

Angel Shed - Safeguarding Policy 2021/22

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1. Introduction

Angel Shed Theatre Company believes every child, young person, and adult at risk should have access to a safe, creative, and inclusive environment. Where members of Angel Shed Theatre Company are children, young people, or adults at risk, it is necessary to ensure that their welfare, care and protection are actively planned for and promoted.

Angel Shed places the highest priority on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Angel Shed is committed to safeguarding children and young people within the context of the Children Act 1989 and 2004. This document follows guidance on what organisations providing services to children or working with children are required to have in place.

The policy and procedures have been reviewed and revised in light of learning reviews and the subsequent policy developments that have taken place. This policy takes into account the statutory guidance contained in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 DfE (WTSC 2018), the revised London Child Protection Procedures 5th edition 2013, and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2021 DfE (KCSE 2021).

Angel Shed will ensure that all children, young people, and adults at risk are treated as individuals with their progress, welfare and needs monitored and planned for on an individual basis. This policy will outline the ways in which a child's, young person's, or adult at risk's welfare and protection can be planned for through procedures that are based on knowledge of the individual's needs and inclusive development.

This policy was approved by Angel Shed's management team in February 2022 and also agreed by trustees in February 2022.

Signed by Chair of Trustees: Andrew Duncan

Dated: 09/02/2022

- The policy will be reviewed every year and the next review date is February 2023
- The Safeguarding Leads at Angel Shed are **David Mabbott** and **Natalie Sloth Richter**.
- All safeguarding concerns should, in the first instance, be reported to the Safeguarding Leads.

2. The Policy

Angel Shed places the highest priority on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. The aim of the policy is to outline Angel Shed's commitment to, and awareness of, the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

Principles

Children, young people and adults at risk have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and abuse and they and their parents/carers have a right to expect organisations and other settings to provide a safe and secure environment.

Angel Shed believes that every child, young person and adult at risk has the right to:

- be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- have the opportunity to achieve their full potential
- have their needs determined in their own right and fully met
- be listened to, believed and have their views be given careful consideration
- be respected and understood in the context of their own cultural, religious and ethnic origin
- be protected against all forms of discrimination

Definitions

Adult: Any person engaged in activities with Angel Shed aged 18 or over with full capacity

Artistic Director: Person/s engaged to lead, develop, support and deliver workshops

Assistant Facilitator: Trained person/s engaged to support the Members and delivery of practice

Child or young person: Any Member or attendee of Angel Shed workshops aged 17 or under

Adult at risk of harm: Shortened to 'adult at risk' in this policy. Any Member or attendee of Angel Shed workshops aged 18 years or over who, by reason of physical or learning disability, may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Member: Any Member or attendee of any age or status

Senior Staff: Executive Director, Co-Artistic Directors

Staff: All Employed and paid personnel (including Artistic Director and Assistant Facilitator) who carry out a role including the delivery of our Workshops.

Safeguarding Lead: Persons/s appointed to have full responsibility for all safeguarding process and delivery

Safeguarding Trustee: Person/s appointed to advise on best practice and procedures of the safeguarding process and delivery

Volunteer Unpaid person/s (aged 16+) including trained workshop volunteers engaged to support the Members and non-workshop volunteers such as photographers, musicians and trustees.

Workshops: Delivery of performing arts (drama/music/dance) to Members

Accountability and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all staff, trustees, and volunteers at Angel Shed. It recognises that all levels of the organisation should take responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk and that there should be clear lines of accountability within the organisation.

Angel Shed staff have a key role to play because of the frequent and regular contact they have with children, young people and adults at risk. Accountability for safeguarding does not lie solely with frontline staff, and managers and trustees must take responsibility for ensuring the safety of children, young people and adults at risk accessing Angel Shed.

Angel Shed is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to appropriate training. Angel Shed will ensure allegations against staff, professionally and personally, are taken seriously and investigated in the most appropriate way.

Safeguarding

The emphasis of this policy is to ensure a holistic and child/adult-centred approach to safeguarding, recognising that protecting children and adults from harm cannot be separated from policies to improve children's lives as a whole.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- protecting children and adults from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's and adults' health or development;
- ensuring that children and adults grow up and reside in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children and adults to have the best outcomes.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

The Safeguarding Trustee will:

- monitor and take responsibility for ensuring the organisation is following best practice and that policies and procedures are up-to-date
- work closely with Angel Shed's Safeguarding Lead(s) on a yearly report to trustees and support them in implementing effective policies and procedures

The Safeguarding Lead(s) at Angel Shed will:

- make referrals to local authority children's social care and other external agencies as necessary, and support other staff in doing so
- liaise with statutory services with regard to the safety and wellbeing of children who attend Angel Shed
- know the names of the key people in the local authority / borough where they work (i.e. the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff)
- ensure Angel Shed's safeguarding policies are known, understood, and used appropriately
- in partnership with other key staff, be responsible for investigating allegations against staff
- work with the Safeguarding Trustee to produce an annual safeguarding report
- support and advise Angel Shed Staff as required
- ensure information is gathered about appropriate training for staff and ensure training is up-to-date and regular
- monitor completed Disclosure Report Forms
- where necessary, provide written additional information for meetings in connection with child protection
- monitor training and induction, and ensure that all staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training every year
- maintain detailed, accurate, and clear records on Charitylog

Angel Shed Staff and Volunteers will:

- be familiar with Angel Shed's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures and adhere to them at all times
- know Angel Shed's Safeguarding Lead(s)
- report any safeguarding concerns immediately to Angel Shed's Safeguarding Lead and record advice given and action taken
- check with their Angel Shed manager if they are asked to do anything unusual or out of the ordinary or which compromises, or may compromise, professional boundaries
- attend safeguarding training as required by Angel Shed

4. Child and Adult Protection Awareness

Angel Shed is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse. Angel Shed is committed to working with the main statutory agencies – local councils, the police and NHS organisations and other local voluntary organisations to promote safer communities, to prevent harm and abuse and to deal with suspected or actual cases of abuse. Our procedures aim to make sure that the safety, needs and interests of children, young people, and adults at risk are always respected and upheld.

Child and adult at risk abuse awareness

Staff and volunteers will be made aware of a number of types of abuse. Angel Shed will not itemise the signs of abuse for each individual type due to this potentially being blinded by unseen signs of harm, however some common signs of abuse and neglect can be found in Appendix 4.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the types of abuse, which could give rise to a safeguarding concern when working with a child, young person or adult at risk.

Types of abuse

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect
- Online abuse
- Malicious communications
- Radicalisation
- Criminal exploitation
- Sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation
- Child trafficking

Reporting procedures

Any member of staff or volunteer who is concerned about the welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risk, or suspects or knows of abuse, should immediately inform Angel Shed's Safeguarding Lead who will liaise with the necessary authorities. Angel Shed will examine and investigate any concerns raised.

Any disclosures made need to be recorded factually. If staff or volunteers encounter abuse or suspicious situations of concern (for example a child may tell them something, a friend may say something, or a volunteer might notice something) then you should discuss the matter with the Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Lead may need to report the situation to Children's Services, the LADO and/or the police and needs a full and accurate report.

A Disclosure Report Form can be found saved in the Forms folder and printed copies will be available at all Angel Shed sessions.

If, for any reason, the staff member or volunteer who has disclosed their suspicions of abuse believes that their concerns about a child, young person, or adult at risk are not being taken seriously then they have a duty to report the abuse to the necessary authorities themselves.

5. Guidance for Workshops

Ratios

Angel Shed will ensure that there are very good staff/volunteer to child/young person ratios in workshops, rehearsals and performances involving children, young people, and adults at risk. Staff and volunteers will offer a range of direct and indirect support experiences to ensure that children and young people are able to both progress steadily to manage their own inclusion with as much independence as possible while also being as safe as possible. These ratios will always exceed the legal 1 adult to 10 children/young people ratio for comparable leisure activities.

During workshops and rehearsals, children and young people will be supported by the following Angel Shed staff and volunteers:

- a) Artistic Director
- b) Assistant Facilitators (Theatre, Dance, or Music)
- c) Volunteer
- d) Older Members providing support for younger Members (Children's Theatre)

Liaison with Parents / Carers

In all areas regarding the welfare, care and provision for their child/young person or adult, parents/carers will be encouraged to contribute information orally, in writing, via the company application form, and subsequent opportunities to update information, in order to assist planning. Parents/carers will be made aware of the accessibility of relevant staff for consultation before and after sessions and at other times during the week.

Liaison with Children / Young People / Adults at risk

Children, young people, and adults at risk will always be consulted about the provision for their inclusive progress, welfare and care within Angel Shed – with their views informing all aspects of planning. Angel Shed staff and volunteers are very much aware of the need to use as many opportunities as possible to talk to children, young people, and adults at risk about their progress, welfare, and care and to understand their daily life experiences. Angel Shed will never promise to keep a secret or to guarantee confidentiality for a child, young person, or adult at risk and will explain that there may be times when information will be passed on to other agencies if it is for the purpose of keeping the child, young person, or adult at risk safe.

Contextual Safeguarding

Staff and volunteers will be made aware that not all the risks children and young people face will happen at Angel Shed. As young people grow and develop they spend greater amounts of time outside of their family e.g. in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups, or online. Children and young people attending Angel Shed will be affected by, and may be exposed to harm in, any one or more of these environments. This is known as extra-familial risk and harm.

Contextual safeguarding recognises that to protect children and young people staff and volunteers must think about the impact of children and young people's experiences outside of Angel Shed. Their experiences elsewhere may also influence the way they behave at Angel Shed. By understanding what is happening around a child or young person, and working together with others, we play an important role in safeguarding children and young people. The best people to understand the environments that children and young people live in, and the challenges they face, are the young people themselves. By creating a safe space, and starting conversations with them about their experiences, we will not only be able to better understand any potential risks but better help the children and young people we work with.

If concerned about a child or young person, whether about something happening within Angel Shed or outside, staff and volunteers should report this to a Safeguarding Lead (David Mabbott or Natalie Sloth Richter), children's services, or the police, following the procedures outlined in this policy. It is important to report any worries you have - by doing so you will help build up, or add to, a picture of that child or young person's experiences.

Dissemination of Information

Angel Shed will ensure that information about the inclusive progress, welfare and care of individual children, young people, and adults at risk which can inform planning and provision, is appropriately disseminated to staff and volunteers who are helping to manage the individual child's, young person's or adult at risk's progress. Meeting structures are put in place to ensure information from parents/carers, children and young people, and staff is disseminated and acted upon while remaining confidential. All child protection information is held confidentially and is shared with staff on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

Peer to Peer Inclusive Support

It is crucial that children and young people are encouraged to see the inclusion of their peers in activities as a natural, instinctive, and positive process. To do this, children and young people should not see inclusion as adult-led, rather they should see the process of inclusion as child and young person-led and capable of being taken on by their own peer group. Children and young people need to see older children, young people and adults at risk modelling inclusive support and helping them to manage the inclusive, creative support of their own peer group. In these situations, trained staff will clearly manage the process so that children, young people, and adults at risk taking on these support roles are supervised and boundaries made clear.

Angel Shed staff will provide ongoing training for older children, young people and adults at risk involved in supporting younger Membership groups. They will be made aware of Angel Shed's Safeguarding policy and procedures and their own responsibilities within this framework. In addition, their work will be monitored and supervised at all times.

Registration Procedures

Angel Shed will ensure that in workshops, rehearsals and performances, children, young people and adults at risk are registered on entry with immediate information regarding any aspects of progress, welfare and care disseminated to relevant staff and volunteers. Registration procedures will monitor absence and lateness.

6. Code of Behaviour for Staff and Volunteers

This code of behaviour relates to all activities Angel Shed delivers within or away from the main premises. If an activity takes place outside of Angel Shed's usual session times or premises, staff will instruct volunteers of any additional guidelines.

Appropriate Boundaries

All Staff and volunteers are responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate and clear professional boundaries in respect to their relationships with children, young people and adults at risk at all times. No staff or volunteer should build a 'special' relationship with any one child or young person or group of children or young people and or adult(s) at risk. No member of staff or volunteer may give a child, young person or adult at risk their personal information.

As far as possible, staff and volunteers must try not to find themselves in a position where they are alone with a child, young person or adult at risk; this includes the offer of a lift to a child or young person in their own vehicle. If no one has arrived to collect a child, young person, or adult at risk then their parent/carer must be contacted by staff only (see Uncollected Child Policy). Where a member asks to speak to a staff member or volunteer privately, the conversation should take place in an environment that is appropriate, for example in a room with a window in the door where they can be seen by other staff and volunteers.

If a child, young person or adult at risk joins Angel Shed and there is an existing social or family relationship with a member of staff, the member of staff must inform the Safeguarding Lead of this.

No staff or volunteer should meet up with any Member or parent/carer for social reasons outside of Angel Shed. You should inform Angel Shed if this happens by coincidence. Under no circumstances should any staff member or volunteer go to a member or parent/carer's home.

No staff or volunteer can friend/follow any Member on any social media platform (please see social media policy for more detail). If any staff member or volunteer is followed by or receives a friend request from a current or former member of Angel Shed on social media they must inform Angel Shed.

Appropriate clothing must be worn by staff and volunteers at all times.

Physical Contact and Safe Touch Policy

It is recognised that a level of physical contact exists as a natural part of Angel Shed's sessions. The level of physical contact is determined by the context of the artistic work which includes drama and movement work. In all other contexts, touch should be related to a child's, young person's or adult at risk's needs.

Physical contact or activity with children and young people must be that which is appropriate and never open to interpretation. Staff should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. Volunteers should be monitored and, if necessary, advised in this area by the Staff. All children's, young people's, and adults at risk's application forms include signed consent by parents/carers with regard to safe touch being used during activities.

Photography

No recordings, videoing or photographs should be taken of any volunteer, Member, or parent/carer without consent. All children and young people's application forms include a photograph, filming, and online exposure permission request. Recordings, videos or photographs should only be taken by staff unless volunteers/Members are directed by staff to do so in specific circumstances.

Personal care and Welfare

Staff will take the lead in managing provision for the Members' individual welfare, care and progress. Any relevant information will then be passed onto volunteers.

Staff and volunteers will work together when supporting individual Members by sharing experience and responsibility whilst encouraging as much independence in the individual members as possible.

Where there are specific issues related to a member's personal care and welfare e.g. changing or toileting, Staff will consult with the parents/carers and member to ensure that their needs can be met in as inclusive and discreet a manner as possible. Awareness of procedures and routines at home will inform the procedures and routines to be used at Angel Shed. Staff will make the relevant volunteer(s) aware of the agreed procedures for each member. Volunteers will not be asked to support the personal care of any member.

7. Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

Angel Shed staff and volunteers who come into contact with children, young people, or adults at risk are expected to uphold a high standard of professional boundaries in all of their work, and a high level of transparency with regard to any issues that may be of concern e.g. upholding boundaries. Wherever staff may have contact with known members outside of their work role, they should discuss the situation with the Safeguarding Lead in order to agree appropriate steps around protecting the reputation of Angel Shed.

Allegations against staff and volunteers

All allegations of abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead and immediately referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will then consult directly with the police and Children's Social Care to determine the next course of action as well as agree on what actions will need to be taken by the Safeguarding Lead at Angel Shed.

The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that any person has:

- behaved in a way that may have or has harmed a child, young person or adult at risk
- committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or adult at risk
- behaved towards a child or children, adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm

It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible and to be consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. All allegations must be investigated as a priority to avoid any delay. The time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors including the nature, seriousness, and complexity of the allegation.

In the event staff receive an allegation against someone from another organisation, this should also be reported following the same procedure.

If the child, young person or adult at risk's safety is deemed to be at immediate risk, the police may need to be informed before the LADO alongside other appropriate actions being taken.

Whistleblowing Procedure

If any staff or volunteer has concerns about another staff or volunteer it is their duty to share this with the Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risk arising from suspected abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately to the LADO. This applies to allegations both in and outside the workplace – at Angel Shed and elsewhere.

If a staff or volunteer's concerns are about a Safeguarding Lead, they should share this with the Safeguarding Trustee instead. They can also contact the LADO directly. Contact details for both can be found in Appendix 2.

Angel Shed will take steps to fully support anyone who in good faith reports their concerns that a colleague is or may be abusing a child, young person, or adult at risk. NB: The whistleblower is a witness, not a complainant. The allegations of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer will be fully recorded and reported appropriately. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned, and consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line offers free advice and support to those with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation. The line can be contacted by anyone who is concerned that Angel Shed, or another organisation, doesn't have clear safeguarding procedures to follow, doesn't act on or deal properly with concerns, or may cover up concerns. This applies to incidents that happened in the past, are happening now, or may happen in the future.

Contact the Whistleblowing Advice Line by calling 0800 028 0285 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

8. Information Sharing

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

The General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018 place a greater duty on organisations to be open and honest in relation to the use of people's data; however, the acts "do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information to keep children and young people safe".

Where possible, staff should gain consent from children and families before sharing and storing information; however, you may continue to share information without consent if you believe an individual's safety is at risk. Sharing information with professionals who need to know ensures that problems are identified early and action is taken when children are thought to be at risk of abuse.

9. Training

All staff, volunteers and trustees, regardless of their roles, will receive appropriate training. All staff and trustees must also have read the Angel Shed Safeguarding Policy and related documents. Angel Shed staff and volunteers will receive dedicated safeguarding input delivered by Angel Shed as part of their induction training, and refresher training every year. Angel Shed senior management staff (Artistic Director(s) and Executive Director) will receive local authority/equivalent advanced safeguarding training, refreshed every two years.

10. Safer Recruitment

All recruitment at Angel Shed will adhere to safer recruitment practices and staff should be trained in this process.

All adverts for roles will include a statement about Angel Shed's commitment to keeping children, young people and adults at risk safe.

Involving children and young people in the recruitment process for any role can help us ensure we are selecting the right person. This must be planned in advance so that children's welfare is prioritised and everyone gets the most out of the experience.

All staff, trustees, and volunteers must submit an application form or CV and cover letter, attend an interview, and provide contact details for two referees which must be received and vetted before any position can begin.

An Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check must be carried out for all Angel Shed staff, trustees, and volunteers and will be updated on a three yearly basis or on a 'live' basis for those registered with the DBS update service. Angel Shed utilises the DBS Update Service which allows portability of a certificate across employers. Angel Shed will gain the relevant consent and undertake the proper checks if a new member of staff is on the update service.

Angel Shed will use professional judgement and experience to decide if volunteers or external staff who are not engaging in regulated activity will require an Enhanced DBS Check. Regardless of whether an Enhanced DBS is required for a volunteer, Angel Shed will ensure that an appropriate risk assessment is completed and reviewed regularly. Volunteers are supervised by staff and have their progress reviewed on a regular basis. Staff are supervised by the board of trustees and are subject to regular reviews.

Appendix 1: Angel Shed Safeguarding Procedure Summary

Immediate Actions

Where Angel Shed have potential evidence of child, young person, or adult at risk abuse (e.g. through a disclosure by a child, young person, or adult) observation of abusive behaviour, or information-sharing by colleagues), staff must take the following actions on the same day:

- Raise concerns with Angel Shed's Safeguarding Lead.
- Complete a Disclosure Report Form (printed copies available at all sessions).
- The Angel Shed Safeguarding Lead will then decide about how to proceed with the concern raised and whether reporting the concern to external agencies is required e.g. Children's Social Care / Police. The Angel Shed Safeguarding Lead will take any immediate action required by the time the child leaves the session.
- Angel Shed Safeguarding Lead will update CharityLog with concern raised and document all advice received and actions taken. The background for the escalation of an existing case and what actions have been taken must be noted in the case recording history. If it is a new case, any relevant background information must also be recorded in the case history.
- Angel Shed Safeguarding Lead must also update CharityLog with any directions / guidance given to volunteers/those reporting the concern.
- The case should be reviewed regularly and updates recorded on CharityLog.

Internal Angel Shed Reporting

Angel Shed has an internal safeguarding reporting system which enables us to retain an overview of the number of safeguarding cases on which we are working. This internal reporting is required whenever Angel Shed staff are involved in the following cases:

- Cases formally reported to Angel Shed's Safeguarding Lead
- Cases where a referral is made to a local authority
- Cases where children are subject to a Child Protection (CP) or Child in Need (CIN) Plan

Recording

Angel Shed staff are expected to maintain accurate and complete records of all casework on Charitylog. Angel Shed staff, where reasonably possible, should record more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student with whom they are working.

Appendix 2: Contact Details of Key Personnel

The **Lead Safeguarding Trustee** for Angel Shed is **Sarah Kitteridge**, whose contact details are:

Email: sarah@angelshedtheatre.org.uk

The **Safeguarding Leads** for Angel Shed are **Natalie Sloth Richter** and **David Mabbott** whose contact details are:

Tel No: 07910 822 412

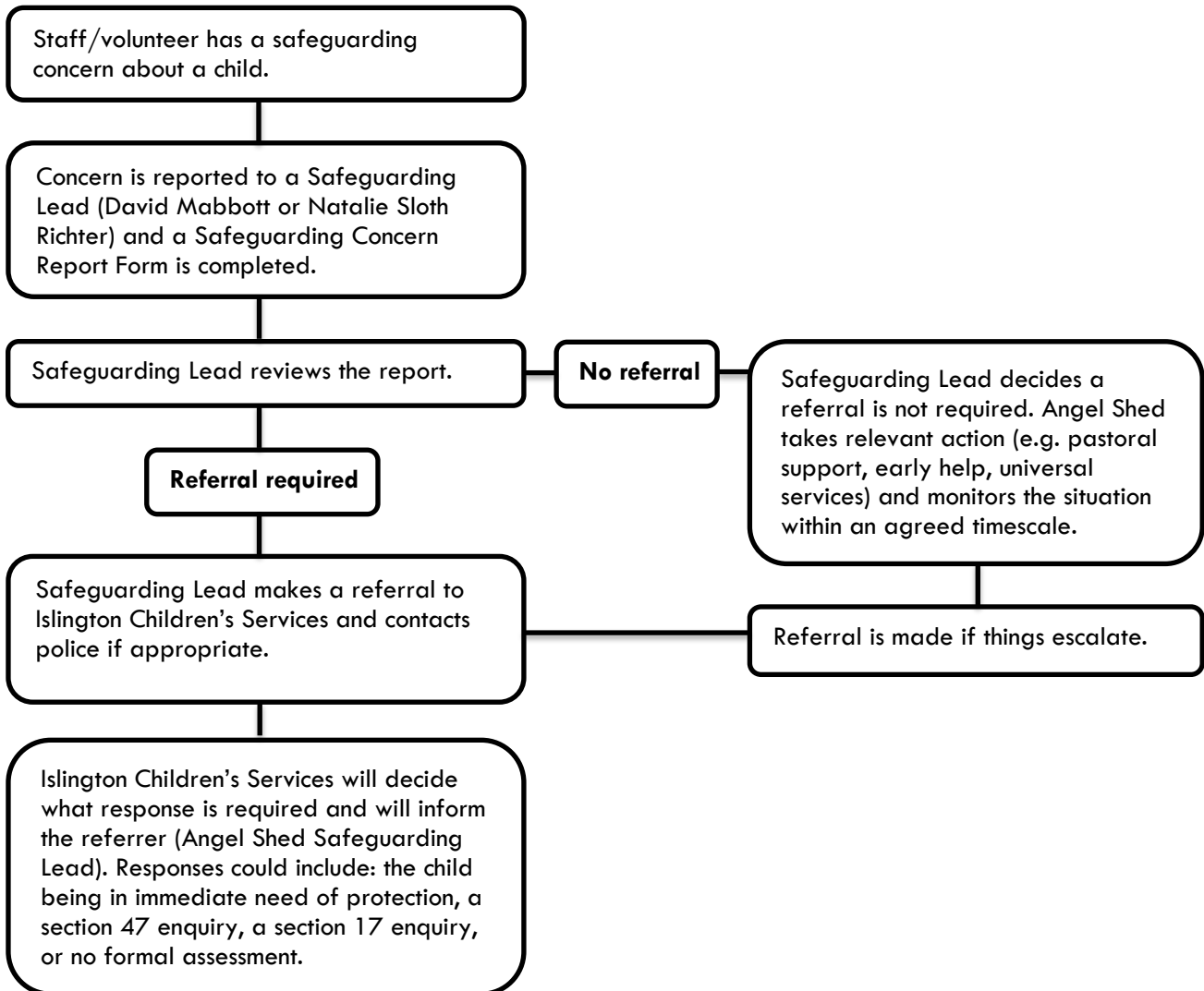
Email: natalie@angelshedtheatre.org.uk / david@angelshedtheatre.org.uk

Relevant Islington External Agencies

Children's Services Contact Team - (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm) - 020 7527 7400
Emergency Duty Team (5pm to 9am, Weekends and Bank Holidays) - 020 7226 0992
Tim Djavit - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - 020 7527 8102
Police Referrals - **999**

NB: For other local authorities, please refer to their children's services website where all contact details can be found.

Appendix 3: Responding to Safeguarding Concerns Flowchart



Appendix 4: Common Signs of Abuse and Neglect

This is not an exhaustive list as there are a number of indicators of abuse.

The following is consistent with both children and adults.

Poor personal hygiene or scruffy/messy appearance

Consistently wearing dirty, scruffy, or otherwise unsuitable clothing is one of the most common indicators that an individual is being neglected. This can mean anything from clothing that has holes in, to clothes that don't fit. Another indicator is if an individual is consistently unhygienic. Smelling badly, having rashes or other skin conditions that might indicate poor hygiene, and having consistently unwashed or matted hair could all be signs of neglect.

Bruising, scratches, marks, cuts, or burns in non-accidental injury sites

A non-accidental injury site is an area of the body that would not normally be affected by an accidental injury, such as the tops of the arms or the neck. It's common to fall off a bike and graze a knee for example, but if you notice bruising around the tops of an individual's arms and they can't give a reasonable explanation for why they have such marks, this could be a cause for concern. You should be especially concerned if an individual has gone to lengths to avoid any marks, bruises, cuts, burns, or scratches from being noticed, or if their explanation does not seem consistent with the injury.

Anxiety or extreme shyness around certain individuals

Some people are naturally shy and display symptoms of anxiety around strangers. However, you should pay close attention to any uncharacteristic displays of anxiety or shyness - particularly around someone they know, or someone they have previously had a normal relationship with. Signs of anxiety might include choosing not to speak or not being able to speak, acting restless, or showing extreme apprehension to be around certain individuals.

Aggression

It isn't normal for people to act aggressive without good reason, especially not in public places or if such behaviour is uncharacteristic of them. Unexplainable or unnecessary outbursts of aggression, whether this involves shouting and screaming or violence and rage, should be treated as a cause for concern.

Sudden, unexplainable changes in attitude or behaviour

We all get different mood swings within reason, but if you notice sudden, unexplainable changes in a person's behaviour and they do not want to give a reason why, or if they refuse to acknowledge any change in their attitude, this could point to a cause for concern. This might involve a child who is normally quiet and well-behaved suddenly becoming loud, disobedient, and attention-seeking, or vice versa.

Having a knowledge of inappropriate topics

While it isn't uncommon for children to know about sex and inappropriate adult topics, it is unusual for them to have an in-depth knowledge of such topics. This is especially the case if it seems as though the child is talking from personal or eye-witness experience. Likewise, even for adults, there are some topics that are inappropriate, so if an individual starts to display an in-depth knowledge in support of radical or extremist views and beliefs, this could also be a sign of a safeguarding concern.

Overtly sexual behaviour

In adults and children of all ages, it is not appropriate to display overtly sexual behaviour. This is especially true if individuals are trying to coerce other people into joining in with their behaviours, not appearing to realise the issue with their behaviour, or refusing to stop when they are asked to.

Insecurities and choosing to cover up the body or certain parts of the body

Many of us have insecurities about certain parts of our bodies, but some individuals might not feel comfortable exposing any part of their body or might have issues with a certain feature of their body, due to low self-esteem from emotional abuse, or insecurity stemming from physical or sexual abuse. Similarly, hiding one area of the body consistently could be an attempt to conceal any injuries or scars related to abuse that an individual does not want anyone to ask questions about.

Having a poor relationship with family members

Family relationships can sometimes be strained for a variety of reasons, but you should pay close attention to those who have consistently bad relationships with their family members. Take note of individuals who always have a negative outlook on otherwise normal situations and continually place blame on one member of their family. Family relationships can be tenuous things, but if you suspect the issue runs deeper than a single bad argument, this could be a sign of an abusive relationship.

Depression and withdrawal, not enjoying activities

We all get low moods sometimes, but it is not common for individuals to be depressed without a reason. If an individual seems consistently depressed and withdrawn, or if they stop enjoying activities they used to, this could indicate a number of different problems at home, and abuse should never be ruled out as one of these issues.