



Safeguarding Policy - 2025

The Heron Theatre

The Heron Theatre is a receiving theatre that hosts individuals and groups of performers as well as art exhibitions and films. It does not produce its own productions. The management of the theatre is the responsibility of the management committee of trustees. The running of the theatre is undertaken by unpaid volunteers.

Safeguarding

This document is the Safeguarding Policy for The Heron Theatre, assessed and approved by the Heron Theatre trustees on 9th January 2025.

This policy will be reviewed annually in January each year. A copy is displayed in the building. Every trustee and volunteer is required to read it and sign that they have done so.

The next review will take place on 8th January 2026.

A copy of this document will be made available to all users of the theatre and they are expected to comply with it.

The Principle

The underlying principle is that the trustees believe that everyone, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, bullying, neglect and exploitation. The trustees will not tolerate any breaches of this principle.

The Role of trustees and volunteers

The trustees and volunteers will:

- provide a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with the Theatre including volunteers, performers, audiences and hirers.
- set a culture that prioritises safeguarding, so that it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled sensitively and properly.
- have adequate safeguarding policies and measures to protect people
- provide clarity as to how incidents and allegations will be handled should they arise, including reporting to the relevant authorities, such as the Cumbria Adult Social Care or Cumbria Children's Social Care

The trustees have overall responsibility for the safeguarding and protection of service users within the Heron Theatre. The Designated Safeguarding Lead person (DSL) is the Honorary Secretary (Peter Mann) who supports the chairman in the implementation of this policy. The DSL supports trustees and volunteers in matters of safeguarding concern. Any concern must be passed immediately to the DSL or chairman.

The trustees will require a Disclosure and Barring Service check where appropriate.

Trustees and volunteers must maintain a proper focus on the safety and welfare of all users of the theatre in line with the code of conduct (attached).

Training of volunteers

All volunteers must attend an induction session on their role and the running of the theatre. This will include an introduction and explanation of this safeguarding policy. Volunteers will also be invited to refresher meetings each year.

All changes to the safeguarding policy will be sent to each volunteer in person

Reporting concerns and complaints

Anyone, whether adult or child who raises a concern or complaint will be heard with respect and care.

No promise of confidentiality in keeping the matter from the authorities should be made.

Concerns must be raised as quickly as possible. This can be done through the duty manager for the event or a trustee.

The DSL must be informed as soon as possible. If the DSL is not available the chairman must be informed.

The DSL will decide in consultation with the chairman whether to refer the concerns to the relevant authorities in line with the attached form.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead person (DSL) is

Peter Mann 01524 419252 secretary@theherontheatre.com

Other contacts:

Child safeguarding issues CSCP@cumbria.gov.uk 0333 240 1727

Adult safeguarding issues: Cumbria Safeguarding Adult Hub customerservicessouth@cumbria.gov.uk or 01228 526690

Please see below the reporting forms as well as a record of the action taken in considering the complaint or concern

What is abuse?

Abuse is “The violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons”.

Abuse of Children

The abuse of children and young people can take many forms. They have the same right to protection regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities (physical, sensory and/or learning difficulties) are especially vulnerable and need special care and protection.

Statutory definitions

The UK central government categorises and defines abuse in terms of:

- Physical abuse including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.
- Emotional abuse including conveying to a child that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- Sexual abuse including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. It may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual exploitation Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

Bullying and cyberbullying Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying.

Online abuse With the ever-growing use of the internet, there has been a corresponding rise in the use of the internet and other electronic communication to target, groom and abuse children. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by adults who pretend to be children of similar ages when online and who try to obtain images or engineer meetings.

Electronic images The downloading, keeping or distributing of indecent images of children are all classified as sexual. The texting of sexual messages and photographs (sometimes referred to as ‘sexting’) can be particularly problematic and abusive amongst children and young people.

Abuse of adults

The UK central government categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

- Physical abuse including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
 - Sexual abuse including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.
 - Psychological abuse including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse.
 - Discriminatory abuse including racist, sexist, based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
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Good Practice Guidelines

The following guidance relates especially to children and vulnerable adults but also represent good principles for interaction with anyone -.

Be aware that a person's actions could be misinterpreted, even if well intentioned.

Be aware of how your speech, tone of voice and body language may be perceived. In particular, never scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child or vulnerable adult.

Children may not see the physical danger associated with activities and theatre equipment that an adult would recognise. Therefore:

- ensure that equipment is safely stored and used and that children are warned of any danger
- that any horseplay which could lead to injury is immediately stopped
- All activities involving children should be risk assessed and approved by The Heron Theatre Executive Committee

Supervise the children carefully and do not permit bullying or ridiculing.

Control and maintain discipline without any physical punishment.

Respect a person's right to privacy whatever their age.

Do not touch a person inappropriately or intrusively. This includes any physical touching which could be easily misinterpreted.

Ensure you are not left alone with a child, in particular:

- never give a lift to a child or young person when alone
- do not take a child or young person alone backstage or to any other part of the theatre such as sound or lighting box
- never invite a child or young person to your home or to any other place
- never text or email a child or young person direct unless with parental permission
- do not contact on Social Media.

In summary these guidelines are to enable the Heron Theatre to be a happy place where everyone feels comfortable

Photographing and Videoing

Productions may not be recorded by video or photographs without prior permission of The Heron Theatre Executive Committee. Permission needs to be obtained from parents before any videoing, photography or streaming of children can take place.

Accidents

All accidents must be recorded in the theatre's accident book located in the kitchen.

Parents/carers should be informed as appropriate.

Guidance for visiting performers and companies

All performers and visiting companies must be familiar with the Safeguarding Policy and follow the guidelines and procedures and take action in line with the policy by reporting suspicions to the house manager or the DSL.

It is the responsibility of the visiting producer and company to ensure every child's safety. There should always be at least two adults on site with any group of one or more children.

It is the responsibility of the Producer to keep a register of all children involved in any production or event within the theatre, with a contact name and number to be kept readily to hand in case of emergency.

Safeguarding Concern Report Form

To be completed by Referrer

Please give as much detail as possible (ensuring handwriting is readable)

Please keep it factual and include exactly what you were told (in the person's own words)

Please include the names (or initials) who was involved including witnesses, staff, and members of the public

Please give any details of previous incidents

Date of Record:

Date of Incident:

Time of Incident:

Name of Referrer:

Role of Referrer:

Child or adult's Name/Initials:

Has the individual been notified of this referral? YES/NO

If NO, please explain why.

Details of concern (continue on reverse if necessary)

Please include names (or initials) of any alleged perpetrator, or other person/witnesses.

Other notes can be added to this document.

Reported to:

Title and Role of person reported to:

Date Reported:

Signed

Action form for Designated Safeguarding Lead Person

Date form received.

Action Taken

Advice Sought

(From whom and what was advice given)

Referral made

If not, state reasons why –

If yes record to whom and any agreed actions

Other notes /information /concerns

Any other action required?