

# Meditation in Action

## Safeguarding Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with Meditation in Action. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of trustees or programme facilitators or personnel associated with Meditation in Action
- The design and implementation of Meditation in Action's programmes and activities

NB: Associated personnel includes, but is not limited to, volunteers, programme visitors, supporters

The policy lays out the commitments made by Meditation in Action, and informs trustees or programme facilitators and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under Meditation in Action's Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by Meditation in Action or associated personnel

### What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our trustees, programme facilitators or programmes.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

### Scope

- All Meditation in Action trustees or our programme facilitators
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to Meditation in Action, including but not limited to the following: consultants, volunteers, programme visitors.

## **Safe recruitment**

Meditation in Action ensures safe recruitment by obtaining Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check, where appropriate, and/or personal and/or professional references.

## **Policy Statement**

Meditation in Action believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Meditation in Action will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by trustees, programme facilitators or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them (see Associated Policies).

Meditation in Action commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

## **Prevention**

### **Meditation in Action responsibilities**

Meditation in Action will:

- Ensure all trustees or programme facilitators have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with Meditation in Action. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying trustees, programme facilitators and associated personnel
- Ensure trustees or programme facilitators receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

### **Trustees or programme facilitators responsibilities**

#### **Child safeguarding**

Meditation in Action trustees or programme facilitators and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children

- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

### **Adult safeguarding**

Meditation in Action trustees or programme facilitators and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults
- Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect

### **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**

Meditation in Action trustees or programme facilitators and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, Meditation in Action trustees or programme facilitators and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a Meditation in Action trustees or programme facilitators or associated personnel to the appropriate trustees or programme facilitators

### **Enabling reports**

Meditation in Action will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to trustees or programme facilitators and the communities we work with.

Any trustees or programme facilitators reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by Meditation in Action's **Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy**.

Meditation in Action will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

### **How to report a safeguarding concern**

Trustees or programme facilitators who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the assigned Safeguarding Officer. If the trustee or facilitator does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Officer (for example if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate trustee or programme facilitator.

## **Response**

Meditation in Action will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see **Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns** in Associated Policies).

Meditation in Action will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to trustees or programme facilitators found in breach of policy.

Meditation in Action will offer support to survivors of harm caused by trustees or programme facilitators or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

## **Confidentiality**

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

## **Associated policies**

Code of Conduct

Anti Bullying and Harassment policy

Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblower) policy

Complaints Policy

Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns

Data Protection

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Beneficiary of Assistance**

Someone who directly receives goods or services from Meditation in Action's programme.

### **Child**

A person below the age of 18

### **Harm**

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

### **Psychological harm**

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

### **Safeguarding**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our trustees or programme facilitators or programmes. One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and trustees or programme facilitators. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

**Sexual abuse**

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

**Sexual exploitation**

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

**Survivor**

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

**At risk adult**

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.