



Infosound Safeguarding Policy

Updated 19th March 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to protect everyone, including vulnerable adults, from any harm that may be caused whilst working at, or as a direct result of listening to, Infosound audio services for blind and partially-sighted people in the UK.

This policy lays out the commitments of the charity Infosound and it is produced to inform all trustees, volunteers and employees of Infosound of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding themselves and the public.

Background

Infosound is a registered charity and a free public service. Infosound's Constitution states that the charity's objects are "to serve the needs of any person resident in the United Kingdom who is blind (severely sight-impaired) or partially-sighted (sight-impaired) or labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading print material inaccessible to them, by the provision of information in audio and other accessible formats."

Because of the age demographic of vision-impairment in the UK, it is considerably more likely that Infosound will be heard, or contacted, by adults rather than children. These adults are deemed to be "vulnerable" by dint of their disability of vision-impairment (blindness or partial sight) and this is the listening audience Infosound directly serves. However, other disabilities can sometimes accompany being blind (severely sight-impaired) or partially-sighted (sight-impaired).

Since Infosound has no premises of its own, staff and volunteers generally work from home or they may congregate, in very small numbers, at someone's home. Trustee meetings are also held in a domestic property. Significantly, because Infosound is, essentially, a "broadcaster" of audio content, it is extremely unlikely that any member of the charity would come into direct physical contact with a member of the vision-impaired public we serve; although occasional phone conversations may be had with listeners. Additionally, no member of the public would ever visit the private home of a staff member or volunteer.

However, it is recognised that Infosound has a safeguarding responsibility in editorial terms and that it needs to robustly manage the nature of the content it broadcasts or distributes.

Policy Statement

1. Ultimate responsibility for safeguarding rests with Infosound's trustees, under the direction of its Chair. There is a nominated and named Safeguarding Officer, to whom any concerns should be reported immediately. This person is Marian Myers. Both the Chair of Trustees and the charity's Safeguarding Officer may be contacted simultaneously by emailing safeguarding@infosound.org.uk. Both may also be reached via the charity's phone number: 03000 111 555.
2. All suspicions or allegations of abuse against, or concerns regarding, any other person, whether within the charity, another organisation or amongst the public, will be taken seriously and dealt with immediately and appropriately.
3. All volunteers and employees of Infosound must be encouraged to recognise, respond and report anything untoward, whether or not it is directly connected with the charity's work. This means that if a trustee, volunteer or employee sees something that gives them cause for concern then, if appropriate, they should intervene and report it to the Safeguarding Officer. The nominated Safeguarding Officer must then immediately:
 - a. bring this to the attention of all charity trustees, should it refer to something within the charity, or
 - b. notify a relevant organisation, charity, authority or statutory agency, should it be observed outside the charity, in another organisation or within the general public.Nothing should be ignored.
4. Special care should be taken when dealing with blind and partially-sighted members of the public over the phone or elsewhere, especially in regard to not giving advice about best practice on daily living or vision-impairment issues. At all times vision-impaired people should be encouraged to only seek advice and support from professional specialists in the field of ophthalmology and/or well-established and responsible charities set up to support those who live with sight loss.
5. Any information broadcast or distributed by Infosound, whatever the source, must adhere to the charity's editorial remit to, at all times, be fair, accurate, objective and impartial and not to encourage a listener to take a course of action that would cause them any harm, including financial harm. This also overlaps with the charity's GDPR responsibilities when it comes to maintaining listeners' privacy and identity, including revealing, albeit unintentionally, their home address and other personal contact information should they not choose to mention this to the general listening public when appearing on Infosound. Compliance with this is the responsibility of the charity's Managing Editor.

This safeguarding policy should be:

- reviewed and agreed by the trustees at least once a year and updated, or amended, as appropriate in the interim.
- be promoted to all volunteers and employees and, as necessary, to other contractors or those working with the charity.
- be made available for the public to read at any time on the charity's web site.

Safeguarding Policy Review and Adoption

This safeguarding policy has been reviewed and agreed by Infosound's trustees and it is hereby adopted as the charity's policy until otherwise amended.

Signed _____ (Andrew Hindell, Chair of Trustees)

Date _____