

4 November 2025

Safeguarding policy

Safeguarding means taking proactive steps to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm — including physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm, as well as neglect. The Sandford St Martin Trust (SSMT) recognises that the welfare of adults and children is paramount in all our work and decisions. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and supportive environment for everyone we work with.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every person who works for or comes into contact with the SSMT is treated with respect and feels they are in a safe and supportive environment. There will be a zero-tolerance approach towards harm, including abuse.

This policy sets out SSMT's commitments and the responsibility of the Trustees and Executive to take reasonable steps proactively to safeguard the welfare of staff and those they may interact with, and outlines staff responsibilities. This policy applies to all Trustees, staff, consultants, interns and anyone working on behalf of SSMT.

The policy covers harm including physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm and neglect including sexual harassment.

It reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements to ensure the best interests of children and vulnerable adults will be central in all decisions and actions relating to safeguarding.

In formulating this policy, the Trustees have consulted with staff members and considered guidance by the [Charity Commission](#) and the [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#).

Risks

Areas of concern for risk include:

- organisations or individuals applying for or receiving Sandford St Martin Awards
- donors and partners
- employees, Trustees, consultants and interns.

SSMT in its normal activities does not work directly with children or vulnerable adults. However, some Awards entrants do have direct contact with minors or vulnerable adults: for example, broadcasters and programme-makers working on content for young audiences, may be higher risk.

Additionally, there may be risks associated with SSMT organised events such as its annual awards ceremony, online meetings and outreach activities.

The Sandford St Martin Awards

SSMT seeks to ensure, through proportionate and reasonable due diligence, that award entrants take their responsibilities seriously and that safeguards are in place in these organisations to protect vulnerable people from abuse.

As part of the awards application process, all entrants are referred to [Ofcom's Broadcasting Code](#) and must confirm they have taken reasonable steps to make sure

- the welfare of people taking part in their programmes is protected
- audiences are protected from any potential offence arising from viewing the treatment of people whose welfare appears to be put at risk of significant harm as a result of their taking part in programmes

As part of our due diligence process, SSMT makes appropriate enquiries as follows:

For programmes where safeguarding concerns are most relevant, for example the Young Audience Category, the Executive Director and the Events and Content Producer will satisfy themselves that the production company/content-maker is compliant with safeguarding responsibilities.

UK broadcasting standards for safeguarding are primarily set and enforced by Ofcom through its [Broadcasting Code](#), which includes dedicated rules for the protection of people under eighteen (Section One) and the welfare of participants in programmes (Section Two).

Some SSM Award entrants are small organisations, sometimes individuals, and may not have adequate systems in place. SSMT should ensure that inquiries regarding an entrant's safeguarding measures are reasonable and proportionate; if gaps in an entrant's approach are found, SSMT will refer the entrant to resources to help them develop and implement safeguarding policies and procedures.

Unusual or significant risks will be drawn to the Trustees' attention before any final prize decision so any further necessary information required can be requested. This may include:

- ensuring the entrant demonstrates and exercises a commitment to safeguarding
- copies of the applicant's safeguarding policies, any necessary permissions received and details of the person in the organisation responsible for safeguarding
- whether any matters have come to the attention of Ofcom where applicable

Events

Children and vulnerable adults attending the SSM Awards, SSMT events or meetings must be accompanied by a family member or carer. We will take reasonable steps to ensure we know who is attending any event in advance.

Full risk assessments of hosting venues will be undertaken before any event to identify and address any potential risk to health or safety. These will include copies of the hosting venue's own health and safety and safeguarding policies.

Social media and website

SSMT's safeguarding policy applies to all activities online – such as blogs, social media posts and virtual meetings.

It applies to everyone who uses SSMT's websites, digital platforms and social media and is outlined in SSMT's [Social Media Policy](#).

Awareness of safeguarding

The Trustees and Executive should ensure that staff and consultants have sufficient knowledge of safeguarding (what to look for and what questions to ask) to be assured that its approach is adequate. It is the Executive Director and the Trustees' Management and Governance Group's responsibility to monitor sector information resources and stay abreast of developments in safeguarding law and practice. Staff and consultants will be required to be familiar with the safeguarding policy. All staff are encouraged to take part in [safeguarding training](#) and to access the broader range of resources that the NCVO signposts.

Recruitment is managed by the Executive Director. SSMT will ask for references from two previous employers and will conduct appropriate background checks as and when required by law. SSMT does not currently have any posts which qualify for a standard or enhanced DBS check.

Raising and acting on concerns

In the event of becoming aware of a safeguarding concern, Trustees, staff, consultants, partners or award entrants should immediately inform SSMT's Executive Director who will be responsible for assessing what steps to take. Staff members may choose to inform a member of the Trustees' Management and Governance Group instead, who will then inform the Executive Director.

Any alleged breach of this Safeguarding Policy by an employee will be dealt with under the Trust's [disciplinary procedure](#) and could result in dismissal for gross misconduct.

Any alleged breach of this policy by a consultant will be dealt with under the clause in the Trust's standard contracts which enables the agreement to be terminated if the consultant commits any act of "Gross Misconduct" (this is defined to include physical violence, actual or threatened; acts of bullying, harassment or discrimination' and harm as defined in the safeguarding policy).

Any alleged breach of the policy by a Trustee will be investigated by the Chair, or Trustees appointed by the Chair, and could result in disqualification from the board.

In an emergency and where neither the Executive Director or the Chair are available, and any individual covered by this policy considers that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of an incident, the individual should contact one of the following services: a) police; b) The Local Authority Designated Officer and relevant children's services; c) Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre; d) NSPCC.

Any child or vulnerable adult or their family concerned about abuse may contact the Executive Director on anna.mcnamee@sandfordawards.org.uk

Confidentiality shall be maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. It is important to keep accurate factual notes surrounding any allegations or incidents; these should not constitute any form of investigation, however. They should be a record of what happened

and/or was said by whom and in what context and clearly indicate any dates or times – both for the incident/allegation and any subsequent referrals.

Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis and should be kept secure at all times.

SSMT will encourage a culture of accountability by implementing a [Whistleblower Policy](#), giving confidence to Trustees, staff, consultants, interns, anyone working on behalf of SSMT and award entrants that they can raise matters of concern without fear of reprisal, knowing that matters will be investigated appropriately and regarded as confidential.

Policy status

This policy is reviewed and approved by the Board. This policy will be made available on the Trust's website to be accessed by award entrants, staff, Trustees, consultants and partners.

This policy will be reviewed every year.

Next review Autumn 2026