

Commonword Enterprises

Safeguarding Policy

Why a safeguarding policy?

At its simplest, safeguarding means keeping people safe from harm, abuse or neglect. Commonword is committed to protecting from harm all people who benefit from the work of Commonword. Commonword has safeguarding responsibilities in relation to: (i) vulnerable adults (or children if under 18) who attend tutorials and workshops, (ii) writers involved in Commonword projects, (iii) staff and freelancers delivering workshops and events, (iv) Board members devising and monitoring the strategy and programme delivery of the organisation.

This Safeguarding Policy sets out what to do when presented with a safeguarding concern when involved in a Commonword activity. Please read it carefully and keep it readily available for reference.

To whom should staff refer safeguarding concerns?

There may be occasion when a Commonword staff member is confronted with safeguarding issues.

Serious safeguarding concerns should be referred to the **Commonword Safeguarding Lead: Chief Executive, Pete Kalu** (Tel 07796040347, pete@cultureword.org.uk).

Six Guiding Principles when dealing with safeguarding concerns

Our Safeguarding Policy is founded on the Six Guiding Principles enshrined in The Care Act 2014. When dealing with any safeguarding concern staff should refer to these principles and consider the best course of action.

- **Proportionality**: the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented;
- **Empowerment**: individuals are encouraged and supported to make their own decisions;
- **Partnership**: communication is at the heart of safeguarding;
- **Accountability**: transparency in safeguarding practice and record-keeping;
- **Prevention**: take action before harm occurs;
- **Protection**: support and representation for those in greatest need.

How do Commonword staff recognise a safeguarding scenario?

These are examples of possible safeguarding scenarios that might arise during the course of a Commonword activity. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list.

1. A participant has an emotional or physical collapse during a workshop.
2. A participant unexpectedly discloses a personal story or other material that is explicit, highly disturbing or sensitive, or relates to ongoing abuse or trauma.
3. A participant proves to be unexpectedly vulnerable. For example a participant is in a state of agitation, confusion and distress.
4. A participant displays highly offensive behaviour such as verbal abuse, offensive language or opinions.

5. A participant begins to target others – the staff member or other group members – outside the group through email or other communication.

What do Staff do if they find themselves in a scenario such as those above?

Commonword has adopted a simple traffic light system.

Green

This is a concern that the writer can deal with satisfactorily within the workshop or activity.

Amber

This is not an immediate crisis or emergency situation, but the staff member feels some action is required because they are worried or want to prevent the issue getting worse.

Red

This is a crisis in which the participant is at risk to themselves or those around them, has lost mental capacity and is at immediate risk of harm. Under The Care Act 2014 this situation is a legal responsibility and immediate action is required. Examples might include: threatened suicide, collapse, choking, severe injury, self-harm or some other immediate harm, or disclosure of a serious crime including abuse. (*Note – red-light situations are very rare.*).

What to do in a ‘red-light’ situation:

- a. **ACTION:** If nobody qualified is available to help and somebody is at immediate risk, call the emergency services (999) without delay. Get help from those around you if possible.

If someone raises a ‘red-light’ concern with you such as suicidal intentions, abuse:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay calm• Take immediate action if appropriate• Recognise your feelings, but keep them to yourself• Use language that the person can understand• Reassure the person that: telling you is doing the right thing; they are not to blame; you believe that they are telling the truth• Listen carefully, record what the person says and keep these notes• Explain what you will do next (i.e. tell a Safeguarding Lead) in a simple and clear way• Follow the standard procedure in telling a Safeguarding Lead and seeking advice and support for yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panic or delay• Express strong feelings of upset or anger• Use jargon or express opinions• Probe deeply for information• Use leading questions• Make them repeat the story• Promise unconditional confidentiality• Approach the person against whom the allegation has been made, or discuss the disclosure with anyone other than the safeguarding officer.

b. AFTERWARDS: once the immediate crisis is over, do the following:

- Fill in the Safeguarding Concern / Disclosure Form (on page 6).
- Send the completed form to the Commonword Safeguarding Lead within the hour. **General Manager, Pete Kalu (Tel 07796040347, pete@cultureword.org.uk).**
- The Commonword Safeguarding Lead will decide what action to take, report back to you and offer support.

What to do in a non-emergency situation

First, decide if the situation is Green or Amber.

GREEN = The staff member feels that the concerns raised in this category are within their competence to deal with – for instance, a group member is tearful and anxious.

What you can do:

- Check that the participant is OK to carry on and proceed with the group.
- If appropriate, suggest the group has a short break and take the opportunity to speak to the participant privately.
- If you want to pool or share advice, email other staff remembering to:
- Keep confidentiality.
- You may also wish to discuss the situation with your Safeguarding Lead

AMBER = This is not an immediate crisis or emergency situation, but you feel some action is required to prevent it worsening. Perhaps you have met the participant on several occasions and notice that they have ongoing well-being and/or worsening mental health concerns, or that their language or behaviour is inappropriate or occasionally offensive.

What you can do:

- With their consent, help the participant to connect with the relevant advice/counselling services.

If the participant does not wish to seek help and does not give consent to your breaking confidentiality you can still contact the Commonword Safeguarding Lead (**General Manager, Pete Kalu (Tel 07796040347, pete@cultureword.org.uk).**

- to raise your concern without disclosing their name. You can then discuss next steps.
- Record the event or meeting that has given you concern on the Safeguarding



Form below, including the action you have taken. Submit the form to the Commonword Safeguarding Lead.

How to record safeguarding concerns

All Amber and Red safeguarding incidents must be reported using the form below.

Commonword Safeguarding Concern / Disclosure Form

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Staff must fill in this form to report any Amber or Red concerns and email it to the Designated Safeguarding:
General Manager, Pete Kalu (Tel 07796040347, pete@cultureword.org.uk).

Subject heading "safeguarding concern".

You should anonymize the participant's identity on this form/email (Name/Phone/Email/Carer info).
The identifying details in the first section below should be given to the Safeguarding Lead over the phone.

Details of person at risk	
Name: Participant X. <i>(give this info only in a phone call to the SL)</i>	
Age:	Sex:
Phone number: <i>(give this info only in a phone call to the DSL)</i>	
Email: <i>(give this info only in a phone call to the DSL)</i>	
Parent / Carer contact details (where relevant):	

Details of the incident / concern
Date and time of incident / concern:
Who was there:
Who raised the concern (if not yourself):
Contact details of person who raised the concern:

Details of the incident / concern: **What was said or done, and by whom?** (Where possible use the words of the person you are concerned about").

Safeguarding participants and safeguarding Commonword staff during activities: a two-way process

Here are some practical guidelines to follow for your own protection as well as those in your group:

- Ensure that the room in which you meet is in a venue where there are other people present who could support you in an emergency, and that it's in a public space where everyone feels safe.
- Don't engage in any online activity that may compromise professional responsibilities.
- Use physical contact only where necessary (e.g. for First Aid): explain what the contact is for and change your approach if the other person appears uncomfortable.
- Do not initiate physical greetings (handshakes, etc.).
- Be aware of situations that can be misunderstood and may make you vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate behaviour.
- Avoid off-colour humour.
- Don't take photographs or videos of individuals or groups without consent.
- Don't give out your personal phone number/ email/ home address.
- (If applicable). If working online, keep screen backgrounds simple without conveying too much detail of your personal life.

What is Commonword doing to ensure that everybody knows about safeguarding, and that everybody feels safe at work?

Commonword undertakes to give regular training to trustees, staff and other contractors on various aspects of safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Lead ('DSL'): Lead **(General Manager, Pete Kalu (Tel 07796040347, pete@cultureword.org.uk))**, responsible for the implementation of Commonword's Safeguarding Policy including making referrals to relevant agencies and for ensuring that appropriate training is offered to staff. The DSL maintains records concerning safeguarding incidents.