

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The Mark Williams Foundation is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all young people aged 17-25 engaged in our entrepreneurship programme. This safeguarding policy reflects our commitment to protecting vulnerable beneficiaries from harm in accordance with the standards set by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and relevant Scottish legislation.

Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, mentors, and any other individuals involved in delivering or supporting our programme. It covers the protection of young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and any form of harm or discrimination.

Legal Framework

Our safeguarding approach is guided by key legislation including:

- The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Human Rights Act 1998

Commitment

We pledge to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment for all participants.
- Promote equal protection for all young people irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or identity.
- Make safeguarding a priority in our organisational culture and practices.
- Ensure all involved understand and implement safeguarding responsibilities.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Board of Trustees holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding oversight.
- A designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be appointed to manage concerns and ensure compliance. The Head of Impact is trained as the DSL (Level 3).
- All mentors, staff, and volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding training and clear guidance on expected conduct.

Safe Recruitment

We commit to safe recruitment practices including:

- Background checks via the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme for all adults working with young people.
- Verifying references and suitability for roles involving direct contact with beneficiaries.

Code of Conduct

Clear guidelines will be established regarding acceptable behaviour, communication, and interactions between mentors, staff, and beneficiaries, to prevent abuse or exploitation.

Reporting and Responding to Concerns

- Any concerns, disclosures, or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously, documented, and reported promptly to the Safeguarding Lead.
- Cases involving potential criminal offences will be referred to the police and relevant authorities.
- We will comply with OSCR's requirements to report notifiable safeguarding incidents.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

We will ensure that all information concerning safeguarding concerns is handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation.

Monitoring and Review

- The safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if required by changes in legislation or organisational activities.
- Implementation will be monitored through regular training, audits, and feedback mechanisms.