neglect** – Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a CYPVA. Somebody may abuse or neglect a CYPVA by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. CYPVA may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, or another CYPVA.
- **Physical abuse** – Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a CYPVA. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a CYPVA. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.
- **Emotional abuse** – Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a CYPVA such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the CYPVA's emotional development. It may involve conveying to CYPVA that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on CYPVA. These may include interactions that are beyond the CYPVA's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the CYPVA participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing CYPVA frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of CYPVA. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a CYPVA, though it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse** – Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a CYPVA to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the CYPVA is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving CYPVA in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging CYPVA to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** – Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a CYPVA's basic physical and /or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the CYPVA's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a CYPVA is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
 - 1) Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - 2) Protect a CYPVA from physical and emotional harm or danger;
 - 3) Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers);
 - 4) Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

2. How a concern about abuse might arise at the Trust

Awareness of the possibility of a CYPVA being abused might be raised in a number of different ways:

- A CYPVA may disclose abuse or give reason to suspect that they or another CYPVA are being abused or are at risk of significant harm.
- A parent or other adult may raise a concern about either their own or another CYPVA.
- A member of staff, volunteer, contractor or trustee may be suspected of abusing a CYPVA.

3. What should you do if abuse is reported to you?

What to do upon suspicion or disclosure for a child, young person or adult:

DO	DON'T
<p>Stay calm</p> <p>Listen, hear and believe</p> <p>Take what the person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a CYPVA at risk with speech and/or hearing impairment, and/or differences in language</p> <p>Tell the CYPVA at risk what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared</p> <p>Record in writing exactly what has been said using the young person's words as soon as possible</p> <p>Sign, time and date (DD/MM/YYYY) the report</p> <p>Seek advice immediately from the Designated Safeguarding Officer</p>	<p>Don't Panic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is extremely unlikely that the child, young person or adult at risk is in immediate danger <p>Don't probe for more information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the CYPVA at risk may affect how the disclosure is received at a later date <p>Don't make assumptions</p> <p>Don't paraphrase</p> <p>Don't offer alternative explanations</p> <p>Don't promise confidentiality</p> <p>Don't promise that everything will be okay</p> <p>Don't try to handle the disclosure alone</p> <p>Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser</p> <p>Don't gossip with colleagues</p> <p>Don't ask the CYPVA at risk to repeat a disclosure unnecessarily</p>

4. Disclosure of Abuse

In the event that a CYPVA divulges information to a Trust staff member, contractor, volunteer or trustee about being abused, mistreated or in danger, but requests that such information is not passed on to others, the following steps should be taken:

- The CYPVA should be informed that it may **not** be possible to protect his/her confidentiality.
- The staff member, contractor, volunteer or trustee should inform the CYPVA that they will have to discuss the matter with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- The staff member, contractor, volunteer, trustee, or Designated Safeguarding Officer should make all efforts to help the CYPVA understand the need for seeking appropriate help.
- If it is felt that the CYPVA is at risk of significant harm, it will be necessary to refer the matter to Social Care, thereby breaching the CYPVA's confidentiality. However, the CYPVA should be informed as fully as possible of what is happening and why.

If a CYPVA discloses significant harm, the staff member, contractor, volunteer or trustee should listen carefully, giving the CYPVA undivided time and attention. **The CYPVA is never to blame in situations of abuse and should be reassured that they have done nothing wrong, either in relation to the abuse or in reporting it.** The aim is to facilitate the disclosure (but not to cross-examine) in order to determine whether there is real cause for concern. The responsibility for undertaking any investigation lies with the area Social Care Services Department.

The CYPVA must be informed, whenever possible, about any action being taken on their behalf and what is likely to happen. If there is no immediate danger, it is advisable to give the CYPVA time to fully understand what action is being pursued and why before proceeding.

Information concerning the disclosure, or any other CYPVA protection concerns, should be recorded as soon as possible. The record should include:

- The date and time of the interview or disclosure;
- The CYPVA's account;
- Any injuries noted;
- A report made by the staff member, contractor, volunteer or trustee which includes any injuries noted and any action taken.

The record should be signed and dated, and a copy sent to the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately. A Safeguarding Report Form template can be found on the TFT website.

5. Reporting abuse

Any action to be taken will be determined by the urgency and seriousness of the circumstances. **Where there are serious concerns for the CYPVA's safety, act immediately. If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is not available, discuss the matter with the Trust's Director or the Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding, or another member of the Trust's core staff.** Delaying the process may place the CYPVA at further risk.

If you are working on an outreach project or a project that takes place within a school, a centre, or any setting (real or virtual) for CYPVA, then you must discuss the matter with a representative from the school or centre eg the class teacher, who will then take the matter to the relevant member of staff. You must also inform the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will follow up with the school.

If the personal safety of the CYPVA is immediately threatened, urgent action must be taken. In most cases, this will mean contacting the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, or the relevant local authority's Safeguarding Partnership or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). To find your local LADO visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

In exceptional circumstances, a referral can be made to the police.

If in any doubt, call one of the following:

- **NSPCC – Child Protection Helpline – 0808 800 5000**
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/>
- **If you think a CYPVA is in immediate danger call 999**

CYP can also be signposted to Childline for 24/7 support and advice:

- **Childline 0800 1111 - <http://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>**

6. Allegations of abuse against a staff member, volunteer or trustee

If the behaviour of a staff colleague, volunteer, contractor or trustee towards CYPVA causes you concern:

- Do not ignore your concerns.
- Do not confront the person about whom you have concerns.
- Discuss your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or in their absence the Trust's Director or the Trustee with Responsibility for Safeguarding. If concerns are regarding a Trustee, speak with the Chair in addition to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Do not delay in passing on concerns to someone who is in a position to take them forward, and ensure that a proper investigation takes place.
- Do not worry that you may have been mistaken. It is better to have discussed it with someone with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.

Designated Safeguarding Officer	Designated Safeguarding Trustee
Kate Forde Head of Education & Engagement T: 07932 652 152 E: k.forde@thamesfestival.org	Olga Stanojlovic Thames Festival Trustee E: o.stanojlovic@thamesfestival.org

7. Flowchart showing how concerns and disclosures are reported

All Trust staff, including the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Officer, will deal with concerns using the following flowchart illustrating how they are to be reported and escalated: please see our policy page for [flowchart download](#).

Do not delay, do not investigate and always seek advice.