



## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **Children and Vulnerable Adult Support and Protection Policy**

Spark is committed to providing a safe environment to all who access it. It is everyone at Spark's responsibility to look out for the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to protect them from physical or psychological harm (including self-harm).

This policy is in place with the aim of safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults whether or not they require additional support in daily living. This policy works in connection with other Spark policies and where appropriate these other policies should be followed to provide the best service and outcomes for the person to whom it concerns.

These policies include:

1. Confidentiality Policy
2. Equality and Diversity Policy
3. Health and Safety Policy
4. Complaints and Incidents Policy

Spark expects everyone to treat each other with respect and provide support for their individual needs. Spark also expects all staff, members and/or volunteers to raise any concerns regarding the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult associated with Spark, in line with this policy and the Spark complaints procedure. Any questions or concerns must be raised with a member of Spark staff or a member of the Spark Board of Trustees, who will be responsible for taking the relevant steps to ensure that appropriate actions are taken.

#### **Spark will:**

- Ensure processes and measures are in place to ensure that children and vulnerable adults remain safe whilst accessing our services
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children or vulnerable adults in line with this policy as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary policy and procedures.
- Take any incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse seriously and respond to these sensitively, swiftly and appropriately, involving the relevant authorities as appropriate e.g. police, social work, health service, advocacy services, and protecting the needs of those who disclose any safeguarding concerns relating to their attendance at Spark
- Stipulate that all children under the age of 16 must be accompanied to Spark activities by an appropriate adult, whether a parent or guardian



- As far as possible, support any extra needs that a person requires to be met to attend our service e.g. carers and supporting family members of children and vulnerable adults will be welcomed and supported to attend
- Promote the health and welfare of children and vulnerable adults by providing opportunities for them to take part in our clubs/groups/projects/volunteering safely
- Respect and promote the rights of children and vulnerable adults
- Actively seek the input and feedback from children and vulnerable adults attending Spark, on what helps them feel comfortable, safe and secure when using Spark's services and making appropriate changes in response to these when required
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from any form of abuse, harassment, or victimisation during their engagements with Spark
- Recruit, train, support and supervise our staff to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults during their engagements with Spark
- Carry out safeguarding risk assessments where required for particular activities, projects or events involving children and vulnerable adults.
- Inform members of staff, volunteers and the Board of Trustees about this policy and ensure they abide by it and adhere to our procedures
- Stipulate that any third parties providing services to Spark that involve children or vulnerable adults have appropriate safeguarding and protection policies and procedures in place
- Co-operate with the local council's needs to protect any children and vulnerable adult from harm and will assist with any enquires regarding this in connection with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Spark endeavours to create a safe space for people to share concerns confidentially however where required, Spark reserves the right to share information with other appropriate parties/authorities where Spark staff or the Board of Trustees deem it appropriate to do so to protect individuals from harm. The information will only be shared with relevant and appropriate professionals e.g. police, social work, health care professionals (this list is not exhaustive and will depend on the specific situation occurring).

All information stored or shared will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Adult Support and Protection Act 2007.

Except in emergencies where an individual or group are at risk of harm, the decision to share information to protect an individual will be taken in consultation with the Spark CEO, Chairperson or another nominated member of staff or member of the Board of Trustees.

### **Online Interactions**



Spark members and volunteers will from time to time interact and communicate with Spark online, primarily through our Facebook page or by email.

Facebook communications with Spark should be channelled through the Spark Facebook page or via the Spark Facebook messenger channel, which can be viewed and accessed by members of Spark staff and volunteers, which keeps staff, volunteers and all members safe when using this channel.

Where a staff member or volunteer have any cause for concern regarding email or Facebook communications to or from a child or vulnerable adult, they must raise this with a(nother) member of staff or the CEO as soon as they possibly can. A decision can then be taken together on the most appropriate way to proceed to protect the child or vulnerable adult from risk of harm.

### **Duty of Care**

Spark has a duty of care to ensure that where a child or vulnerable adult discloses that they are at risk of harm or abuse, the following process must be observed.

- Listen carefully and do not ask leading questions
- Volunteers must notify a member of Spark staff as soon as possible following the conversation
- Record the details of the conversation soon after and store this in a confidential (locked) staff only storage area
- Discuss with the Spark CEO or member of the Board of Trustees and make a decision on next steps and who else it may be appropriate to involve to protect the individual i.e the police, social work.
- Ensure that all records relating to the disclosure are stored securely in a staff storage area and remain confidential.

### **Legislative Framework**

Spark will monitor this policy to ensure it meets statutory and legal requirements including the Data Protection Act, Children's Act, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and Adult Support and Protection Act 2007.

### **Ensuring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

All Board of Trustee members will receive a copy of the Children and Vulnerable Adult Support and Protection policy. Existing and new persons to Spark will be introduced to this policy via request and staff training. The policy will be reviewed annually and amendments will be proposed and agreed by the Board of Trustees.



## **Non-adherence**

Breaches of this policy may be dealt with under the Grievance and/or Disciplinary policy as appropriate.