Parks for London

Safeguarding Policy & Procedures
Children, young people and adults at risk from harm

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Background

The London Parks and Green Spaces Forum is a registered charity and trades as Parks for London, for the purposes of this policy document the Charity will be referred to as 'Parks for London', 'we' or 'our'.

Parks for London seeks to improve the quality of and promote London's parks and green spaces to ensure they meet the needs of residents and communities, and the wider environment. It does this by working with London's landowners and managers, those that maintain parks and green spaces, and policy makers.

Governance of the Charity

Parks for London has adopted the Charity Code of Governance. The 7 principles of which are reviewed and discussed by the Board of trustees at each board meeting, in relation to our activities and practices. We also subscribe to NCVO's trusted standard.

Parks for London has a risk register in place which addresses potential risk areas (covering governance, external, regulatory and compliance, financial and operations), with corresponding controls and actions required to mitigate risks. Risks in relation to safeguarding are addressed under governance. Safeguarding risks in relation to vulnerable individuals and groups are currently considered to be extremely low, due to the nature of our work and related activities. The register is reviewed by the Board quarterly.

A risk management statement is given in the trustee's annual report, which covers all major risks we face and how we seek to control them.

Introduction

Creating a safe and welcoming environment, where everyone is respected and valued, is at the heart of safeguarding. Every organisation that delivers charitable activities has a duty to safeguard staff members, volunteers, participants, and donors; the Charity Commission expects charities to make safeguarding a priority.

Parks for London seeks to promote a fair, open, inclusive, and positive culture that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect of staff, volunteers and others who may be involved with us. All should feel able to report concerns, confident that they will be taken seriously and that appropriate action, where necessary, will be taken swiftly.
This safeguarding policy addresses '**adults at risk from harm'** (see note 1 – appendix A), '**children**' (see note 2 – appendix A) and general issues around safeguarding.

Policy

Parks for London acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of *children* and to safeguard and protect *adults at risk from harm*, as well as its staff and volunteers.

Statutory guidance and legislation for managing safeguarding duties for children and adults at risk from harm are outlined in notes 5 and 6 in appendix A. Parks for London is committed to ensuring that its' safeguarding practices meet statutory requirements, and good practice.

Parks for London has a duty to protect its staff and volunteers (see note 7 – appendix A) from harm or abuse. This means being aware of types of harm that can develop within an organisation, such as: physical; sexual; emotional; psychological; neglect; radicalisation; discriminatory; and financial. Parks for London have the following policies and procedures in place, to protect its staff and volunteers for: Grievance, Health and Safety, Bullying and Harassment, and Whistleblowing.

Parks for London's does not currently undertake any '*regulated activity*' (see note 4 – appendix A) or any other work or activities with *children* or *adults at risk from harm*, nor does it undertake any such activities directly with the public.

Parks for London is a small charity, which seeks to increase its impact by collaborating with other like-minded organisations*[1] with an interest in green infrastructure. Parks for London may occasionally have collaboration agreements in place with businesses and may organise events, conferences, or launches with other organisations. Such collaborations do not involve any regulated activity or otherwise with *children* or *adults at risk from harm*.

With reference to safeguarding guidelines, policies and procedures put in place, these must be proportional to the level of risk involved. The following policy and procedural measures are considered appropriate for the level of risk, based on current activities, and will be reviewed biennially.

Parks for London will ensure:

- Ensure that all staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures, to ensure suitability to act in their role within the organisation
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate induction and training, including safeguarding awareness and the practices of Parks for London therein
- Identify a member of staff as a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to be responsible for ensuring that safeguarding procedures are carried out and that staff and trustees are aware of the current policy and procedures
- Ensure recruitment of trustees follows due process, as outlined in Parks for London's governing document and appropriate eligibility checks are undertaken
- Identify a trustee to take lead responsibility for safeguarding at a governance level
- Establish procedures that minimise the risk of harm or abuse to individuals in relation to Parks for London's work, events, and activities

[1] Organisations that Parks for London collaborates with, by way of collaboration agreements or otherwise, will be subject to Parks for London's guidelines on partnering with other organisations.

- Establish procedures for reporting and recording, concerns and/or suspected abuse or harm.

Procedures for the recruitment, induction, and training

For staff:

- All applications will be made in writing
- Due diligence will be done when considering applicants for interview
- Interviews for shortlisted candidates will be undertaken by a panel consisting of at least one member of staff and one colleague who may be a trustee
- Appointments will be subject to appropriate references (at least 2) and proof of ID, being provided
- DSB checks (see note 3 – appendix A) are not considered necessary for any permanent roles within the Parks for London current structure, this will be subject to review if the structure or our activities change
- All new staff must read and understand all policies and procedures, in place, including safeguarding, as part of their induction
- Training will be given to staff to enable them to undertake their role and to develop within the organisation. All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding training, which will enable them to have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities in this regard, including appropriate behaviour, identification of the signs of abuse (see note 8 – appendix A) and steps to report any concerns.
- Staff are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to their role and that upholds the standards of Parks for London. Conduct that is considered to not be of an acceptable standard may be subject to disciplinary procedures, which are given in the Staff Handbook.

For Trustees:

Parks for London will take reasonable steps to ensure that trustees are suitable and eligible to be appointed.

- All trustees shall be properly appointed following the procedures and restrictions in the Charity's governing document, as per Charity Commission guidance
- Appointments are subject to appropriate references and proof of ID
- Currently trustee appointments are not subject to DBS checks, this may be reviewed if our activities change.
- Individuals cannot be appointed as trustees if they are disqualified under the Charities Act [see note 9 – appendix A]
- All trustees are registered with Companies House as directors, and must not be disqualified from being a company director
- Trustees must sign the Charity Commissions Trustee Eligibility Declaration form
- Trustees will be given an induction, any applicable training, and resources to enable them to understand and fulfil their duties and responsibilities, which includes having oversight of how safeguarding and protecting people from harm are managed at Parks for London [see note 11 – appendix A].

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Parks for London's DSL will take responsibility for safeguarding as follows:

- Develop and update all safeguarding policies and procedures, in line with latest guidance, good practice and current issues, ensuring they are proportional to the level of risk
- Keep up to date with latest guidance, good practice, and current issues around safeguarding
- Provide support and advice to staff regarding safeguarding concerns
- Ensure staff have appropriate safeguarding training and maintain training records
- Ensure any reported concerns are dealt with in a timely manner in accordance with procedures and recorded accurately.

Collaborations with other organisations

Whenever Parks for London undertakes a project/event/activity with another organisation the DSL will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements, if necessary, are in place and that each organisation understands its respective responsibilities.

Reporting concerns and responding to allegations and suspicions

As previously stated, Parks for London does not undertake any regulated or non-regulated activities with vulnerable groups. The following reporting procedures are therefore provided to cover any safeguarding concerns or issues:

- The DSL will be the first point of contact for any questions about Park for London's safeguarding policy and procedures, and to report any concerns to (from an individual internally or externally). If a concern is urgent and the DSL is not available, the Executive Director should be the next port of call, followed by the trustee with responsibility for safeguarding. See appendix B for contact details.
- All reports will be taken seriously, the DSL should gather as much information as possible and record it accurately including the following:
  -Contact details of the person(s) involved
  -Nature of the allegation/concern, including dates, time and special factors and other relevant information
  -Any other relevant information such as witnesses
- All records will be confidential and kept securely in accordance with GDPR, records will not be kept for more than 5 years.
- The DSL with the Executive Director or designated trustee will need to assess the concern reported and take appropriate action. Different concerns will require different actions, for example if a situation is life threatening the emergency services should be called immediately; where a child or adult at risk from harm, is in immediate danger or risk of harm, the local authority safeguarding team or police should be called [see appendix B for more information].

Appendix A - Notes to the policy

1. Any adult may experience abuse or harm, however, certain people are at greater risk, so are given more protection by law; *'Adults at risk of harm'* are defined under the Care Act 2014, as those who:
   - Have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
   - Are experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and
   - As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.
2. *'Children'* refers to individuals that have not yet reached their 18th birthday.
3. Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] helps employers make safer recruitment decisions by processing and issuing DBS checks for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. It also maintains the adults' and children's *Barred Lists* and makes considered decisions as to whether an individual should be included on one or both lists and barred from engaging in *regulated activity*.
4. *Regulated Activity* is a term used to describe certain job functions carried out by an employee [as defined by the (DBS)], which will determine eligibility for an Enhanced Level DBS check and a check of the DBS Barred Lists. Regulated Activity is broken down into two separate groups 'Activity with Children' and 'Activity with Adults'.
5. The Charity Commission expects charities working with persons under 18 years of age to follow the government's guidance on Working Together to Safeguard Children. The most important pieces of legislation detailing legal duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are: *The Children Acts 1989* and *2004*.
6. The Charity Commission expects charities working with *adults at risk from harm* to follow their guidance and work with the appropriate local authority who hold the main legal duty to safeguard adults at risk. This requirement comes from *The Care Act 2014*. The Care Act requires all local authorities to have a *Safeguarding Adults Board* (SAB) that operates at a strategic level to protect adults.
7. Parks for London currently has a staff team of 4 full-time employees.
8. More information about different types of harm/abuse relating to children can be found at and for adults at the Ann Craft Trust
9. More information about trustee disqualification can be found here
10. Specific guidance for trustees around safeguarding is provided by NCVO and can be found here

Appendix B - Acting on reports of concern or risk of harm to others

Emergency Incidents

This is when there's a life-threatening situation or where there's imminent danger and harm to a child, young person or adult. In such cases the DSL or other senior member of staff should:

- Immediately contact the emergency services if not already done
- Make sure the current situation is safe.
- Establish how others are coping to see if they need any immediate support
- Inform a senior person in your organisation.

Child or adult protection concerns

This is when a child, young person or adult at risk from harm (who you believe is unable to protect themselves) is at current risk of, or has experienced, abuse or harm. In such cases the DSL or other senior member of staff must:

- Call the local authority safeguarding team or the police if the person is in immediate danger, or the abuse has happened where they live, immediately;
- Call the local authority safeguarding team within 24 hours and make a telephone referral, if they're not in immediate danger;
- Be guided by the safeguarding team or police on any further actions required of you. Always follow up your call with a written referral.

Allegations concerning staff or volunteers

If someone has alleged that staff or volunteers from Parks for London have harmed or abused a child or adult at risk from harm, the DSL or other senior member of staff must:

- Contact the local authority safeguarding team as soon as possible (within 24 hours);
- Be guided by them on any further actions required;
- Reading on managing allegations about children: managing allegations of abuse (from NSPCC Learning).

Where such allegations do not involve the aforementioned groups the DSL should:

- Follow the organisational disciplinary procedures.
- Contact the relevant senior person in the organisation as soon as possible within 24 hours to discuss the concern.
- Decide the next steps together, which might include an internal investigation.

Welfare concerns

This is when no one has been harmed in any way, but you or someone else have concerns about a child, young person or adult at risk relating to their health, wellbeing or safety if they don't get help.

Within seven days the DSL should speak with the person and when it is appropriate speak with their family or carer to explain your concerns and make sure they have the support they need. This may mean providing information about services or speaking to a lead professional involved.

Concerns about other organisations

This is a situation where the safeguarding concern is about another organisation, their staff, volunteers, or the people they work with. The DSL should:

- Contact the DSL of the organisation in question (within 24 hours) and pass on concerns.
- In some circumstances the DSL may decide to follow up with the organisation to confirm they have acted on the issue.
- If at any point the DSL is aware that the organisation has not acted and someone is at risk, the local safeguarding team should be contacted.
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Supporting those who report/share a concern

Whilst the primary concern should be the best interests of the person who is at risk of harm, there should be an awareness that the person sharing a concern may also be distressed by the situation, even if they are reporting on behalf of someone else. The DLS should:

- Thank them for bringing this concern to your attention and that they have fulfilled their key responsibility
- Explain that you will now take responsibility in leading management of this concern and any contact with statutory agencies
- Highlight that there may be limited updates that you have or can give them on the situation; that does not mean that it was not important for them to share this
- Remind them of the importance of confidentiality and not sharing this information further
- Ensure they have your contact details in case they think of anything else they have not yet shared that they think may be relevant
- Discuss with them what additional support they may require. This may include informing a senior member of staff that they have dealt with a difficult situation, contacting any employee assistance programme or supporting them to access additional support
- Consider contacting them later to check in on how they are doing.

Appendix C - Contacts

Contacts at Parks for London

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):
Nina Obhrai, Admin and Finance Manager
Email: nina.obhrai@parksforlondon.org.uk
Tel: 07748 9685 79

Ed Stannard, Executive Director
Email: ed.stannard@parksforlondon.org.uk

Designated Safeguarding Trustee
Kate Brown, Trustee
Email: safeguarding@parksforlondon.org.uk

External Contacts

Emergency Services can be contacted by telephone on 999

All Local Authorities (LA) will have a *Safeguarding Team*, that can be contacted for concerns about children and young people and adults at risk from harm; numbers for each LA can be found by using the following government service

Other Agencies:

NSPCC - National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Children 0808 800 5000

Other information about who to contact in specific situations can be found at the Ann Craft Trust