



Artist and Freelancer Good practice guide

TVA has certain requirements for (staff and) project freelancers which will include provision of CRB or DBS certification no older than two years, and provision of evidence of current public liability insurance. Besides those crucial safe-guarding procedures, it is also important to consider best practice for the delivery of projects working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

What follows below is some general guidance on good practice based on 'Keeping the Arts Safe' (Arts Council England 2005) and on TVA experience across relevant sectors. Some guidance points will apply more to the project planners than to individual freelancers, but most will offer useful considerations for artists and freelancers.

Following best practice guidelines should help ensure that project participants are comfortable and feel safe, and should also help to ensure that staff and freelancers are not vulnerable to accusations of improper conduct.

NB: refugees, asylum seekers and others newly arrived are not generally considered as 'vulnerable adults' as understood throughout this document and more generally throughout the arts/ voluntary sector, however, care and sensitivity should of course be taken when working with them.

(Additionally, some projects, which work with particularly vulnerable groups, will require mutual planning and meeting with host organisations or similar, prior to activity, to agree protocols for general conduct and, for example, where to report any disclosure. Some settings, such as prisons or hospitals, will issue very clear additional guidance for artists and other freelancers, which must be followed.)

Good practice in planning a project for work involving children, young people and vulnerable adults means:

- undertaking, at the outset of project planning, a risk assessment, and monitoring risk throughout the project, alerting relevant personnel to any issues arising
- identifying, at the outset, the people with designated protection responsibility
- engaging in effective recruitment, including appropriate vetting of staff and volunteers
- knowing how to get in touch with local authority social services, in case you have to report a concern to them
- putting systems in place to create and manage good relationships with parents and other stakeholders
- being aware of the content of your work and the impact it may have on children, young people or vulnerable adults

Good practice in a physical environment where there is contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults means:

- always requesting/ trying to ensure that someone from the school/educational establishment, youth organisation or care setting is present and therefore meeting their responsibility for ensuring the safety of those in the setting
- if it does arise that an artist or freelancer is going to be working with a small group of participants with no other responsible adult in the room, as may happen on occasion when engaging in some specialist activity, then ensure that other personnel are nearby, ideally within earshot or eyeshot – if this is not the case then a freelancer may be entitled to ask/ wait for a suitable arrangement to be made before continuing. If a freelancer feels uncomfortable with levels of support or feels that they have been placed in a vulnerable situation in some way, then this should be reported back to TVA as soon as possible.
- it is generally not good practice for a freelancer to be on their own with a single participant; if such a situation does arise, as may happen through a combination of circumstances/ specialist activity, then try to ensure that other personnel are within earshot or eyeshot. Again, a freelancer would be entitled to ask for a suitable arrangement to be made before continuing, and any instances where this has happened – whether the freelancer has been comfortable with it or not – should be reported back to TVA.
- monitoring all risks throughout the project

Good practice in physical contact means:

- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance from participants
- only touching participants when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular arts activity
- seeking agreement of participants prior to any physical contact
- making sure disabled participants are informed of and comfortable with any necessary physical contact

Good practice in interpersonal dealings means:

- treating all children, young people or vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- always putting the welfare of each participant first, before achieving goal
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empower children, young people or vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process
- giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- making the arts fun, enjoyable and promoting equality
- being an excellent role model for dealings with other people
- recognising that children or young people with disabilities may be even more vulnerable to abuse than other children or young people
- not allowing sexual relationships to develop between artists/facilitators and young people or vulnerable adults

Good practice in managing sensitive information means:

- following TVA policy and set of procedures for taking, using and storing photographs or images of children, young people or vulnerable adults. The full TVA policies are available from TVA and on the TVA website. The digest is that photo permissions must be sought in advance from appropriate adults (teachers, parents, carers, partner organisation staff), images must not be used for any purposes other than those agreed, which are likely to be for the project itself, possibly for the project partner if applicable, possibly for the project

funder, and possibly for TVA dissemination. TVA recommends that images are destroyed after 3 months unless they are to be used as described.

- careful monitoring and use of web-based materials and activities
- agreed procedures for reporting any suspicions or allegations of abuse (this may be particularly relevant in some settings where reporting pathways should be agreed in advance)
- ensuring confidentiality in order to protect the rights of employees, freelancers and volunteers, including safe handling, storage and disposal of any information provided on artists or arts facilitators (or others involved in arts projects) as part of the recruitment process (Data Protection Act 1998).

Good practice in professional development means:

- keeping up to date with health and safety in artistic practice
- being informed about legislation and policies for protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- undertaking relevant development and training

And finally.....

TVA (and many other organisations and agencies) maintains that the organisation will hold the right to immediately cease working with any artist, freelancer or volunteer who posts unwelcome views, comments or material on any digital or social media platform, even when the material is unrelated to any current project.

This could include negative comments about a particular project, or generally racist, homophobic or misogynist views or material.

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