



ROYAL OPERA HOUSE COVENT GARDEN FOUNDATION

Safeguarding Policy: Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

August 2026

This policy is up-to-date as of August 2026 when it was approved by the Exec. It will be reviewed annually, but also after a serious safeguarding incident and/or change in the law.

KEY DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Document Ownership and Date	
Document owner	Safeguarding Manager
Date of this version	August 2026
Audience and Context	
Applies to	The policy applies to all contingent staff and artists, paid or unpaid at the Royal Ballet and Opera, as well as partner organisations and their staff engaged in Royal Opera House activities.
Related policies and procedures	Safeguarding Framework Safeguarding in Performance Activities Safeguarding Non-performance Activities Photographing Children, Young People and Adults at the Royal Opera House Safeguarding incident response plan Bullying and Harassment Policy Data Protection Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Health & Safety Policy Recruitment Policy Whistleblowing Policy

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Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all staff in any capacity, paid or unpaid and includes 3rd party contractors. It is also relevant to people with whom we engage, including children and their parents / guardians / carers.

The policy has the full support of the Board of Trustees and Executive Steering Group.

Application of this policy

This policy is related to safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk. Matters related to staff, such as bullying and harassment, are managed by the HR Team and the policies can be found [here](#). This is shown in the diagram below.



Context

The Royal Opera House Covent Garden Foundation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, with its registered office at Bow Street, London, WC2E 9DD. Registered in England No. 480523 | Registered Charity No 211775. The Royal Ballet and Opera (RBO) is regulated by the Charity Commission

The RBO works across England and Wales, with sites in Covent Garden, Thurrock and Aberdare and tours outside the UK regularly. We also work extensively

The RBO produces world class opera and ballet, as well as a significant Learning and Participation programme working with schools, children and marginalised adult groups. Some opera and ballet productions include children who are licensed to perform under The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014.

Approval for children and young people to perform at Covent Garden is either through a 'Body of Persons Approval' (BOPA) from Westminster City Council, or an individual license from the child's local authority. For large projects across England, activities are approved through a National BOPA applied for through the Secretary of State for Education.

There are approximately 1,070 contracted staff at the RBO, with additional freelance and casual staff and over 150 volunteers. There are also 340 staff sub-contracted through 3rd party organisations (cleaning, catering etc).

Equal opportunities statement

The RBO is committed to providing equity of opportunity and protection from abuse for all in line with our values, our commitment to diversity and inclusion and relevant legislation.

Comments and actions that contribute to discrimination, harassment or victimisation are not acceptable and will be challenged. Such incidents involving children will be recorded and shared with parents and carers, and for those involving adults at risk, their next of kin and the relevant agencies when necessary and appropriate.

Policy Aim

The RBO aims to implement the principles of the Government's statutory 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance, which underpins child protection and safeguarding in England, The Care Act 2014, and includes guidelines from the NSPCC and other sources such as NNCEE (National Network for Children in Employment and Entertainment), Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and SAFEcic. We also operate in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

Its purpose is to:

- Demonstrate its commitment to the welfare of children, young people, adults at risk and staff.
- Outline the legal requirements, organisational procedures and best practice for the protection and safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.

The policy has two aspects of intervention:

- **PROACTIVE / PREVENTATIVE** – providing guidance to ensure steps are taken to reduce the likelihood of harm or abuse to children and/or adults at risk.
- **REACTIVE / RESPONSIVE** – ensuring plans are in place to respond to concerns of harm or abuse, to ensure the child/adult at risk is supported, and the RBO reviews and puts measures in place to prevent this situation happening again.

Proactive / preventative measures are in place for different scenarios. It is essential we plan, and risk assess all our work with children, young people and adults at risk, and while background checks are in place where appropriate for those working closely with children, young people and adults at risk, this is part of a wider matrix of measures which are in place including relevant HR policies and processes.

The RBO endeavours to provide a safe, secure and engaging environment for all. We will achieve this through proactive leadership, and engagement, also by adhering strictly to policy, guidance and risk assessments alongside visible commitment to wellbeing. Our organisation holds current Public and Employer Liability Insurance which covers all our activities.

Why do we need a policy to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk?

Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with children, young people, adults at risk, parents, carers and/or families have responsibilities for safeguarding. It is important to remember that children, young people and adults at risk can also abuse and that such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

Everyone who works with or deals with children or adults at risk in The RBO in any capacity must read and ensure they understand this policy and are aware of and implement the procedures and protocols relevant to their role.

To undertake these responsibilities, we have:

- senior managers and board members committed to a safeguarding culture
- clear guidance on peoples' responsibilities and accountability
- a culture of listening to children, young people and adults at risk
- safer recruitment practices for all staff, artists and volunteers working directly with children, young people and adults at risk
- procedures for safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk
- procedures for dealing with allegations against, and concerns about any personnel
- mandatory induction and further safeguarding training for staff in contact with children, young people and adults at risk for staff, paid and unpaid
- agreements about working with other organisations and agencies.

In the context of this policy, when we talk about 'safeguarding' or 'protecting' we do not mean preventing accidents as this is covered by Health and Safety.

This policy is mandatory and must be applied in all situations where the RBO works with children, young people or adults at risk, and all efforts must be made to comply with this policy.

Policy statement for protecting children, young people and adults at risk

The Royal Ballet and Opera believes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We recognise that the care, protection and welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount and that these groups have the right to be protected from all types of harm.

The RBO has a fundamental duty of care towards all children, young people and adults at risk who participate in RBO activities, whether as a performer, visitor or through an activity or project. This applies to everything the RBO does regardless of where it is delivered and includes online / digital delivery.

The RBO is committed to:

- Valuing, respecting and listening to children, young people and adults at risk; preventing anything which contradicts their dignity and rights;
- Ensuring safe recruitment practices are followed when employing staff;
- Developing and maintaining appropriate systems to protect children, young people and adults at risk from abuse;
- Training staff to ensure there is a common understanding of recognising abuse and, reporting concerns;
- Sharing information about concerns with appropriate agencies, involving children and parents as appropriate, while maintaining confidentiality;
- Developing an environment of safety and security, operating to the City of Westminster's guidelines for the care of children in stage performances and local Safeguarding Partnership and Board's policies and Procedures.

The RBO's work is guided by the following principles:

- Considering the best interests and welfare of children, young people and adults at risk as paramount, and these are factored into decision making;
- Ensuring a child-centred and rights-based approach is used to ensure children and young people are in focus during planning, delivery and performances;
- Ensuring an at-risk adults-centred and rights-based approach is used to ensure at risk adults are in focus during planning, delivery and performances;
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality to ensure sensitive personal data is protected and people will be informed about issues on a need to know basis;
- Proactively recognising elements of risk and taking all necessary steps to reduce this risk;
- Ensuring suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately, and that all staff are aware of how to report an issue.

Glossary and definitions used in this policy

Children and Young People:

There is no single law that defines the age of a child across the UK. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991, states that a child “means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (Article1, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (16th in Scotland).

Where this document refers to ‘children and young people’ this refers to anyone under the age of 18.

Adults at risk:

This Policy will also relate to adults at risk, as similar principles of care and protection apply to this group.

An adult at risk is a person over the age of 18 years and is:

- having needs for care and support, and;
- experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect and;
- as a result of those care needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Contingent workforce:

Guest artists, freelancers, casuals, volunteers, work experience, contractors.

Position of Trust:

A ‘position of trust’ is a legal term and applies to situations where the child or young person has some dependency on the adult involved, often combined with an element of vulnerability of the child. At the RBO, we consider roles such as chaperones, dance associates / teachers and healthcare staff to be in positions of trust and have additional measures in place to deter people from abusing their position.

RBO employees / staff and artists:

Those employed on a permanent or fixed-term basis.

Trustee:

The Board of Trustees lead the RBO and decide how it is run. The board holds overall accountability for safeguarding. There is a nominated trustee for safeguarding within the board.

Volunteer

Volunteers are people who give time to the RBO to carry out certain tasks and do not receive remuneration for what they do. RBO volunteers carry out many tasks for example front of house such as welcoming people, and admin such as creating ALT TEXT for images.

Young and emerging adults

This term is used to describe those who are aged from 18 into their mid-twenties. This age group are recognised as having vulnerabilities due to the transition between childhood and adulthood where they are navigating significant life changes such as finishing education, finding work, as well as neurological factors such as ongoing brain development and identity crisis due to the transition.

Young Performers:

Young people (Under 18) engaged by the Royal Ballet and Opera to perform a specific role as a part of a production. For the Royal Ballet School 'Young Performers' refers to all their students regardless of their age / school year.

Creating a safe environment for children and young people¹ at the RBO

We all have a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It is vital you maintain professional standards of behaviour, so they feel safe and supported. Sadly, misunderstandings can and do occur and can have very serious consequences for staff. The following guidance should be applied to your working life. You should recognise that a failure to do so may result in formal disciplinary action.

Everyone, regardless of their role must read and act upon the Safeguarding Policy, always speak up about safeguarding concerns, and read and understand the Whistleblowing and anti-Harassment and Bullying Policies.

Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity. Do not use language or behaviour to humiliate, demean or undermine and do not use offensive words and phrases in any language when they are present. Be especially careful of the use of sarcasm, as this can be misinterpreted and is not easily understood by those for whom English is not their first language.

To protect yourself, it is important that you always act in a professional and transparent manner around children and young people and are careful not to behave in a way that could reasonably be subject to misinterpretation. Do not meet children you have interacted with through the RBO socially in person or online, and do not share personal information such as phone numbers. Do not accept any gifts or hospitality from children, young people, parents or guardians.

Time and attention must be allocated on a needs basis, as not everyone learns at the same rate. No rewards or gifts should be given to single out individuals. Rewards and gifts can be subject to misinterpretation and may be considered bribery or grooming. It is important to discuss any gifts or rewards used in your professional life with your line manager to ensure that they are acceptable.

Should you become aware that a child is behaving towards you in a way that suggests that they may have become infatuated, you must ensure your own behaviour cannot be subject to misinterpretation. Advise your line manager and/or the safeguarding manager immediately so that appropriate and sensitive action can be taken. It is never appropriate for a member of staff to have a personal or sexual relationship with a child or young person.

Avoid unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with a child and follow the guidance in the 'Safeguarding Policy: Children, Young People and Adults at Risk' around physical contact with children if you are in a role where contact is necessary as part of your job.

If at any point you feel concerned about a situation that might compromise your professional standing; or you are concerned about the behaviour of another adult or child, talk to your line manager, the Safeguarding Manager, a senior HR Manager or report your concern to: RBOSafeguarding@roh.org.uk

¹ This includes students from The Royal Ballet School who are 18 or older. Referred to as "children" on this page.

Related Policies

Data Protection

We will treat any personal information by which an individual can be identified, for example, name, address, and email, in accordance with the provisions of Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and will not share information with any third party, except where required by law.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern externally about a person or practice within the RBO, which could affect others in an illegal and or harmful way.

The RBO promotes the sharing of any concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk as soon as possible with the Safeguarding Manager or DSL.

If individuals reporting their concerns within our organisation do not feel they have been acted upon then we support their right to report these concerns to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) (England and Wales only) social care services, the police, and /or the Charity Commission

Other documents relevant to this policy

There are specific processes and protocols which should be applied when working with children and/or adults at risk in any context related to our work, and these should be adhered to by all staff. They outline specific approaches to children who we connect with across the RBO. These documents are available internally only.

- Safeguarding in Performance Activities
- Safeguarding Non-performance Activities
- Photographing Children, Young People and Adults at Risk at the RBO
- E-safety risk assessment

Recruitment

The RBO is committed to safe recruitment of contracted staff in line with the relevant legislation and guidance from government and the Charity Commission for recruiting all staff, paid or unpaid. We do this by:

- advertising employment vacancies with a clear commitment required to safeguarding
- assigning all contracted posts clear job descriptions
- obtaining full personal details via an application form, or CV, and with relevance to previous work with children, young people and adults at risk for recruitment to employed roles which include as a responsibility for these groups.
- when a candidate is offered employment, the relevant criminal declaration form will be sent for completion as set out by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, as amended
- always taking up written references for new employees, one from the most recent employer or education establishment
- where possible, undertaking all interviews face to face based on the job description

- ensuring, where practicable, that at least one person on each interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment training, in line with the relevant Charity Commission safe recruitment guidelines.
- Having clear procedures and records for interviewing to ensure we are satisfied, and can evidence that the applicant is appropriate and suitable

Any appointment will only be confirmed subject to:

- a satisfactory ID and right to work check
- Criminal records check where job meet the threshold
- a follow up of written references by telephone if relevant to the vacant post
- confirmation of the Right to Work in the UK for employed personnel
- occupational health fitness to work as relevant

Roles and Responsibilities

The RBO has specific legal obligations under UK law related to children, young people, and adults at risk. We are required to report any serious safeguarding incident to the Charity Commission, and failure to report could result in regulatory action.

The RBO has a duty of care for any child, young person, or adult at risk with whom it interacts, regardless of the nature of the interaction, as well as a responsibility to act in the person's best interests if it becomes aware of a risk of harm. This is the case even if the risk lies away from the RBO.

Everyone shares responsibility for promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk regardless of their specific role. The Exec are accountable for safeguarding within their area of work, and report to The Board of Trustees who hold ultimate accountability for safeguarding at the RBO.

Line of Accountability for Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk

Everybody working for the RBO, whether as a permanent, casual or freelance member of staff, or as a volunteer, and regardless of seniority or role, has a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk. Everyone must be vigilant to the signs that may indicate harm or a risk of harm, and must report any disclosures or concerns relating to children, young people and adults at risk, as soon as possible, through the Safeguarding manager, one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs), the safeguarding QR code, via the confidential email: RBOSafeguarding@roh.org.uk or the 3rd party '[Speak Up](#)' service.

The accountability for safeguarding at board or committee level is shared between members. Safeguarding is on the organisation's risk register. The RBO complies with the PREVENT Duty. We also have a lead Safeguarding Trustee

The Safeguarding Steering Group lead by the Chief People Officer meets 3 times per year. The group comprises of senior managers across the house and meets to recognise risk and ensure measures are in place to mitigate those risks. The CPO And safeguarding manager will regularly meet the Designated Safeguarding Trustee to ensure the Board have the latest relevant information. The CEO's report to the Board has Safeguarding included as a standing item.

Lead and Deputy Leads for Safeguarding

The role of the Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads at the RBO is to oversee and ensure that our safeguarding policy, which includes online safety, is fully implemented.

Their responsibilities are:

- monitoring and recording concerns
- making referrals to social care, or police, as relevant, without delay
- liaising with other agencies
- arranging training for all staff

One of the DDSLs is always available to support or cover for the Lead. Any complaints or allegations against the Lead for Safeguarding will be handled by the Chief People Officer.

Safeguarding Trustee
Alistair Summers
Executive Director responsible for safeguarding
Ann Paul Chief People Officer: Ann.Paul@roh.org.uk
Safeguarding Lead
Gaynor Evans, Safeguarding Manager: Gaynor.Evans@roh.org.uk Tel: 02072129653
Media: All media enquiries will be handled by Chloe Westwood: Chloe.Westwood@roh.org.uk

Departmental DDSLs (Contact on firstname.lastname@roh.org.uk)			
Name	Job title	Department	Location
Adam Holgado	FOH Manager	VE	FOH/Red L5
Adrian Villasenor	Head Costume Performance	TPC	Blue L3
Alex Hensby	General Manager	L&P	Red L5
Alice Ceiriog-Hughes	Senior Marketing Manager	A&C	Green L3
Allie Duthie	Events programme manager	L&P	Red L5
Deirdre Chapman	Repetiteur	Royal Ballet	Blue L3
Ellen Dawson	Assistant Stage Manager	TPC	Yellow L2
Gabriella Wilby	Events Officer	D&A	Red L7
Jai Channa	FOH Manager	VE	FOH/Red L5
Jess Clark	FOH Manager	VE	FOH/Red L5
Katie Elphick	Schools business & ops manager	L&P	Purfleet
Laura Bray	CTD Programme Manager	L&P	Red L5
Natalie Barron	Children's Coordinator	HR	Red L1
Rachel Vickers	Company & Tours Manager	Royal Ballet	Blue L3
Sal Scalzo	FOH Manager	VE	FOH/Red L5
Samantha Potts	Visitor Experience Director	VE	FOH/Red L5
Sarah Waterman	Apprentices and WE Manager	HR	Red L5
Sophie Steers	Youth Opera Programme Manager	L&P	Red L5
Victoria Green	Senior Events Manager	D&A	Red L7

Induction and Training

As part of the onboarding process in Dayforce all newly employed staff record they have received and understood this policy at point of being contracted. All staff complete an induction which includes safeguarding.

When needed, staff will receive further safeguarding training, at the appropriate level, as soon as possible. We also agree a probationary period of three months with clear goals. Updated safeguarding training is normally required every 2 years (online) or three years (face to face).

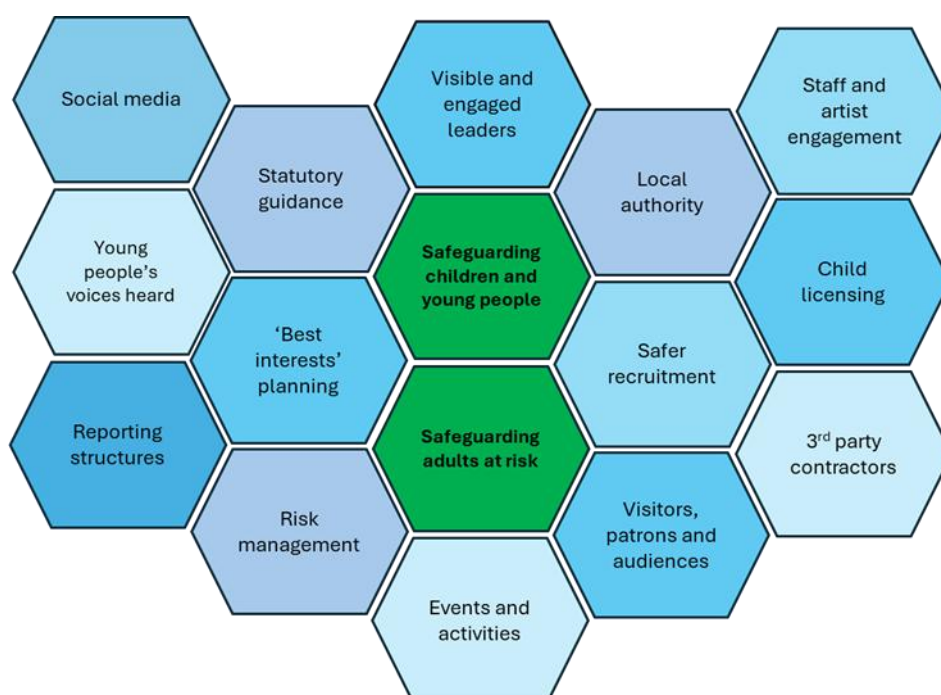
Staff working directly with at risk groups will also undertake the free online government training for Prevent and FGM.

The 'Safeguarding Matrix'

To eliminate safeguarding risk, we need embedded measures across all our work, and safeguarding needs to be understood by all staff and contingent workers.

Below is an example of some of the different areas of our work which are integral to keeping children, young people and adults at risk safe in the RBO.

Where children, young people and adults at risk are part of our work, we should always adopt an approach which is centred on their safety and wellbeing.



Recognising abuse in children, young people and adults at risk

Abuse can happen in different settings (home, community, youth group, school, hospital) and the perpetrator is normally someone known to the child, such as a family member, youth worker, or teacher. Abuse can also happen in an environment such as the RBO where we work with children as performers, audiences, in workshops and so on. It is essential that all staff understand the signs and symptoms of abuse, regardless of their role, and know how to report concerns.

For details of types of abuse, see [Appendix 1](#).

Responding to and recording a disclosure

The RBO has a duty of care to ensure we respond appropriately to situations of actual or suspected abuse, with the primary focus being the best interest of the child, young person, or adult at risk who is the victim of abuse or alleged abuse.

All allegations or concerns must be taken seriously, regardless of who the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim(s) are, and regardless of the situation.

When a disclosure is made by a child, young person or adult at risk it is important to remember to:

- take what you are being told seriously
- stay calm and reassure
- do not investigate
- do not delay

As soon as possible afterwards:

- seek advice from your departmental safeguarding lead
- make a careful recording of anything you are told or observe, date and sign.

Talking about any form of abuse is difficult, not only for the victim, but also for the person they make their disclosure to. People tend to seek out ~~disclose to~~ someone they consider a *trusted adult*, ~~for example a teacher or police officer~~, however they may disclose to anyone they feel they have that connection with.

Staff are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has taken place, but must report concerns, even where there is no real clarity, for example when intuition tells us something is not right.

Staff cannot agree to keep information related to concerns or suspected abuse private, this applies to the alleged victim and the alleged abuser. The individual sharing the information must be reassured that this is not their responsibility but now that of the organisation to follow up in the appropriate way in line with policy.

A disclosure may come from someone telling you:

- they have or are being abused
- they have concerns about someone else
- they are themselves abusing or likely to abuse someone else

We fully endorse the principal of the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, overriding any obligations of confidence we may hold to others. No one working, or involved, with our organisation can promise absolute confidentiality. Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a need-to-know basis.

Timely and accurate written records play an essential role in safeguarding individuals, who may have suffered, are suffering or at significant risk of suffering harm. It is important that records are shared at the appropriate time when necessary.

Where appropriate, referrals will be made by the RBO to the relevant authorities, for example social services or the police. The decision to refer will be made by the Chief People Officer, based on advice provided by the Safeguarding Manager. Individuals must never make this decision in isolation, unless a child or adult at risk is at risk of immediate harm, where the emergency services are contacted.

Any safeguarding matters specifically related to children, young people or adults at risk, should be referred to the Safeguarding Manager, who will report the matter to the Chief People Officer.

Any safeguarding matters related to RBO staff, casuals, freelancers or volunteers should be referred to the relevant HR Business Partner, who will report the matter to the Chief People Officer.

For concerns related to children, young people or adults at risk, contact:

Gaynor Evans – Safeguarding Manager:

Tel: 0207 212 9653

E-mail:

Gaynor.Evans@roh.org.uk or: RBOSafeguarding@roh.org.uk

For further details on responding to allegations and concerns specifically related to children, young people or adults at risk, see:

Appendix 2: [Handing a Disclosure](#)

Appendix 3: [Handling Allegations](#)

Appendix 4: [Reporting a Concern or Disclosure \(form\)](#)

You can also report a concern specifically related to children, young people or adults at risk, see using this QR code:



Appendix 5: [The RBO reporting system](#)

Whenever you have a concern you should report it:

Don't think "What if I say something?"

Think "What if I don't?"

How we work

Consent

When consent is required for any activity or intervention we will, unless it is an emergency, obtain consent from the individual if of sufficient age and or understanding.

Where possible parents will be asked to provide consent for children and young people, and we ask parents to discuss this with their child or young person to ensure they are aware of what we are asking and consents to it.

We recognise that consent is an ongoing process, and people have the right to refuse or withdraw their consent at any time.

When working with young performers, for example in a rehearsal room, creative teams are advised to explain clearly what they require the child or young person to do and ask for consent. For ballet, where physical contact is part of the nature of the artform, no touch should be initiated without asking for consent. Guidance is available for creative teams working with young performers from safeguarding or company managers.

Staff Ratios to Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

There must always be a minimum of two responsible adults present for any activities involving children, young people, and adults at risk.

For activities related to performance, we follow the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014. This guidance has a ratio of 1:12 for chaperones to young performers, however we work to 1:10 as a minimum.

All activities are risk assessed, and staffing ratios are considered at this point, in some cases the ratio will change with adults supervising fewer children, young people, and adults at risk.

Some activities involve volunteers who receive an event briefing, which includes safeguarding and is delivered by the DSL. They also have a supervisor should they need support.

Performance activities

Children, young people and adults at risk may be contracted to perform at the RBO or during a project elsewhere in England. For performance related activities, the following additional measures are in place:

- The activity is covered by a license, exemption or via the RBO Body Of Persons Agreement. This includes a detailed risk assessment related to the activity which is submitted to the licensing authority
- Professional licensed chaperones from our team of chaperones are assigned to the production or project
- Chaperones work to the guideless as laid out in our internal chaperone handbook, and undertake their work with the child's best interests at the centre of everything they do
- All young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday are chaperoned at the RBO
- Health and Safety and stage inductions are completed to ensure the children, young people and adults at risk are familiar with the stage area and know the stage manager.

Lone and One to One Working

We do not work one to one with children, young people and adults at risk to protect both individuals. Should a request be made to the safeguarding manager for lone working this would need to be justified, and a risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure:

- the care or activity provided is suitable for one to one working,
- the lone worker has been trained to undertake this particular role,
- that health and safety issues have been identified and recommendations followed,
- safeguards are in place to protect individual's rights to safe working practice,
- safeguards are in place in relation to strategies for emergency situations,
- accurate and relevant written recording is maintained following any care and activity, signed and dated.

Visiting cast and creatives

We work across the house with visiting creative teams and artists. It is the responsibility of the Company / General Manager to ensure that they receive the RBO safeguarding information prior to their starting date. At the point of contacting, they are sent and sign to say they have received and read the code of conduct. Briefings will also be given on arrival by a member of the safeguarding team or the programme manager.

Those working with children and young people in a position of trust, for example Dance Associates for Learning and Participation must have a valid enhanced DBS on the update system, or have a DBS completed by the RBO before commencing their work. A condition of their contract is to enrol their DBS onto the update service so we can check their status at any point in time.

3rd Party contractors (services)

Services such as cleaning and catering are provided by 3rd party contractors. As part of contracting, all 3rd parties are given a code of conduct which includes safeguarding. They are also briefed on what to do and what not to do when working around children, young people and adults at risk, and are given information on how to escalate safeguarding concerns should they have any.

Code of Conduct

We aim to provide a safe environment free from discrimination, upholding and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. We undertake to:

- ✓ treat all children and young people and adults at risk with respect and dignity
- ✓ ensure that their welfare and safety is paramount
- ✓ maintain professional boundaries face to face and when using technology
- ✓ ensure any intimate touch required, to carry out care, treatment or training is within relevant guidelines and is safe and appropriate.
- ✓ always listen to individuals and take account of their wishes and feelings
- ✓ always act in a professional way and not accept bullying, swearing or other disruptive behaviour
- ✓ liaise openly with parents and carers
- ✓ only use physical contact if necessary to keep a person safe
- ✓ avoid being alone with children, young people and adults at risk
- ✓ listen to, and act upon, any disclosures, allegations, or concerns of abuse
- ✓ participate in approved safeguarding training at appropriate levels
- ✓ always follow our safeguarding policy
- ✓ make activities safe, fun, and enjoyable.

Online safeguarding

The RBO is committed to respecting the rights of children, young people and adults at risk featured in its online communications, the correct handling of data, and enabling a safe online environment for all users.

The RBO works in the digital space and captures and communicates content online to and about children and young people. We recognise that while the online world has huge benefits, there are also significant risks which must be addressed to ensure we are keeping the people we work with safe from harm.

When considering the use of a new project in the digital space, social media site, platform or any digital product, the manager should use the [e-safety risk assessment](#) ², to assess the viability of the digital product in terms of safeguarding.

Online safeguarding and the camera and image processes should be read together as they are interlinked.

² Internal document

See also [e-safety referral flowchart](#)³

Social Media

There are Social Media guidelines available internally. We recognise that children and young people may follow artists' professional social media sites, however staff and artists should not:

- interact with children and young people other than in the public domain - in no circumstances should anyone respond using a direct message
- follow under 18s back on social media
- take any RBO related images that include children and young people and post them on social media.

Transport

We do not arrange transport, when groups are brought to the RBO, the transport is arranged by their school. Schools are asked to provide assurance that they complete due diligence on any transport company, and that this is reviewed.

Apprentices and work experience

Apprentices

The RBO apprenticeship scheme is open to young adults aged 18 or over. While the apprentices do not fall into the category of children and young people, the RBO recognises the potential vulnerability of apprentices, and has specific measures in place to support and protect them.

Work experience

Due to the safeguarding issues and current lack of capacity to properly support a full work-experience programme, we are currently only able to offer placements to those who are over 18. The exception to this is standalone partnership projects that are not full-scale work experience placements but a hybrid programme, working in partnership with an organisation to double down on our safeguarding measures. This approach ensures young people that come into the building are protected under our duty of care procedures. These programmes apply only to young people aged 16 or over.

All offers of work -experience are co-ordinated through the Apprentices and Work Experience Team, to ensure appropriate measures are in place and no child or young person is put at risk. All members of staff working with young people on work experience or Apprenticeships are required to complete 'Duty of Care' training.

³ Internal document

Young and emerging adults

This age group are not covered by statutory guidance in terms of child protection, however the RBO recognises their vulnerabilities. This group includes apprentices, Aud Jebsen dancers and other staff in this age group. Staff and artists should be conscious of this when working with younger members of staff. Managers of young staff should pay particular attention to pastoral support. Any concerns will be dealt with under HR policies and should be reported to an HR business partner.

Young guests of Staff and Artists

In line with House Rules, staff and artists are welcome to bring children and young people as guests to back of house areas, however, this applies to non-work time as they cannot appropriately supervise a child and carry out their work at the same time.

Children (persons under 18) can only be brought into the back of house areas if they are always accompanied by their parent or guardian, RBO staff must never take responsibility for a child guest, other than to escort a lost child to Security or Front of House Management.

Children and young people who are guests of staff and artists must be registered 24 hours in advance and on arrival at stage door will be given a sticker that says 'accompanied minor' which they must wear at while in the building. Only two under 18 year old guests are permitted per adult. Certain areas such as the build area are out of bounds for these guests.

For full information, see House Rules⁴

⁴ Internal document

3^d Party Venue Hire

All 3^d party venue hires which include children, young people and adults at risk must ensure that these groups are protected, by taking all reasonable steps to keeping them safe from harm and abuse and that they carry full public liability insurance for this.

This means that:

- they will comply with this Safeguarding Policy unless they already have an equivalent;
- they will provide the RBO with a copy of their organisation's Safeguarding Policy/ies or if they do not have one adopt the RBO policy;
- they will safely recruit all current paid and voluntary workers who work with children and/or adults at risk, by using safe recruitment processes, including disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service where eligible,
- they will maintain a list of the names of all paid and voluntary workers with regular and direct contact with children, young people and/or adults at risk;
- no person under the age of 18 years will be left in charge of any children young people or adults at risk of any age;
- no child or group of children or young people and/or adults at risk should be left unattended at any time;
- a register of children, young people or adults at risk attending the activity will be kept securely. This will include details of their name, contact details of parent/guardian/carer etc., date of birth and next of kin and any medical / dietary information the organiser should know;
- they will, within 24 hours inform the RBO Safeguarding Manager of any incidents or allegations of abuse or causes of concern.

People and/or organisations hiring any RBO venue must complete and sign a safeguarding checklist ahead of their event, and the RBO reserves the right to audit events to ensure that safeguarding standards are being met.

Ethical fundraising

We are committed to our fundraising being:

- **Legal:** All fundraising must meet the requirements of the law.
- **Open:** Fundraisers must be open with the public about their processes and must be willing to explain (where appropriate) if they are asked for more information.
- **Honest:** Fundraisers must act with integrity and must not mislead the public about the cause they are fundraising for or the way a donation will be used.
- **Respectful:** Fundraisers must demonstrate respect whenever they have contact with any member of the public.

Protecting children and young people in Performance Activities⁵

This document addresses:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Chaperones
- Entertainment licenses and Body of Persons Approval (BOPA)
- Chaperoning
- Auditions, rehearsals, and performances
- Working with key teams in technical production and costume

Protecting Children and Young People in Non-performance Activities⁶

This document addresses:

- Events and activities
- Visiting the RBO / attending a performance

Photographing Children, Young People and Adults at Risk at the RBO⁷

This internal document provides specific guidance for the use of recording equipment and images (including audio recordings), and these should be referenced by anyone considering any form of recording children, young people and/or adults at risk.

The guidance supports a 'do no harm' approach, where RBO takes all reasonable measures to avoid exposing people to additional risks through our action.

The guidance covers:

- The risk
- Our responsibilities
- Procedures
- Taking photographs
- Using photographs
- Commissioning photographs
- Media
- Storage and disposal of images.

⁵ Internal document

⁶ Internal document

⁷ Internal document

Company tours – working abroad

As a charity directly working with children abroad, we take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously.

The ballet and opera companies periodically undertake summer tours. Children, young people and at-risk adults may be auditioned and cast into roles in the country hosting the tour.

Children, young people and at-risk adults will be chaperoned by local chaperones who can communicate with them. The guidance followed will be UK guidance combined with regulations specific to the host country.

Where children and young people are cast locally by the promotor /theatre into RBO productions, the RBO will be given details of the local chaperones and local legislation related to performance activities. As required by the Charity Commission, we would adopt the legislation that is more protective of children and young people – either the host country or the UK's.

The tour manager will ensure the promotor and theatre hosting the tours have details of the key local agencies (police and social services) in the host country in case a concern needs to be raised.

The local promotor is responsible for recruiting volunteers and staff in the country we are touring in as safely as possible and request all applicants to present Certificates of Good Conduct where available. The RBO maintains the right to check this periodically.

Should a safeguarding concern be raised during an opera or ballet tour, it will be managed locally but also reported into the RBO reporting system.

Managing allegations specifically related to children, young people or adults at risk on tour

Any allegation specifically related to children, young people or adults at risk in the host country will be managed in the following ways:

- The Tour Manager should report the matter to the Chief People Officer and Safeguarding Manager
- The CPO and Safeguarding Manager will advise on the appropriate reporting procedure to be followed with by local agencies in the relevant country and in the UK.
- Where an allegation against a member of RBO staff is upheld the RBO internal disciplinary procedure will be applied on return to the UK.
- when children are at risk of harm, we will follow the steps outlined in the [Flowchart for reporting concerns overseas](#)

Appendix 1: Types of abuse

The following is for guidance only. It is important to be observant, listen and record. e.g. is what you are observing and being told about an injury consistent with the injury?

- Abuse related to faith or belief
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Breast ironing
- Carrying offensive weapons
- Child criminal and sexual exploitation including County Lines
- Child on child abuse, including sexual violence and upskirting
- Concealed pregnancy
- Criminal exploitation
- Discriminatory
- Domestic violence, including "honour" based abuse
- Emotional
- Exploitive use of technology
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Financial or material abuse
- Forced marriage
- Gangs
- Gambling
- Hate and "mate" crime
- Hazing and initiation rites
- Hoarding
- Modern slavery
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Online safety
- Organisational or institutional
- Psychological
- Physical
- Radicalisation
- Self-neglect
- Sexual
- Trafficking

Appendix 2: Handling a disclosure from a child, young person or adult at risk

Anyone receiving a disclosure must follow this guidance.

Receive:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief. Reacting negatively may cause the child, young person or adult at risk to shut down.
- Accept what is being said without judgement.
- Allow the child, young person or adult at risk the space to talk without asking too many questions.
- Take them seriously.

Reassure:

- Reassure the child, young person or adult at risk, as far as is honest and reliable. Don't make promises that you can't be sure to keep, e.g. "everything will be all right now".
- Tell them they did nothing wrong by talking to you and you take it seriously.
- Don't promise confidentiality. You have a duty to report your concerns.
- Tell the child, young person or adult at risk that you need to tell others, but only those whose job it is to help them.
- Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk and how brave they have been – it takes a lot to come forward about abuse.

React:

- Listen quietly, carefully and patiently. Do not assume, speculate or jump to conclusions.
- Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the child, young person or adult at risk is telling the truth. Remember that an allegation of child abuse may lead to a criminal investigation, so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation.
- Let the child, young person or adult at risk explain to you in his or her own words what happened, don't ask leading questions.
- Ask open questions like "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?"
- Communicate with the child, young person or adult at risk in a way that is appropriate to their age. This is especially important for those with specific needs and/or for those whose mother tongue is not English.
- Do not ask the child, young person or adult at risk to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff. Explain what you will do next and who you have to talk to.
- Seek advice from the Safeguarding manager and/or departmental DSL
- In an emergency, seek help and contact relevant local authorities including police and social services
- Support the child, young person or adult at risk, they will continue to look to you for support since you know about the situation, and the child will see you as a safe person.

Record

At all times when required, and especially where there is a safeguarding concern, we are committed to keeping records which are:

- Recorded – ideally on a safeguarding incident form
- of sufficient details of child, young person or adult at risk to identify individual who is subject of concern and any significant others
- accurate and factual/based on fact, as a true record of:
 - what has been monitored/observed
 - what has been said and by whom
 - what has given cause for concern
 - what action has and/or will be taken including the reason for those actions
 - the reason stated for no action being taken and by whom
- non-judgmental
- timely within 24 hours
- signed and dated by the writer and co- signed by the Lead or Deputy
- shared as appropriate by the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding
- stored safely and securely by the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding

Refer

Any disclosure should be handled on a need-to-know basis. This should only be discussed with the Chief People Officer, Safeguarding Manager and/or department DSL, and not other colleagues or externally. It is natural to feel distressed if you receive a disclosure, and if you are struggling, you should contact our employee assistance programme, [AXA](#).⁸

⁸ Internal link

Appendix 3: Handling Allegations, Complaints and Disciplinary/Grievance Procedures related to Children Young People and Adults at Risk

Our policies and procedures to deal with allegations or complaints in relation to children, young people and adults at risk, are in line with the statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children⁹, the London Safeguarding Children Partnership¹⁰ and Charity Commission guidelines¹¹, and our disciplinary, complaints and grievance procedures.

All allegations or concerns must be taken seriously, regardless of who the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim(s) are, and regardless of the situation. This plan should be triggered when there has been an allegation or expression of concern related to:

- A child who has contact with the RBO and is at risk of abuse in the family or community
- A member of staff or artists (paid or unpaid)

Staff are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has taken place, but must report concerns, even where there is no real clarity, for example when intuition tells us something is not right.

Staff must not agree to keep information related to concerns or suspected abuse private, this applies to the alleged victim and the alleged abuser.

When a child is with a school group or the concern arises at a school or college, then in all cases the school's or college's Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed.

On receipt of the concern or incident related to staff and artists, the Safeguarding Manager will inform the Chief People Officer who will ensure that the necessary compliance with safeguarding procedures has taken place. Consideration will be given to the seriousness of the allegation, the evidence provided to support the allegation at that point, whether a criminal offence may have been committed, the potential risk to the child or other children/ adult(s) and whether to refer to the police, Social Care, or follow other courses of action such as record only, or monitor.

Where a complaint or allegation has been made with regards to any inappropriate behaviour or poor practice, in relation to children, young people and adults at risk, the Chief People Officer will decide who is best placed to discuss the situation with social care services (the LADO with regards to children England and Wales only) and / or the police before making an open decision about the best way forward.

In the case where the Chief People Officer is implicated, the safeguarding trustee will be informed. In the exceptional circumstances that both are involved, the person concerned will inform the Board Chair. If there is a belief that the concern has not been taken seriously or acted upon then anyone can contact our '[Speak Up](#)' external reporting line.

Reports can also be made directly to the Charity Commission:

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2>

¹⁰ https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/alleg_staff.html#5.-responding-to-an-allegation-or-concern-%E2%80%93-the-role-of-the-employer

¹¹ <https://www.charitysafeguarding.dcms.gov.uk/>

whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk and advice can be sought from the charity 'protect': <https://protect-advice.org.uk/> tel: 020 3117 2520

Any investigation will override the need to implement any such procedures. The Chief People Officer is responsible for making referrals to the relevant:

- LADO
- Disclosure and Barring Service
- Charity Commission

Appendix 4: Reporting a concern, disclosure or safeguarding complaint

This form should be filled in when you have any concerns about a child or adult at risk, a disclosure, or someone's behaviour towards them which you feel is inappropriate. Complete as much information as you can, but do not delay due to missing information. Once complete, send to RBOSafeguarding@roh.org.uk

Your details		
Name		
Department and job title		
Email address		
Contact number		
Details of child / adult at risk affected		
Name		
Sex		
Date of Birth		
Name of parent / carer and contact details (if known)		
Any additional needs known		
Date and time of incident		
Location incident took place		
Does your concern relate to anyone working for the RBO (in any capacity)?	☐	YES
	☐	NO
	☐	NOT SURE
Person's name and job title (if known)		
Nature of concern		
Summary of concern (what was said, what was said, who else was involved or present, observed state of person making disclosure etc)		
Please give details of who else is aware of this and what they know		
Lead, Deputy, or Designated Safeguarding Lead only		
Record the action taken and the reason for taking it OR why no action has been taken at this time.		
Time and date:		
Name of organisation, address and phone numbers/e-mails for the contacts above		

Appendix 5: The reporting system

If you are worried a child, young person or adult at risk has been abused because:

- you have seen something;
- someone says they have been abused;
- somebody else has told you they are concerned;
- there has been an allegation against a colleague;
- there has been an anonymous allegation;
- an adult has disclosed that they were abused as a child;
- a child, young person or adult say they are abusing someone else.

Check this safeguarding policy for guidance. Talk to the Safeguarding Manager or DSL without delay, who will then talk to the Chief People Officer.

The CPO in consultation with the Safeguarding Manager should refer the concern to the relevant adult's or children's social care service and/or the Police and follow up the referral in writing within 24 hours.

In cases of allegations against a 'person of trust' with a duty of care towards a child, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will co-ordinate the next procedural steps.

Under "whistle blowing", anyone can refer directly to the Police, social care services, LADO, the Charity Commission, Protect or the NSPCC (child concerns only) when they are concerned the organisation is not managing safeguarding concerns

CONSULT,
MONITOR

AND RECORD

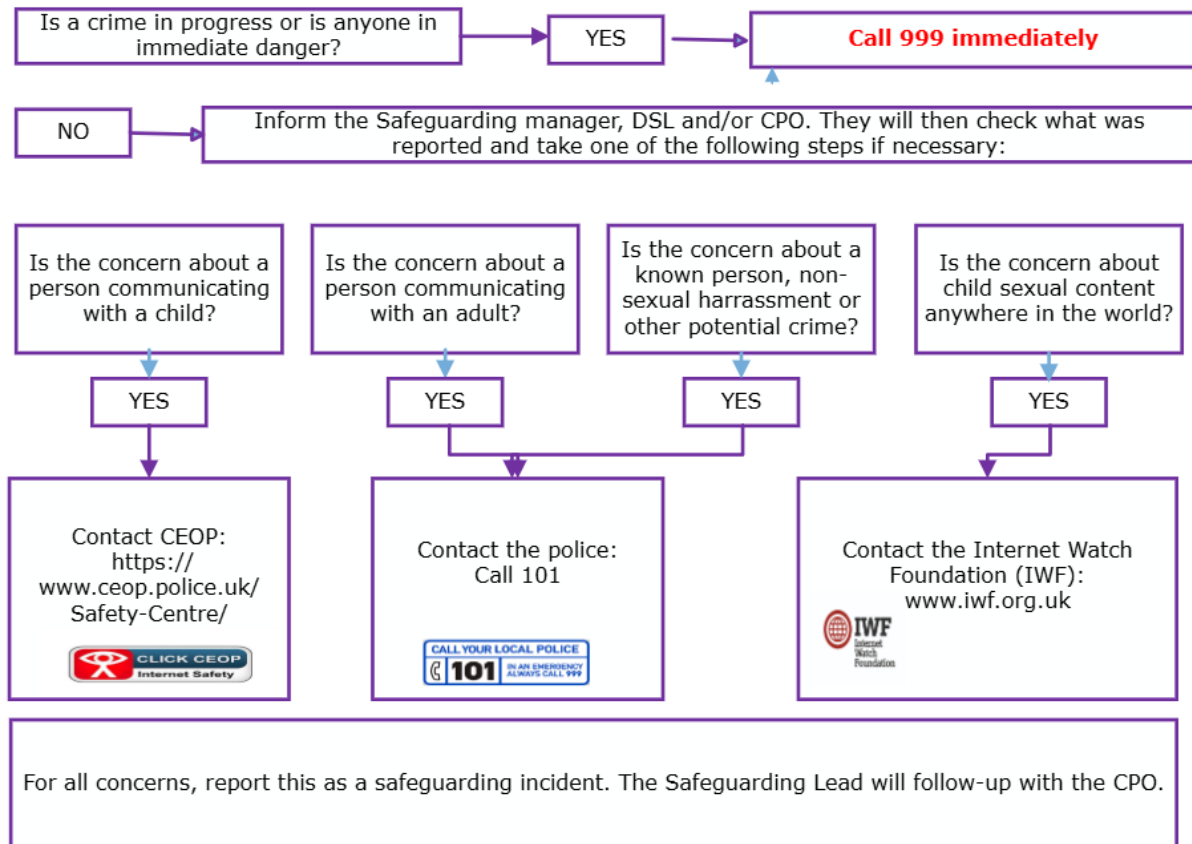
Sign/Date/Time

*Include name
and job role*

Any consultations should not delay a referral.

In an emergency do not delay: dial 999

Appendix 6: e-safety referral flowchart



Appendix 7: Useful contacts

The CPO and Safeguarding Lead are responsible for contacting the relevant authorities.

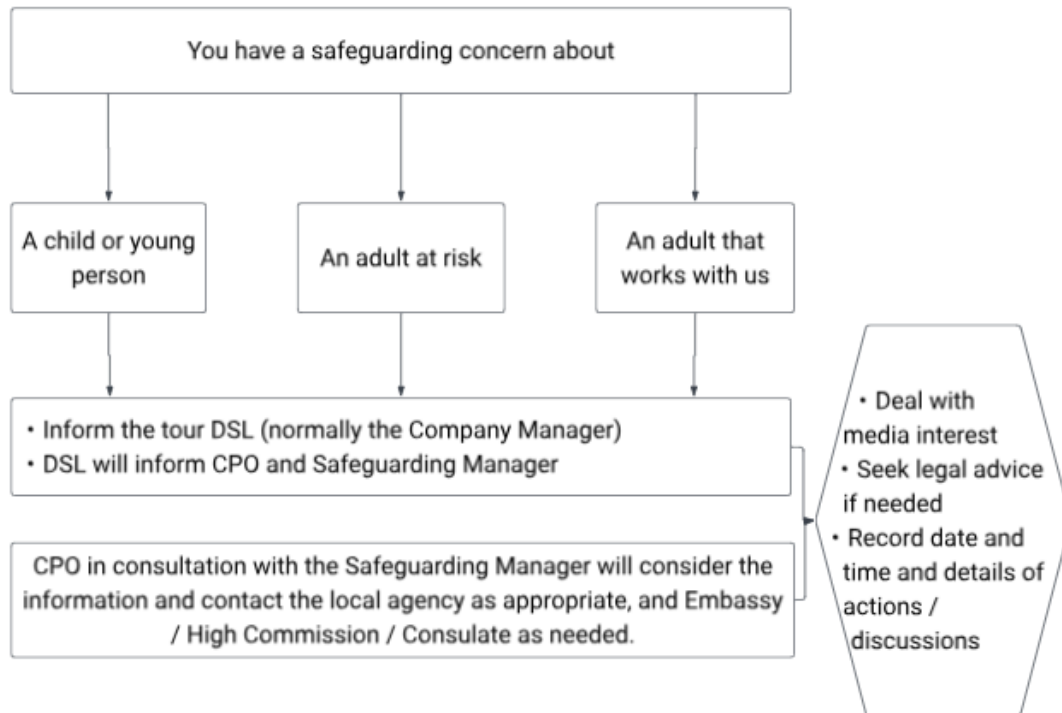
Any email referral should be followed up with a call to ensure it has been received.

Projects outside Covent Garden: for national projects such as Chance to Dance, the project information pack will include local contacts for the different regions.

To report a concern about a child (Westminster):	
Westminster Access Team	020 7641 4000
Out of hours	020 7641 2388
E-mail	AccesstoChildrensServices@westminster.gov.uk
Westminster LADO consultations and referrals	
Duty Child Protection Adviser	020 7641 7668 LADO@westminster.gov.uk
If Duty CP Adviser cannot be reached contact: Aqualma Daniel (Named LADO)	07870 481712 Aqualma.Daniel@rbkc.gov.uk
To report a concern about an adult at risk (Westminster):	
Adult social care	020 7641 2176
Out of hours	0207 7641 6000
E-mail	adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk
Other useful contacts	
NSPCC advice	0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk
FGM helpline	0800 028 3550
Forced Marriage Unit	020 7008 0151 fm@fco.gov.uk
Anti-Terrorist hotline	999 or 0800 789 321
Police	101 and request area. Emergency 999
To report a concern about a child living outside Westminster	Run a postcode check to find the local authority you should report to.

Appendix 8: Flowchart for reporting concerns overseas

This applies to concerns related to children, young people or adults at risk.



Appendix 9: Legislative Framework

This policy complies with, and is underpinned by the requirements of the following:

- Care Act 2014
- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Employment Rights Act 1996 (ERA 1996) and 2025 (ERA 2025) and other relevant employment legislation/ACAS guidance
- Equality Act 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005, Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019
- The Protection of Children Act 1978
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance 2023
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989.