

Canon Collins Trust

Child & Vulnerable Person Protection Policy & Guidelines

1. Policy Commitment

The abuse of children and vulnerable people happens when power is misused to the detriment of these groups. All forms of abuse and exploitation suffered by children and vulnerable people are unacceptable, and nearly all are preventable.

Canon Collins Trust will take steps to protect children and vulnerable people from abusive adults who might seek to gain access to them through our work. The possibility of abuse occurring is one which we take seriously and are committed to working to prevent.

Abuse is a corporate and an individual responsibility. All employees and volunteers will be made aware of the need for a child and vulnerable person protection concern in all our activities. Associations with anyone found engaging in abuse or exploitation of children or vulnerable people will be terminated.

The guiding principle of this policy is that the protection of children and vulnerable people is always the overriding consideration in all actions by our staff and volunteers.

The Canon Collins Trust Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Policy is a statement of the expectations we have of our employees, trustees and volunteers when they come into contact with children or vulnerable people.

We will endeavour to ensure that all employees and volunteers:

- Are **aware** of the problem of abuse and the risks to children and vulnerable people
- Are **aware** and **committed** to the policies and procedures set out in this document
- **Safeguard** children and vulnerable people from abuse through following a code of conduct
- **Report** breaches in the code of conduct
- **Respond** appropriately when the code of conduct is breached

Our Expectations

A 'duty of care' exists for all stakeholders who come into contact with children or vulnerable people. This means they should not only apply the principles of good practice in their work but also that they have a responsibility and legal duty to ensure the protection and safety of children and vulnerable people in their care.

Throughout its activities Canon Collins Trust will:

- Strive to understand children and vulnerable people within the local context in which they live
- Work with children and vulnerable people in a spirit of cooperation and partnership based on mutual trust and respect
- Work with children and vulnerable people in ways which enhance their capacities and capabilities and develop their potential
- Treat children and vulnerable people with respect and as individuals in their own right
- Regard children and vulnerable people positively and recognise their specific needs and rights
- Value the views of children and vulnerable people and take them seriously

Our Values and Beliefs

Canon Collins Trust believes in the rights of children and vulnerable people to:

- Be listened to and have their rights given careful consideration
- Be encouraged and helped to participate in decisions which affect them
- Have their welfare and development promoted and safeguarded so that they can achieve their full potential
- Be considered players in their own development with their health, safety, wellbeing and best interests given paramount importance
- Be valued, respected and understood within the context of their own culture, religion and ethnicity
- Have their needs identified and met within the context of the family where necessary

Our Commitment

We recognise:

- The rights of children and vulnerable people to protection from harm, abuse and exploitation as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The rights of vulnerable people to the same levels of protection from harm, abuse and exploitation
- The rights of Canon Collins Trust staff, partner organisations and other stakeholders to training and support
- The importance of working in partnership with other organisations in the protection of children

2. Definitions

Canon Collins Trust defines a **child** as anyone under the age of 18. This is consistent with the definition used by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Canon Collins Trust defines a **vulnerable person** as anyone who requires support in order to live safely and participate actively in the community.

A 1999 World Health Organisation consultation identified the following five subtypes of abuse:

Physical Abuse: the actual or potential physical harm from interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust.

Sexual Abuse: the involvement of a child or vulnerable person in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the person is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws and social taboos of society. Sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child or vulnerable person and an adult or child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances, internet pictures and materials.

Neglect and negligent treatment: is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child or vulnerable person in: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the person's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children and vulnerable people from harm as much as is feasible.

Emotional abuse: includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that a child or vulnerable person can reach their full potential in the context of the society in which they live. There may also be acts toward the child or vulnerable person that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, scape-goating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Sexual exploitation is the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another. Prostitution and trafficking of children or vulnerable people for sexual abuse and exploitation is one example of this. **Commercial or other exploitation** of a child or vulnerable person refers to the use of that person in work or other activities for the

benefit of others. These activities are to the detriment of the child or vulnerable person's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development.

It is clear from the above definitions that abuse can be caused by both actions and omissions and can take place both within the context of the family and in the context of other agencies and carers.

3. Prevention – Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People

Canon Collins Trust employees and volunteers must adhere to the following Child and Vulnerable Person Code of Conduct as a condition of service. Failure to adhere to the code could result in disciplinary action.

It is important for all Canon Collins Trust staff, trustees and volunteers in contact with children and vulnerable people to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks
- Be visible to others when working with children and vulnerable people whenever possible
- Create and maintain a non-defensive attitude and an open culture in which to discuss any issues or concerns
- Foster a culture of mutual accountability so that any potentially abusive behaviour can be challenged
- Develop a culture where children and vulnerable people can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly
- Respect children and vulnerable people's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem

In general, it is inappropriate (except for parents, family or guardians) to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children or vulnerable people away from others
- Take children or vulnerable people to your own home, especially where they will be alone with you
- Have children or vulnerable people to stay overnight at your home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child or vulnerable person

Canon Collins Trust staff and volunteers must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or vulnerable people

- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children or vulnerable people
- Develop relationships with children or vulnerable people which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child or vulnerable person at risk of abuse

Staff, trustees and volunteers must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:

- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative towards a child or vulnerable person
- Do things for children or vulnerable people of a personal nature that they can do for themselves such as toileting or changing clothes
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour towards children or vulnerable people which is illegal, unsafe or abusive or exposes them to danger
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- Discriminate against, show different treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child or vulnerable person in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way. Touching should only be:
 - in response to the need of the person
 - be only with the person's permission (except in an emergency situation)
 - avoid the breasts, buttocks and groin
 - be open and non secretive

The guiding principle is that protection of children and vulnerable people is always the overriding consideration.

Declaration:

I have received the Canon Collins Trust Child and Vulnerable Person Code of Conduct which I have read, understood and committed to follow.

Signature

Date

4. Requirements of this policy

During recruitment and training Canon Collins Trust will ensure that:

- All employees whose work will include contact with children or vulnerable people will be asked to sign a declaration of criminal convictions
- For all applicants two references will be sought. We will require references by phone as well as in writing. Particular attention will be given to any area of concern relating to the protection of children or vulnerable people
- Applicants whose work will include contact with children or vulnerable people will be asked about previous work with these groups during the interview process
- Employees working with children and vulnerable people will first be subject to a police check
- All Canon Collins Trust staff and volunteers working with children or vulnerable people will be required to sign a declaration that they have read and understood this policy and code of conduct.
- Canon Collins Trust staff are vigilant for signs of behavioural patterns in applicants that may be of concern, and are systematic in exploring these

5. Guidelines for reporting suspected or actual abuse of children and vulnerable people for Canon Collins Trust employees and volunteers

This section is to ensure that Canon Collins Trust staff and volunteers are clear as to what steps to take if they believe that the Child and Vulnerable Person Code of Conduct is being broken.

No staff member, volunteer, trustee or partner organisation will prejudice their own position or standing with Canon Collins Trust by responsibly reporting someone who they believe is breaking the Child and Vulnerable Person Code of Conduct.

Responsible reporting is defined as being in accordance with this policy, the Code of Conduct, and the disciplinary guidelines in place.

Responsible reporting also means that any person making a report should bear in mind that all concerns are allegations until they have been investigated. For this reason it is important for anyone raising a concern to strictly follow the reporting model set out below. In particular confidentiality is expected within the reporting chain.

Procedural guidelines

A. Employees and volunteers should normally discuss their concerns with the Chief Executive. Where they are unable or unwilling to do this they must raise their concerns with the trustee designated as whistleblower.

Discussions should focus on:

- Evidence that the Code of Conduct has been broken
- Risks to the child/children
- Measures to safeguard children and minimise risk
- Action/next steps

Concerns should be reported as quickly as possible.

B. The Chief Executive or whistleblower should assess the following:

- The reported concerns and support needs
- Whether, and at what stage, Canon Collins Trust should report the concerns to external bodies
- Appropriate response eg disciplinary process or urgent action if children are judged to be at risk.

Staff and volunteers should feel able to consult and seek support from the Chief Executive at any stage of the process. The Chief Executive may seek advice from other colleagues as necessary.

C. Making reports

- Any concerns, allegations or disclosures should be written down as soon as possible. Records should be signed and dated.
- Records should be detailed and precise, focussing on what was said or observed, who was present and what happened. Speculation and interpretation should be clearly distinguished from reporting.
- Any concern, disclosure or allegation is alleged rather than proven at this point.
- All such records should be treated as extremely confidential. They should be passed only to the persons specified in this reporting model. It is the responsibility of each individual in possession of the information to maintain confidentiality.
- However, it is very important that confidentiality is never promised. It must be made clear that following the steps in this policy is an obligation. Explanations should be given about the possible outcomes that could result from information being reported.

- In certain instances there will be the obligation for Canon Collins Trust to report concerns to the appropriate external bodies. This will usually occur as a consequence of the reporting procedure. However if urgent action is required in order to protect children then it may be prior to the reporting procedure.

D. Responding to concerns

Responses will vary according to local conditions and the nature of the concerns.

In order to protect children it may be necessary to take immediate action to ensure that the Code is not broken again or further abuse cannot take place.

The best interests of the child or vulnerable person and the desire to secure the best outcomes for them should always govern decisions regarding what action should be taken in response to concerns.

With regard to the member of staff or volunteer against whom allegations are made, Canon Collins Trust standard disciplinary procedure will be followed.

6. Partner Organisations

Any agreement between Canon Collins Trust and partner organisations which provide services to children or vulnerable people will require assurance that child protection policies and procedures are in place, acknowledging that lack of such policies can place children, vulnerable people and Canon Collins Trust at risk.