

Newcastle Meditation Centre Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The Newcastle Mindfulness and Meditation Centre (“NMC”) is committed to making a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.

As part of its work to promote and facilitate the learning and practise of mindfulness and meditation, NMC may come into contact with both children and vulnerable adults.

NMC undertakes to fulfil its responsibilities to create safe environments where people can learn and practise mindfulness and meditation together. This policy outlines the ways that NMC will fulfil these responsibilities with regard to protection of children and/or vulnerable adults and how it will respond to concerns in an appropriate and timely manner. The policy establishes a framework to support trustees, staff and volunteers in their roles and clarifies the organisation’s expectations.

Legislation

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004

Definitions

Safeguarding is about the action that NMC will take to promote a safe environment for all by promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We will work to prevent abuse occurring and seek to protect those who might be at risk. We will respond well to those who are or have been abused. We will put in place measures to mitigate risks (and document the actions taken) in the event that we identify anyone who might pose a risk to others.

Abuse can come in many forms and covers the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect
- Organisational abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Self-neglect
- Financial (or material) abuse
- Modern Day Slavery

A Child is a person under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) statutory guidance). The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

An Adult at Risk is defined by The Care Act 2014 as an adult who may be in need of safeguarding who:

- a) has needs for care and support (whether or not these are being met)
- b) is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, and
- c) is unable to protect him or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it

This more recent definition widens the breadth of those who may be deemed vulnerable. A person's vulnerability increases when they enter unfamiliar surroundings, situations or relationships. Some people are more vulnerable to abuse than others.

Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") check is a pre-appointment safe recruitment check which is carried out on all staff and volunteers involved in "regulated activity".

Regulated activity involves close and unsupervised contact with under 18s and vulnerable groups which cannot be undertaken by a person on the DBS's Barred List. These activities need to be delivered by suitably cleared individuals (via a DBS check).

A **sub-contractor** is an individual or organisation who has been engaged by NMC, in a paid or voluntary capacity, to carry out an activity on behalf of NMC (e.g. the delivery of a course or workshop).

A **hirer** of NMC is an individual or organisation who has been permitted by NMC to use the Centre, normally in return for a fee, as a venue for an activity that is not carried out on behalf of the Centre.

Responsibilities

All NMC staff, volunteers, sub-contractors and hirers have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and to pass on any safeguarding concerns using the required procedures. Safeguarding will be included within induction arrangements for all staff and volunteers. We expect all staff, volunteers and sub-contractors to use this information and promote good practice by being positive role models, to contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to involve people in developing safe practices.

The Trustees of NMC are responsible for the implementation and oversight of this Policy and share responsibility for responding to any concerns, reports or issues in relation to Safeguarding.

This Policy aims to:

- Safeguard everyone – adults and children alike
- Reduce the likelihood of abuse through preventative actions
- Provide procedures to deal with suspicions or concerns that abuse may be taking place
- Outline appropriate steps to be taken if abuse is believed to have occurred

The objectives of the Policy are to:

- Promote good practice in the safeguarding of adults at risk and children
- Increase awareness of abusive or potentially abusive situations
- Make available a procedure to be followed if there is an alert to potential or actual abuse
- Provide guidance for good inter-agency communication

It is possible that NMC activities and events, including those delivered by subcontractors (i.e. to provide services on behalf of NMC) and hirers (i.e. who hire the Meditation Centre as a venue for activities that are not part of NMC's activities) could involve and attract members of the general public, including under 18s and vulnerable adults. However, regulated activities are expected to be minimal.

As a result, key elements of our Safeguarding Policy are as follows:

- Newcastle Meditation Centre will not employ staff, accept volunteers or engage sub-contractors who are under 18;
- Children attending Group events and activities should be accompanied by a responsible adult;
- Information regarding events/activities organised by NMC will specify that children should be accompanied by a responsible adult;
- One-to-one activities or activities of a "regulated" nature that form part of NMC activities are likely to be limited, but DBS checks will be undertaken (i.e. on Centre staff/volunteers and sub-contractors) as required where "regulated activity" is expected;
- All staff, volunteers and sub-contractors will be encouraged to report concerns;
- One or more NMC Trustees will be nominated to act as a nominated Safeguarding Officers, to receive and respond to concerns and allegations, and to liaise as required with statutory authorities.

Responsibilities of Meditation Centre staff, volunteers and sub-contractors

All NMC staff, volunteers and sub-contractors must abide by this Safeguarding Policy. The above controls will apply to those circumstances where sub-contractors are used to provide additional activities on behalf of NMC. An assessment, undertaken by a member of the Operations Management Team, will take place to check whether the proposed activity will involve regulated activity. Where regulated activity is expected, sub-contractors must be prepared to have a DBS check undertaken and abide by the outcome of NMC's consideration of the results.

Responsibilities of hirers

An individual or organisation wishing to hire the Centre as a venue for its own activities which are unrelated to NMC activities, will be asked to disclose, when booking the Centre, whether regulated activity is expected. If it is expected, sub-contractors must provide a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence of their compliance with DBS vetting procedures. All hirers must abide by the NMC Safeguarding Policy and to report any safeguarding related concerns to NMC.

Safe Recruitment

NMC operates in a way which takes account of the need to safeguard adults at risk and children. Although unlikely, it may be necessary to carry out DBS checks where "regulated activities" are expected. The Centre would recruit staff and volunteers following safer recruitment principles and undertake DBS checks where it is appropriate to do so.

NMC will not discriminate unfairly against anyone subject to a disclosure of a conviction or other relevant information revealed by the DBS check and the Trustees will be responsible for assessing any potential risk that is identified.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all. Everyone connected with NMC has a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection and safeguarding of adults and or children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and local authority safeguarding services. Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be maintained and all personal information regarding those at risk or potential abusers will be kept confidential. Any written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines.

Procedure

NMC aims to safeguard all those who work, volunteer or visit the Centre. When safeguarding incidents happen or concerns are raised, NMC's Safeguarding Officers will be made aware of this and will work together to develop and agree a safety plan which includes strategies for reducing the risk of abuse for the individual in question and more widely within the organisation. Actions will be written down and records retained in a secure place.

Record

The accurate written record will be made at the time of the allegation or disclosure giving details of the incident and/or all the grounds for suspecting that abuse may have taken place or concerns that there is a safeguarding issue. Information recorded should include:

- The date and time of the incident
- What the person at risk has said about the abuse and how it occurred
- The appearance and behaviour of the victim including any injuries
- The use of quotation marks to indicate any comments recorded verbatim
- A record of the questions asked.

Report and Refer

Once an alert and a record has been raised the Safeguarding Officers will decide whether it is a safeguarding issue and whether the matter needs to be referred onto another agency. It is not the responsibility of NMC to fully assess or investigate the situation that has come to light. If it is a serious safeguarding situation then a referral to the statutory agencies i.e. police or adult/children's services

will be made. As required, all concerns or allegations made about anyone connected with NMC who is working with children will be notified to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), within 24 hours.

Review

When a safeguarding incident or concern has been raised, the Trustees of NMC will review the response to any concerns/allegations, in conjunction with safeguarding authorities where appropriate, to identify what lessons can be learnt to improve practice within the organisation.

Treatment of anonymous reports

Anonymous allegations or concerns will be accepted and acted on, as there may be genuine reasons why an individual may not feel able to disclose their identity. However, anonymous enquiries may not facilitate any internal or external investigation process and disclosure of the individual raising the concern is encouraged. Anonymous individuals will be encouraged to give contact details.

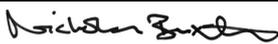
Concerns and/or allegations about possible radicalisation

Concerns or allegations about possible radicalisation will be considered from a safeguarding perspective. It is acknowledged that radicalisers often target children and vulnerable adults and that the radicalisation process increases the likelihood of greater personal vulnerability and the possibility of associated abuse. External referrals will be made in the same way as safeguarding referrals, to external safeguarding and statutory agencies, and to the Police.

Nominated Safeguarding Officer

Ms Ruth Rogan, Trustee
The Newcastle Meditation Centre
71b Westgate Road
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1SG

Authorisation

Approved by:	Nicholas Buxton, Chair	Date approved:	4 July 2019
Signed:		Date of next review:	September 2020

Related safeguarding procedures

Allegations against Newcastle Meditation Centre Staff/Volunteers/Sub-contractors

Where a concern has been raised regarding a staff member/volunteer/sub-contractor, the following procedure must be followed:

- NMC's Safeguarding Officers must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) of the allegation within 24 hours.
- The LADO will advise the organisation on what steps need to be taken next.
- The Safeguarding Officers should meet with the individual immediately to inform them that they may be suspended without prejudice from NMC activities following the allegation. The individual must not be informed at this point the nature of the allegation.
- The individual will be asked to leave the premises and advised not to discuss any information regarding the allegation with anyone linked to NMC activities.
- The allegation should not be discussed with any other parties both in and outside of NMC, with the exception of NMC Trustees and relevant statutory authorities. This information must only be shared on a need to know basis.
- All information regarding the allegation/suspension must be thoroughly recorded and stored in a confidential and secure manner by the NMC Safeguarding Officers.
- The Newcastle Meditation Centre will co-operate with, and take advice from, the LADO.