

# PENTABUS

## **Safeguarding Policy & Procedure**

March 2025

The Policy has been approved by: Pentabus Theatre's Board of Directors.

Any queries relating to this document should be addressed to:

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## **1. Pentabus Theatre**

Pentabus is the nation's rural theatre company, based in Shropshire. We are the only rural touring company that is committed to producing new work & tours to communities across the UK and beyond.

## **2. Pentabus' commitment to safeguarding**

Through its work, Pentabus welcomes individuals of all ages and backgrounds to visit the building and take part in activities, as audience members, workshop and event participants. Pentabus activities also take place outside of the building in community spaces, digital spaces, schools, and organisations across Herefordshire and Shropshire and the UK.

Pentabus work can also be accessed via our website and social media platforms.

Pentabus is therefore committed to creating and maintaining the same protection, and safest possible environment, for people of all ages, genders, sexual orientation or identity, racial heritage, religious beliefs and cultures, health conditions, those who identify as having a disability, and from any model of family life.

When referring to safeguarding we mean:

***The actions taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and prevent them from coming to harm.***

## **3. Who this policy applies to**

Our safeguarding policy and guidelines recognise our duty of care to actively safeguard the welfare of all children and adults at risk.

The application of these policies and procedures is a responsibility of:

- All employees
- Trustees
- Freelancers
- Volunteers
- Agency workers
- External partners
- Contractors
- And anyone representing or undertaking work for or on behalf of Pentabus.

All the above must follow the two most important principles of Safeguarding:

**• Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

**• If in any doubt, alert!**

## **4. Pentabus' safeguarding aims and principles**

All children and adults at risk who come into contact with our services should expect to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Enjoy a positive and meaningful experience.

This policy is designed to ensure that where a safeguarding concern arises an informed and confident response can be provided in line with the following aims and principles and the reporting guidance in **Appendix A**.

## **Children**

A child is defined '*as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. (Children's Act 1989 & 2004)*' and for the purposes of this policy child, children and young people are used to mean anyone up to the age of 18 years.

At Pentabus safeguarding children and young people means:

- The child or young person's welfare is **paramount** – the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
- The voice of the child or young person should **be heard** – children and young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously, taking account of their age and understanding. They should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives and be provided with appropriate support to do so where that is required.
- **Partnership** – safeguarding is a shared responsibility and the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met is through working in partnership. Sound decision-making depends on the fullest possible understanding of the child or young person's circumstances and their needs. This involves effective information sharing, strong organisational governance and leadership, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies, individuals and professionals.
- **Prevention** – the importance of preventing problems occurring or worsening through the introduction of timely supportive measures.
- **Protection** – Children should be safe from harm and in circumstances where their needs are not being met, they must be protected.

## **Adults at Risk**

An adult at risk is defined '*as a person aged 18 years and over who is or who may need community care services because of age, illness, physical or learning disability, or someone who is or may be unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation (including those who have difficulty in communication and may need additional help). (Care Act 2014)*'

With respect to safeguarding an adult at risk Pentabus recognises:

- **A Rights-Based Approach:** To promote and respect an adult's right to be safe and secure; to freedom from harm and coercion; to equality of treatment; to the protection of the law; to privacy; to confidentiality; and freedom from discrimination.

- **An Empowering Approach:** To empower adults to make informed choices about their lives, to maximise their opportunities to participate in wider society, to keep themselves safe and free from harm and enabled to manage their own decisions in respect of exposure to risk.
- **A Person-Centred Approach:** To promote and facilitate full participation of adults in all decisions affecting their lives taking full account of their views, wishes and feelings and, where appropriate, the views of others who have an interest in his or her safety and well-being.
- **A Consent-Driven Approach:** To make a presumption that the adult has the ability to give or withhold consent; to make informed choices; to help inform choice through the provision of information, and the identification of options and alternatives; to have particular regard to the needs of individuals who require support with communication, advocacy or who lack the capacity to consent; and intervening in the life of an adult against his or her wishes only in particular circumstances, for very specific purposes and always in accordance with the law.
- **A Collaborative Approach:** To acknowledge that adult safeguarding will be most effective when it has the full support of the wider public and of safeguarding partners across the statutory, voluntary, community, independent and faith sectors working together and is delivered in a way where roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clearly defined and understood. Working in partnership and a person-centred approach will work hand-in-hand.

## 5. Understanding how safeguarding concerns arise

This policy acknowledges that abuse exists and can present itself in many different forms including **physical, emotional, neglect** and **sexual**. It also acknowledges that abuse can be perpetrated by anyone. A glossary of commonly associated terms related to safeguarding can be found in **Appendix B**.

Concerns about the safety of a child or adult at risk may arise in different situations.

- It may be witnessed or observed.
- It may be heard from others.
- It may be told directly.

It is vital that anyone who suspects that a child or adult is at risk of harm or abuse takes personal responsibility to act. Not acting on concerns may put children and adults at further risk of harm.

## 6. What to do when a concern arises

On occasions you may be approached by someone who wants to tell you about an alleged incident or share their concerns. In such cases please remember the following:

**Do** - Stay calm  
Recognise you own feelings  
Receive the information  
Reassure, tell them they were right to tell  
Actively listen, give them time to speak  
Explain next steps to the person in  
comprehensible language  
Record what is said  
Report to Designated Officer  
Get support for yourself  
(The Designated Officer will be able to  
direct staff to suitable external agencies)

**Do not** - Panic

Criticise the alleged perpetrator  
Probe for more information/investigate  
Promise confidentiality to the person  
Make promises about the future  
Make the person repeat the story  
unnecessarily  
Question unless for clarification  
Use leading questions or put words in  
the person's mouth  
Rush into actions that may be  
inappropriate  
Disclose the information to other  
colleagues  
Pass judgement on the person making the  
disclosure or the alleged abuse

**Remember:**

- How you react may mean the adult at risk, child or young person telling or not telling their story. It may be the beginning of the healing journey for them.
- Record what has been said immediately or as soon as possible on the Pentabus Safeguarding Reporting Form.
- Involve and formally report to appropriate individuals immediately.
- Depending on the individual circumstances e.g. age of the person, level of disability, it may be necessary for an advocate to be present to enable the adult at risk or child's voice to be heard more effectively. This might be the adult at risk or child's leader, teacher, carer, or parent, unless she or he is the person of concern.
- If the supervising person is not available, another member of staff can be availed of to assist in representing the voice of the adult at risk or child, if appropriate.

A flow chart for this process can be found in Appendix A.

**7. Roles and Responsibilities within Pentabus:****Designated Safeguarding Officer**

The overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Leadership Team and Trustees of Pentabus. The Trustees have appointed Elle While as the Safeguarding Lead. In addition, there is one Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). See below for contact details.

The role of the DSO is, in close liaison with the Safeguarding Lead, to lead on day-to-day safeguarding for Pentabus.

This will include:

- Attending safeguarding training and keeping up to date with current legislation and developments in the field of child and vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding.
- Acting as the main point of contact on matters of safeguarding and good practice for working with children and adults at risk.
- Identifying and responding to safeguarding issues, raising and sharing concerns and making referrals when necessary.
- Ensuring that everyone is clear about how to report a concern and that individuals are familiar with and up to date with safeguarding procedures.
- Ensuring sufficient training is given including delivering safeguarding training for new starters, freelancers and casual staff and refresher training for all staff.
- Reviewing and revising policies and procedures on a regular basis and particularly after any concern has been raised.

- Encouraging a culture of openness in which people feel able to fully engage and support safeguarding practice.

In consultation with the Safeguarding Lead, the DSO will respond to safeguarding concerns from staff, parents, participants, public and outside agencies. Together, the DSO and Safeguarding Lead will act on any allegations and incidents in liaison with partners and relevant agencies.

There may be circumstances where the concerns are about poor practice rather than abuse; in these cases, it is still important to report and investigate as this may be just one of a series of other instances which, taken together, give cause for concern.

## **8. Training & Compliance**

All PENTABUS staff, trustees, volunteers, and freelancers as part of the Creative Engagement team will be required to:

- Read this policy in full, confirming their understanding and acceptance of this.
- Attend an inhouse Safeguarding session as part of their day one induction lead by Artistic Director Elle While.
- All staff will be required to attend a refresher training session every two years.
- PENTABUS will ensure all participants understand and are aware of the importance of safeguarding and PENTABUS's commitment to ensuring their welfare and safety is central to their engagement with us.

## **9. Dissemination**

PENTABUS will make the Safeguarding Policy available to all staff, trustees, freelancers, contractors, and volunteers. A copy of this policy can be found on our website.

Failure to conform to the policy could result in disciplinary action and possible exclusion from the organisation. All new staff, freelancers and volunteers will be required as part of their agreement to sign up to the Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by the procedures outlined within it.

When PENTABUS is working in partnership with another organisation or agency (e.g. a school, community group, hirer), they will be made aware that this policy is in place and sent a copy with any contract or partnership agreement.

This policy will be available to all PENTABUS staff, volunteers and any outside organisations or individuals, and is published on our website. Requests for copies of the documents should be submitted to the Safeguarding Lead or the DSO.

## **10. Legal Framework**

This policy and related procedures are written against the following legal requirements:

- Children's Act 1989 Backbone for current law protecting children in UK focused on social worker responsibility to safeguard children.

- Children Act 2004 This adds to and strengthens the Children's 1989 Act. It encourages agencies to work together, share information and tightens up accountability.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child – Children have a right to be free from any form of abuse.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) - statutory guidance about sharing information.
- What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015)
- Information Sharing: practitioners' guide (2018) for information sharing for under 18s without consent.
- Adoption and Children Act 2002: expanded definition of harm to include witnessing domestic abuse.
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 Made the abuse of 'Position of Trust' illegal, also made 'grooming' a criminal offence.
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003: FGM is illegal in England and Wales under this Act. It introduced a mandatory reporting duty to report 'known' cases to the Police in 2015
- Care Act 2014 Backbone for law supporting adults (over 18s) at risk, placing them at the centre of the process.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Police Act 1997 Made it a criminal offence for an employer not to take sufficient steps to check an employee.
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006: was passed to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, it prevents people who are considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from accessing them through their work. Established DBS as a single decision-making group. Manage barred lists.

#### **11. This policy should be read in line with our other policies:**

- Equality, diversity and Inclusion
- Anti-harassment and bullying
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Social Media Policy

#### **12. Pentabus Commitment to Equality**

The Pentabus, Board and staff are committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in the Company's employment practices, in the work we deliver, as well as our work in Engagement



and Artistic delivery. Our underlying principle is that all individuals are unique and have something different to offer. Our aim is to fully engage with our staff and our audience to value these differences and utilise everyone's talents.

The Company recognises our responsibility to reflect the diversity of the community we serve. We will pursue strategies to ensure that our employees are truly representative and that our services are that of an inclusive organisation. Cultural diversity will also inform the Company's Business plan and artistic planning. Please see Pentabus Equality, diversity and inclusion policy for full details.

### **13. Responsibility and Review**

It is the responsibility of all those identified in Section 3 to adhere to this policy and its guidelines. The effectiveness of this policy and its related procedures will be monitored and developed where necessary by the DSO, Safeguarding Lead and Leadership team.

The Board of Directors will review the policy annually.

The next policy will be reviewed March 2025.

### **14. Key Internal Contacts**

The Pentabus staff members with responsibility for Safeguarding are:

Elle While  
Artistic Director  
Telephone: 07976 317537  
Email: elle@pentabus.co.uk

Joanna Freeman  
Head of Engagement  
Telephone: 07442 648128  
Email: joanna@pentabus.co.uk

The board member responsible for Safeguarding is Kieran O'Flaherty

### **15. Key External Contacts**

#### **Shropshire Council**

#### **Children and Young People**

If you think a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of being harmed you must contact the First Point of Contact (FPOC), Children's Services and tell them your concerns. Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm, and Friday 9am to 4pm.

Please report your concerns to FPOC on 0345 678 9021.

If you need to report concerns out of office hours, then please contact the Emergency Social Work Team on 0345 678 9040 selecting option 1

### **Vulnerable Adults**

To report a safeguarding concern by phone ring our First Point of Contact team on 0345 678 9044 Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm, and Friday 9am to 4pm.

If you have urgent adult safeguarding concerns outside of these hours, please phone the Emergency Social Work Duty Team on 0345 678 9040.

### **You can also speak to:**

Public Protection Unit (West Mercia Police): 0300 333 3000

NSPCC: 0800 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

If you think a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, call the emergency services on 999.

If you need to report a crime, please ring 101.

## Appendix A – Reporting Procedure

### **Member of the Public or Pentabus staff/volunteer/contractor becomes aware of, concerned about, observes or suspects:**

- Pentabus employee, visitor, contractor, volunteer abusing a child or adult at risk;
- a child or adult at risk is being, or is at risk of, being abused;
- A child or adult at risk tells you they are being abused by someone outside Pentabus;
- Any incident of abuse or inappropriate behaviour towards a child or adult at risk.
- If in any doubt, alert.**



### **Immediately:**

- Ensure the welfare of the child or adult at risk.
- Check your understanding of the situation, without being investigative.
- Explain that you have a responsibility to report what you have witnessed, or been told, to someone else (i.e. using Pentabus's internal reporting form).
- To report information disclosed by an adult at risk to an external agency, you must have their consent (unless there is an immediate risk). Consent is not required if the disclosure is from a child.



### **Seek support:**

- Inform your line manager as soon as possible.
- If the concern is linked to a visitor at a public venue, for example a theatre, contact the Front of House, Safeguarding Officer for support.



**If you believe there is an immediate risk to the child or adult at risk, contact the Emergency Services via 999**



### **Report:**

- Gather as much information as possible and use the Pentabus Safeguarding Form to record the details of the concern.
- If the concern involves an Pentabus staff member, volunteer or contractor, inform the Board Trustee.

## Appendix B – Glossary of Terms

<b>Abuse</b>	Abuse means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse (and includes abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place.)
<b>Adult</b>	Anyone over the age of 18 years is an adult in law.
<b>Adult at Risk</b>	An adult at risk is defined as a person aged 18 years and over who is or who may need community care services because of age, illness, physical or learning disability, or someone who is or may be unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation (Including those who have difficulty in communication and may need additional help). The term formally used was ‘Vulnerable Adult’
<b>Child</b>	Legally a person is defined as a child until they reach their 18th birthday
<b>Children Act 1989</b>	The most important piece of legislation for safeguarding children. Mandates that the welfare of children should be the paramount consideration.
<b>Children Act 2004</b>	Builds upon but does not replace the 1989 Act. Includes the duty for all organisations to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.
<b>Disclosure &amp; Barring Service (DBS)</b>	Formally the CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) Security Clearance
<b>DBS Basic Check</b>	Contains any convictions or cautions that are unspent or states that there are no such convictions.
<b>DBS Standard Check</b>	Contains details of all spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings (apart from protected convictions and cautions) held on central police records.
<b>DBS Enhanced Check</b>	Contains the same as a Standard check plus any additional information held on local police records that is reasonably considered relevant to the job in question.

<b>DBS Enhanced Check with Barred Lists</b>	Contains the same as an Enhanced check, but it will also include a check of the DBS's children and adults barred lists – individuals who are barred from working with children or adults at risk.
<b>Emotional / Psychological Abuse</b>	This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve serious bullying causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
<b>Equality Act 2010</b>	This legislation legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some cases.
<b>Every Child Matters (2004)</b>	Promotes a new approach to the wellbeing of children. The aim is for every child, regardless of background or circumstances, have the support they need to achieve their full potential.
<b>Financial Abuse</b>	This is a type of abuse which includes having money or other property stolen, being defrauded, being put under pressure in relation to money or other property and having money or other property misused.
<b>FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)</b>	FGM comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genital organs or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
<b>Forced Marriage</b>	Can be the physical pressure to marry (i.e. by threats or violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (feeling of bringing shame on the family). Forced marriage is illegal in the UK, including taking someone overseas to marry or marrying someone who lacks mental capacity.
<b>Harm</b>	Harm means abuse or the impairment of physical or mental health or physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. Seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another person is also a form of harm.
<b>Hate Crime</b>	Crimes committed against someone because of their disability, transgender identity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation are hate crimes and should be reported to the police.

<b>Looked After Children</b>	A 'Looked After Child' is a child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24hrs. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care. (NSPCC)
<b>Mental Capacity Act</b>	Legislation that defines the ability for anyone 16 years or over to make their own decisions. It states that each individual has the right to make their own decision even if others perceive it to be an unwise decision and that an adult must be assumed to have consent.
<b>Neglect</b>	Is a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's wellbeing or, in the case of a child, development.
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates symptoms or deliberately induces illness.
<b>Radicalisation</b>	Radicalisation Refers to the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.
<b>Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA)</b>	ROA allows most convictions and all cautions, reprimands and final warnings to be considered spent after a certain period – the rehabilitation period ROA also gives people with spent convictions etc the legal right not to disclose them when applying for most jobs, most courses and all insurance purposes.
<b>Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006</b>	SVGA was passed to help avoid harm or risk of harm, by preventing people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and adults at risk from gaining access to them through their work.
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	Involves forcing or enticing a child to part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical or non-physical contact, including penetration or non- penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. In adults this includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not or could no consent and/or was pressured into consenting.
<b>Whistleblowing</b>	Refers to Pentabus Confidential Reporting Policy which supports all employees to feel able to "speak up" about things we see, hear or suspect are not right so that they may be investigated, addressed or resolved.

