

## THE ERNEST FOUNDATION - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### Statement of purpose

1. The Ernest Foundation is committed to preventing and responding to risks of harm to and promoting the welfare of all adults at risk that we work with (The Ernest Foundation Peer Support Group). These individuals are referred to as the '**Beneficiaries**' of the Safeguarding Policy.
2. We recognise the importance of the commitment to safety and welfare and, further, are committed to safeguarding all Beneficiaries without discrimination due to an individual's age, race, religion or belief, disability, sex, gender, reassignment, pregnancy or maternity leave status, marriage or civil partnership status or sexual orientation.
3. This Safeguarding Policy is based on the safeguarding laws of England, Wales, and Scotland, including related guidance issued by the UK Government and relevant governmental departments, agencies, and public bodies. If this Policy is at any time inconsistent with the body of law, The Ernest Foundation will act to meet the requirements of up-to-date safeguarding laws in priority to the requirements set out in this Policy.
4. The Ernest Foundation has implemented this Safeguarding Policy in order to meet its obligations as a charity regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales (The Ernest Foundation is registered with the Charity Commission with charity number 1116823).
5. Any questions in relation to this Policy should be referred to Ernest Nkrumah, Executive Officer in the first instance, by emailing [info@theernestfoundation.org](mailto:info@theernestfoundation.org) or by contacting 07402958398.

### Scope of this Safeguarding Policy

6. This Policy explains key aspects of how The Ernest Foundation prevents harm in relation to its Beneficiaries via its practices and its Staff Members' conduct.
7. This Safeguarding Policy covers the organisation and operation of all of The Ernest Foundation's activities involving adults and youths at risk (i.e., our Relevant Activities). These primarily include:
  - a. Supporting people living with HIV to help them improve their quality of life. Organising and running a peer support group to empower them to build their confidence, and self-esteem, and self-management.
8. This Policy's guidelines and obligations apply to all individuals working for or acting on behalf of The Ernest Foundation in the UK at all levels, including senior managers, trustees, officers, employees, consultants, trainers, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term workers, casual workers, volunteers, and interns (collectively '**Staff Members**').
9. This Policy does not form part of any contract of employment or similar and The Ernest Foundation may amend it at any time at our absolute discretion.

## Defining safeguarding

10. 'Safeguarding' is an umbrella term that refers to work (e.g., practices and procedures) aimed at preventing or responding to harm or risks of harm posed to vulnerable individuals, and at promoting these individuals' wider welfare. Safeguarding is particularly important for children and young people and adults at risk. Most safeguarding legal obligations relate to the care of these groups. The safeguarding purposes, adults at risk are individuals 18 years old or over (in England and Wales) or 16 years old or over (in Scotland) who have care and/or support needs and who are, because of needs, unable to protect themselves from (e.g., due to illness and disability). This need not be on a permanent basis.
11. The commitments and practices contained in this Safeguarding Policy apply to the safeguarding of The Ernest Foundation's Beneficiaries from harm caused by either.
  - a. The activities and practices of The Ernest Foundation and any conduct of its Staff Members, or
  - b. People and situations outside The Ernest Foundation's and its Staff Members' control, where The Ernest Foundation's Staff Members are aware of, ought to be aware of, or reasonably suspect the risks posed by a situation.
12. For the purposes of this Policy, a '**Safeguarding Concerns**' is any conduct or situation that is known or reasonably suspected by a Staff Member or another party that risks violating the safeguarding commitments set out above.

## Key measures that The Ernest Foundation is committed to implementing and maintaining to safeguard its Beneficiaries.

13. Following applicable leadership and guidance provided by local Safeguarding Adults Boards when safeguarding adults.
14. Ensuring that Staff Members are trained to, and encouraged to, report any Safeguarding Concerns that they identify Staff Members will be encouraged to follow The Ernest Foundation's safeguarding reporting procedures as closely as possible when reporting concerns (set out below under the heading '**Procedures: Reporting**')
15. Ensuring that all Staff Members listen to all safeguarding-related queries and concerns raised by other Staff Members, Beneficiaries, or relevant other parties, with respect and professionalism. Staff Members should be trained how to, and encourage to, then assist with reporting any such concerns via The Ernest Foundation's regular reporting procedures.
16. Ensuring that all reported Safeguarding Concerns are dealt with by appropriate individuals and teams and in accordance with The Ernest Foundation's relevant procedures (set out below under the heading '**Procedures: Investigation and Response**')

17. Implementing and maintaining comprehensive, accessible, fair, and efficient procedures for Staff Members to use when reporting and dealing with Safeguarding Concerns. These procedures will be made known and easily accessible to all Staff Members.
  - a. Procedures will be designed to ensure all safeguarding issues are dealt with fairly and objectively even when allegations are made against one of The Ernest Foundation's Staff Members. Any such allegations will be treated in a manner that takes into account the gravity of the accusations, but which does not vilify or presume the guilt of an accused individual without a fair investigation.
  - b. Any reports that qualify as protected disclosures under whistleblowing law will be treated securely policies and procedures within The Ernest Foundation.
18. Appointing office manager to hold responsibility for managing safeguarding policies and procedures within The Ernest Foundation.
19. Following appropriate recruitment processes when recruiting new Staff Members, including volunteers. This includes:
  - a. Conducting all appropriate pre-employment checks (e.g., Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record checks).
  - b. Ensuring new Staff Members take part in, and understand the content of, all necessary safeguarding training before having any contact with The Ernest Foundation's Beneficiaries.
  - c. Following The Ernest Foundation's policies and procedures on hiring and recruitment.
20. Providing appropriate safeguarding training for all relevant Staff Members. Every Staff Member should be provided with, and required to undertake, training that is appropriate to their role, responsibilities, and degree and type of contact with Beneficiaries. This should, where appropriate, include training on:
  - a. How to define and identify potential signs of different types of abuse, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect, and others.
  - b. How to listen to and respond to concerns or disclosures about safeguarding issues during an initial conversation (e.g. how to explain when information can and cannot be kept confidential).
  - c. How to use The Ernest Foundation's safeguarding reporting procedures and when doing so is appropriate.
  - d. Which additional resources (e.g. policies, other supporting documents, or external educational resources) are available to ensure Staff Members remain informed about safeguarding.
  - e. Risk assessment
21. Ensuring that all information related to Safeguarding Concerns, including the content of reported concerns as well as the personal data of anybody involved, is handled safely and securely. This involves:

- a. Following the requirements set out by the UK's data protection laws, including The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
  - b. Following The Ernest Foundation's data protection policies and procedures, including our Data Protection and Data Security Policy.
  - c. Providing Staff Members with training on data protection and privacy, where appropriate.
  - d. Ensuring Staff Members always have an identifiable point of contact for questions or concerns about data protection and privacy. This is currently Ernest Nkrumah, who can be contacted by emailing [info@theernestfoundation.org](mailto:info@theernestfoundation.org) or at 07794513215.
  - e. Only sharing information about Safeguarding Concerns internally as far as is necessary to manage the concern for the relevant Beneficiary's benefit.
22. Ensuring transparency and awareness regarding safeguarding information and procedures. For example, by:
- a. Providing information to Beneficiaries about our safeguarding procedures so that they are aware of how to raise any concerns.
  - b. Ensuring all Staff Members are aware of safeguarding laws. The Ernest Foundation's safeguarding commitments and procedures, and Staff Members' responsibilities in relation to these.
23. Regularly reviewing all safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they are up-to-date with safeguarding law and that they remain suitable for The Ernest Foundation's Relevant Activities and workforce, and meeting any review and evaluation requirements specific to The Ernest Foundation's industry and organisation type.

### **Staff Members' Responsibilities**

24. All Staff Members have a responsibility to promote the safety and wellbeing of all of The Ernest Foundation's Beneficiaries. This means that all of The Ernest Foundation's policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding and all UK laws relevant to safeguarding must be followed at all times. Specifically:
25. All Staff Members must contribute to upholding the key measures that The Ernest Foundation has committed to taking to safeguard its Beneficiaries (set out above) to an extent that is appropriate for their role, responsibilities, and degree and type of contact with Beneficiaries. Specific ways that Staff Members should do this will be clarified during training. If a Staff Member is uncertain as to their responsibilities, it is their responsibility to raise this Ernest Nkrumah, Executive Officer.
26. Staff Members must actively participate in all safeguarding training they are assigned and, if they do not understand any aspects of their training, must raise this with Ernest Nkrumah, Executive Officer.
27. Staff Members must never do anything to actively risk the safety or wellbeing of any of The Ernest Foundation's Beneficiaries. This includes, but is not limited to:
- a. Subjecting them to or facilitating abuse of any sort.
  - b. Engaging in any sexual activity with children (i.e. anybody under the age of 18).

- c. Participating in or facilitating any activities that may commercially exploit Beneficiaries. For example, failing to report suspected child labour or trafficking.
28. Staff Members must report all Safeguarding Concerns that they have regarding Beneficiaries, regardless of whether the concerns relate to potential wrongdoing of other Staff Members, other Beneficiaries, or external parties (e.g. parents, teachers, other organisation, or members of the public).

### **Procedures: Reporting**

29. Staff Members will receive safeguarding training that should enable to identify Safeguarding Concerns (e.g. suspected abuse neglect, or threats to wellbeing) relevant to The Ernest Foundation's Beneficiaries.
30. If a Staff Member identifies a Safeguarding Concerns, to report it they should:
- a. Record and report to the Executive Officer
31. If a Staff Member feels unable to follow the above steps, they should report their Safeguarding Concerns in a reasonable alternative manner. This may be the case if, for example:
- a. Following the above procedure would require disclosing the concern to somebody who is implicated in the Safeguarding Concerns or who the Staff Member is otherwise uncomfortable contacting about this concern, or
  - b. The matter is time sensitive and involves a risk of serious of serious harm to somebody, in which case contacting an external agency (e.g. the police, the ambulance service, or a mental health crisis line) or a more senior member of The Ernest Foundation's staff first may be more appropriate.

### **Procedures: Investigation and response**

32. Reported Safeguarding Concerns will be dealt with promptly according to the following process:
- a. Investigation
  - b. Caution
  - c. Dismissal
  - d. Report to the criminal agency
33. Staff Members who report a Safeguarding Concerns will be kept informed about the progression of the matter they reported to an appropriate degree. Note that, depending on the nature of the concern and consequent investigations, some information about matters may be kept confidential and not shared with a reporter.
34. If a Staff Member is found to be in breach of this Safeguarding Policy or safeguarding law in general, they will be treated fairly and will only be dismissed if appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with employment law.
35. Referrals or notifications to external organisations (e.g. police services, local authorities, or regulatory bodies) will be made when, this appropriate, and will always be made in accordance with the law (e.g. Data Protection)

- If safeguarding issues are suspected the relevant contact details are :

Children (under 18 years old)

- [MASH@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@southwark.gov.uk)
- 020 7525 1921

Adult living a learning disability

- [LearningDisabilitisDuty@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:LearningDisabilitisDuty@southwark.gov.uk)
- 020 7525 2333

Adult with a mental health illness

- [MHContact@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:MHContact@southwark.gov.uk)
- 020 752 0088

Adult with a physical or sensory disability

- [OPPDContactteam@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:OPPDContactteam@southwark.gov.uk)
- 020 7525 3324

In case of emergency, the police and if relevant an ambulance should be called on 999

#### **Supporting documents and other protections**

36. This Safeguarding Policy does not cover all of The Ernest Foundation's commitments relevant to protecting its Beneficiaries. We also have other policies in place that protect our Beneficiaries, Staff Members, and/or others. These include:
- a. A Health and Safety Policy
  - b. A Data Protection and Data Security Policy
  - c. A Confidentiality Policy
  - d. Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion Policy

37. All of the policies, procedures, and other documents set out above are available on request from the person within the Organisation responsible for HR matters or via Staff Members' Line Managers.

Approved by the Management Committee

Signed.....*Ernest Nkrumah*.....

Ernest Nkrumah

Date 25<sup>TH</sup> September, 2025