



SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Approved by Trustees: May 2023

1. Purpose

1.1 Xenia promotes friendship, inclusion and learning for refugee, asylum seeking and other migrant women. We offer a safe, welcoming and non-hierarchical space in which women - migrants and non-migrants - can connect with one shared community. We enable all women to participate in activities by supporting them with supervision of children who attend.

2. Scope

2.1 This document sets out the safeguarding responsibilities of the Organising Team, staff, volunteers, sessional workers and trustees. It provides guidance on identifying abuse and neglect as well as responding to, reporting and recording concerns.

2.2 Safeguarding children¹:

Safeguarding children duties apply to any charity working with, or coming into contact with, anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding children means to:

- protect children from abuse and maltreatment
- prevent harm to children's health or development
- ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

2.3 Safeguarding adults at risk²:

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

Safeguarding duties for adults at risk apply to any charity working with anyone aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- 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.

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health
- have a learning disability
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems
- be frail.

2.4 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all Organising Team, staff, volunteers, sessional workers and trustees who have direct contact with children or adults at risk, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard, signpost and promote their welfare.

2.5 This policy refers to the safeguarding of: Xenia participants, the children of our participants, our volunteers, our sessional workers (visitors), our staff and our trustees.

3. Context and background

3.1 The statutory framework for adult safeguarding in England is set out in the [Care Act 2014](#) and related [Statutory Guidance](#) and regulations. This policy is informed by the Act and it reflects the culture shift required in safeguarding practice to ensure that people who are being abused or neglected, or who may be at risk, are supported to make choices and, wherever possible, remain in control of decision making. Xenia will promote empowerment and wellbeing throughout its safeguarding practice.

3.2 The statutory framework for children's safeguarding is the [Children Act 2004](#) and related guidance '[Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children](#)' (2018). Voluntary organisations have legal responsibilities under The Children's Act 2004 Section 11 – a duty to safeguard and promote welfare.

3.3 The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as a person who has care and support needs and is, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected and unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect (or risk of it) because of those needs.

The Care Act statutory guidance identifies [different types of abuse](#) of an adult at risk.

3.4 Child protection involves taking steps to safeguard children and young people at risk or suffering from physical, emotional or sexual abuse. More information about the [different forms of child abuse can be found here.](#)

4. Policy

4.1 Xenia is committed to safeguarding³ all adult participants and child visitors, volunteers, staff, trustees and sessional workers at Xenia regardless of ethnicity, religion, immigration status, marital status, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation or beliefs. Some visitors may be adults at risk, others women with children. This policy defines a child as any child under the age of 18 in the care of a participant (parent or guardian). Xenia aims to create relationships of trust with participants and takes an empowerment approach to our activities that promotes the independence and power of women we work with. This way of working will also inform our safeguarding.

5. Related documents

5.1 This policy should be read alongside other Xenia policies and procedures including the following⁴:

- Code of conduct for Organising Team, Trustees (staff and volunteers in development)
- Health and safety
- Recruitment
- Induction and training
- **Disciplinary and grievance (in development)**
- Data protection
- Signposting

6. Procedures

6.1 Auditing policies and procedures for safeguarding

6.1.1 An audit of safeguarding concerns, action taken and training and support

³ The term 'safeguarding' refers to the reasonable steps charities should take to protect people who come into contact with their charity from harm (*Safeguarding and protecting people or charities and trustees*, Charity Commission, December 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>)

⁴ These policies were under development at the time of this policy being agreed.

provided for Organising Team members, staff and volunteers will be conducted annually by the Trustees- usually at the People and Structures Sub Group. The safeguarding policies and procedures will be reviewed annually or in the light of significant changes to best practice or legislation, or the practices of this group.

6.2 Roles and responsibilities

6.2.1 All Xenia Organising Team, Trustees, staff and volunteers have a duty to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this policy. The Organising Team, staff and volunteers are also responsible for ensuring that they undertake the relevant training identified for their role.

6.2.2 The Trustees will appoint a Safeguarding Officer who is responsible for the updating and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.

6.2.3 The Safeguarding Officer at time of last revision of this policy is named as Makena Lohr and contact details can be found in Appendix one. This position was elected at Xenia's first AGM on 11th December 2016, and re-elected on 7th December 2017. The most recent appointment of Makena into this role was in November 2019. The Safeguarding Officer appointed will be recruited and inducted in line with Xenia's recruitment and induction policies and will receive an enhanced DBS check and training relevant to their role.

From August 2022 the Safeguarding Officer is Megan Karlshoej-Pedersen who was elected at the Trustee meeting 18th May 2022.

6.2.4 The Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure that the safety and welfare of adults at risk and children is Xenia's highest priority;
- Ensure that this policy is enacted and monitored including briefing, training and gathering feedback from volunteers;
- Ensure appropriate levels of DBS checks are carried out according to the roles of staff and volunteers;
- Act as the main contact for discussing information and concerns around safeguarding adults at risk and children;
- Ensure that safeguarding concerns are heard and acted upon, including reporting of concerns to appropriate authorities when necessary;
- Attend appropriate training to ensure all co-ordinators/volunteers remain up to date with current practice and legislation and ensure co-ordinators and volunteers have access to further appropriate information.

6.2.5 Where the actions of the Safeguarding Officer are in question, the matter will be referred to the Trustee lead for safeguarding temporarily take on these responsibilities while an investigation takes place.

6.2.6 Other Xenia roles and responsibilities are set out in Appendix Two.

6.3 Recruitment and DBS checks

6.3.1 Xenia will adopt recruitment policies that support the safeguarding and adults of children. All potential Organising Team members, staff and volunteers will be required to:

- Complete an application form and attend an informal interview to assess their experience and suitability for the role;
- Provide two references before an appointment is made;
- Receive a DBS check based on their role. For staff/volunteers supervising children on a regular basis this will be an enhanced check. For other roles it will be a basic check.

6.3.2 Xenia will monitor the demographics and needs of participants and review the level of DBS checks required to ensure the safety and welfare of participants on an annual basis or more frequently as required.

6.4 Training, supervision and support

6.4.1 All Organising Team members, staff and volunteers will receive training and support appropriate to their role to ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and implemented. This will include, but not be limited to:

- Induction programme - including discussion of safeguarding policy and procedure, opportunity to ask questions;
- Shadowing – to develop understanding of Xenia ways of working;
- Peer buddy – all new Organising Team members, staff and volunteers will be assigned an existing member of the team as their buddy to provide informal peer support;
- Training – where appropriate, Organising Team members, staff and volunteers may attend safeguarding training either internally or via an external provider. Annual in-house safeguarding training will be provided to all relevant Organising Team members, volunteers, staff and Trustees.

6.5 Allegations of abuse

6.5.1 Any Xenia Organising Team member, Trustee, staff member or volunteer who receives a disclosure of abuse should follow the guidance below.

DO:

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Remain non-judgemental
- Reassure the child or adult at risk that the abuse was not their fault
- Call emergency services if urgent medical/police help is needed
- Explain that you will need to discuss what they have told you with another Xenia team member
- Record all facts

DON'T:

- Promise to keep any aspect of the disclosure confidential
- Challenge the alleged abuser
- Investigate the alleged abuse yourself
- Discourage anyone from reporting concerns
- Be judgemental or overreact
- Ask leading questions

6.6 Reporting concerns

6.6.1 If any Organising Team members, staff member or volunteer has concerns that a child or adult at risk is at risk of or currently being abused, they must bring this to the attention of the other workshop co-facilitators or the Xenia Safeguarding Officer.

6.6.2 Any Organising Team members, staff and volunteers in attendance at workshops will debrief at the end of each session and discuss any safeguarding concerns.

6.6.3 If it is agreed the concern needs further attention, anyone acting on behalf of Xenia will:

- For both adults and children, their wishes should be kept at the centre of any action taken and they should be informed of progress at all stages.
- For adults: discuss the concern with the woman concerned and seek her view on next steps. If the concern is serious enough to warrant a report to social services or the police, every effort must be made to seek her consent. In an emergency, follow the procedure outlined in the appendix three flowchart.
- For children: depending on the nature of the concern, it may be discussed with the child and/or their parent/guardian. For immediate concerns, a report may be made to children's social services or the police. If the parent or carer is accused of abusive behaviour, exercise caution in approaching them directly and seek advice from the children's safeguarding team.

6.7 Recording concerns

6.7.1 All concerns regarding actual or suspected abuse should be recorded by the lead facilitator of the workshop or session in the Safeguarding Log. This password-protected and securely stored record should demonstrate:

- The date of the concern
- The nature of the concern
- The location/event at which the concern was raised
- Any action taken and the reasons for the action (or inaction)
- The names of those involved.

6.8 Confidentiality

6.8.1 Xenia seeks to create a welcoming and safe environment in which women can openly discuss all aspects of their lives. We operate a policy of confidentiality within the group which means that women do not share personal information about each other outside of group members. All concerns are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. However, Xenia recognises that there may be times when information needs to be shared in order to safeguard or protect a child or adult at risk.

6.8.2 When such situations arise, all possible efforts will be made to discuss the concern with the individual involved and seek their consent for information sharing. Where this is not possible, the individual will be kept informed about any information that is shared about them.

6.9 Allegations made against a staff member or volunteer

6.9.1 Any allegations that an Organising Team member, Trustee, staff or volunteer has abused a child or adult are reported immediately to the Xenia Safeguarding Lead and we refer any such complaint to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

6.9.2 We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.

6.9.3 Where the Xenia Organising Team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the team member in question may be suspended for the duration of the investigation.

6.10 Safeguarding adults

6.10.1 Xenia will practice safe recruitment of Organising Team members, volunteers, staff and Trustees as described above.

6.10.2 Xenia commits to supporting its safeguarding work by signposting women to appropriate services that may help meet their support needs. Please refer to Xenia's Signposting Policy.

6.10.3 All action taken in regard to safeguarding of adults at risk, including referrals to Social Services and the police, must be subject to the consent of the participant. In every situation, it will be assumed that a person can make their own decisions and action will only be taken in the absence of consent from the participant where they or other adults at risk or children are at significant risk of or experiencing harm.

6.11 Safeguarding children

6.11.1 Actions taken in respect of children must be subject to parental/guardian consent unless doing so would put the child in danger.

6.11.2 Xenia will practice safe recruitment of Organising Team members, volunteers, staff and Trustees as described above.

6.11.3 Xenia will strive to provide safe environments for all children and adults for any activities delivered as part of our programme. This includes:

- Creating a child friendly space
- Avoiding accidents
- Child protection
- Sensitivity
- Aiming to deploy adult:child ratios as recommended by the Department for Education (one adult per three children for under two's; one adult per four children for children aged two or a maximum of six children under the age of eight).

6.11.4 All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at Xenia meetings and on off-site excursions or when moving sites.

6.11.5 Volunteers without an enhanced DBS check and who are regularly supervising children are not left unsupervised with children, either on or off site.

6.12 Health and safety

6.12.1 All children and adults have the right to be safe and to be protected from harm.

Xenia will ensure that health and safety procedures are followed to create a safe environment. Any potential hazards will be drawn to the attention of staff, volunteers and participants and will be dealt with as soon as possible.

6.12.2 However, there is always the risk of accidents particularly when there is a large number of people, and ultimately it is the responsibility of each participant to ensure the safety of herself and her own child(ren).

7. Safeguarding during Covid-19

During Covid 19 workshops may be delivered online due to social distancing measures. We take safeguarding seriously and appreciate that joining Xenia remotely means that people maybe joining from their personal space/ personal device/ home/ public space. As such, we as organisers have less control over the space Xenia takes place in and ensuring it is a safe space.

As such, in addition to the aforementioned safeguarding practices and procedures these additional safeguarding measures are in place:

- We will advise everyone to be aware that they or others may be in a room where others can hear them- confidentiality cannot be kept.
- We will explain to participants how to contact a Xenia team facilitator if they are worried about themselves or anyone else- including how to do so when in a “break out zoom room”
- We will advise that children are not present during Xenia online sessions
- The sensitivity of the topic chosen for online delivery will be considered carefully. We will not choose to discuss topics that may lead to very sensitive disclosure given we have less control over the space we are in.

8. Approval

8.1 This Safeguarding Policy is was approved by the Trustees on 18th July 2022

APPENDIX ONE – CONTACT INFORMATION

Xenia Safeguarding Officer (from 1st August 2022)

Name: Megan Karlshoej Pedersen

Telephone: 07842 406063

Email: hackney@xenia.org.uk

Hackney Children's Services

If you have safeguarding concerns about a child who lives in Hackney, you can contact:

Hackney Children and Families Services Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) **020 8356 5500** or email MASH@hackney.gov.uk:

- the phone line is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays
- outside of these hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team on **020 8356 2710**

See also: <https://hackney.gov.uk/child-protection>

Hackney Safeguarding Adults

Tel: 020 8356 5782

Tel 2: 020 8356 2300 (out of hours)

Email: adultprotection@hackney.gov.uk

See also: <https://hackney.gov.uk/safeguarding-vulnerable-adults>

APPENDIX TWO – XENIA ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Organising Team (OT): the group of named women who take on operational responsibilities for Xenia. The OT operates in a voluntary capacity and works closely with staff and trustees.

Trustees: a group of volunteers who have the legal and financial responsibility for Xenia.

Participants: any woman who is participating at a session who does not have any other responsibilities outside their participation in the session.

Volunteers: these are people who provide delivery specific voluntary tasks for Xenia. These people are not on the OT or Trustees and may or may not be participants.

Staff: employed staff or freelancers who are paid by Xenia for specific roles.

APPENDIX THREE - FLOW CHART: RAISING AND REPORTING CONCERNS

Disclosure made

Staff/Organising Team member/volunteer is concerned a child or adult is experiencing or at risk of abuse.

Discussion with other Xenia Organising Team members and/or staff at workshop debrief, OR Safeguarding Officer after the workshop if this is not possible.

If the debrief decides further action or discussion is required, contact must be made as soon as possible with the Safeguarding Officer. If further support is required, contact should be made with the Trustee responsible for safeguarding.

Adult:

Option 1 – no need to take further action. Concern and reasons for no action logged.

Option 2 – concern needs to be taken further. Concern discussed with woman involved to identify her wishes and preferences, and encouraged to report abuse herself. If she doesn't want to report herself, consent gained to share information and report concerns. If she doesn't give consent, discuss safeguarding responsibilities of Xenia and inform her of your next steps. Contact adult safeguarding – details above. Concern, actions taken and reasons logged.

Option 3 - In an emergency, call 999. Concern, actions taken and reasons logged.

Child:

Option 1 – no need to take further action. Concern and reasons for no action logged.

Option 2 - concern needs to be taken further. Concern discussed with child involved and parent/guardian if appropriate to identify their wishes and preferences, and encouraged to report abuse themselves. If they don't want to report, consent gained to share information and report concerns. If they do not give consent, discuss safeguarding responsibilities of Xenia and inform child (and parent/guardian, if appropriate) of your next steps. Contact children's safeguarding – details below. Concern, actions taken and reasons logged.

Option 3 - Immediate safety of a child is at risk – call 999. Concern, actions taken and reasons logged.