

Institute of Acoustics Safeguarding Policy

1. Aims

Members of The Institute of Acoustics are all professional acousticians and as such are adults. The courses delivered by the Institute are post graduate professional training courses and the youngest participants are in their early to mid-twenties. Whilst the Institute is seeking to become the End Point Assessor for the Acoustics Apprenticeship, as End Point Assessor the Institute will only come in contact with the apprentices at the end of their apprenticeship. The nature of the industry and the level of the apprenticeship means that these apprentices will all be over 18 at this point. Safeguarding for the Institute therefore relates to vulnerable adults.

2. Who is Vulnerable Adult?

A vulnerable adult is a *person* who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

The nature of the Institute's work means that it is unlikely to come into direct professional contact with someone in community care. However any adult can become vulnerable.

- a) When something traumatic happens in their life, for example a bereavement, marriage breakup or serious accident.
- b) Approximately 25% of adults suffer some form of mental illness during their life, for example the intensity of studying on a course whilst holding down employment could trigger a mental health episode.
- c) Adults can become vulnerable when they drink excessively or taking drugs (which may not be intentional), we have a duty of care if adults are drinking excessively at an IOA organised event.
- d) An adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness

Thus any one of us can become permanently or temporarily unable to protect our self against harm or serious exploitation.

The Institute of Acoustics will not tolerate the abuse of adults in any of its forms and is committed to safeguarding adults who have become vulnerable from harm.

3. What does Safeguarding mean?

Safeguarding means protecting an individual's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about the Institute, where appropriate working together with other organisations (for example the Police, local authorities, employers), to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults

sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.'

4. This Policy

This policy outlines the steps the Institute of Acoustics will make to safeguard an adult who is or becomes vulnerable whilst engaging with the Institute. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Institute in working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting the adult's welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect.

For adults working or visiting the IOA Office it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to ensure that decisions made will allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making. At external IOA events (conferences, meetings, committee meetings) it is the Chair of the event who is responsible for ensuring that decisions made will allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making. The Institute of Acoustics will also ensure that safe and effective working practices are in place.

This policy is intended to support staff and volunteers working within The Institute of Acoustics to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding adults. All staff and volunteers are expected to follow this policy.

The key objectives of this policy are for all employees and volunteers of the Institute of Acoustics to:

- a) have an overview of safeguarding
- b) be clear about their responsibility to safeguard adults
- c) ensure the necessary actions are taken where an adult is deemed to be at risk

5. What is Safeguarding adults?

All adults should be able to live free from fear and harm. But some may find it hard to get the help and support they need to stop abuse.

An adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness. Whilst the Institute of Acoustics does not engage in social care we may become aware through our interaction with people of someone who we suspect may be open to abuse. Examples could be:

- a) Whilst in discussion at a meeting we could suspect an older member is being taken advantage of by scammers/family/contractors
- b) A student on a course is displaying signs of mental distress
- c) Someone at a social event who is intoxicated and vulnerable.

The Institute of Acoustics adheres to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work

- a) Empowerment – help the individual to make their own decisions in the situation they are in
- b) Prevention – acting to prevent someone being abused
- c) Proportionality – Our actions should be proportional to the risk/situation
- d) Protection – when someone is in a vulnerable position, taking action to prevent them being taken advantage of.
- e) Partnership – informing appropriate agencies; police' local social services, trading standards etc. and respecting confidentiality
- f) Accountability - understanding that it is our responsibility to take the appropriate action. The Institute of Acoustics will not tolerate the abuse, staff and volunteers should ensure that their work reflects the principles above.

6. Respecting the Individual

The individual should be involved in identifying how best to respond to their situation. For example If someone shares a story where you believe they are being taken advantage of by someone, explain your concerns and ask them if they would be happy to let you contact the appropriate agency (police, social services, trading standards).

7. Who do I go to if I am concerned?

The named responsible person for safeguarding duties for Institute of Acoustics is the Chief Executive

All staff and volunteers should contact the Chief Executive for any concerns/queries they have in regards to safeguarding.

8. What should I do if I am concerned?

Staff and volunteers at Institute of Acoustics who have any safeguarding concerns should:

- a) Respond
 - I. Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services
 - II. Get brief details about what has happened and what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation
 - III. Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.

b) Report

- I. Any safeguarding concerns or actions are to be reported to the Chief Executive

c) Record

- I. Record your concerns, actions taken at the time.
- II. As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed.
- III. Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential do not share or discuss with others.

d) Refer

- I. In making a decision whether to refer or not the concerns to other agencies, the Chief Executive will take into account:
 - (a) the adult's wishes and preferred outcome
 - (b) whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
 - (c) the safety or wellbeing of others
 - (d) whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
 - (e) whether a crime has been committed
- II. This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to the following people:
 - a) the police if a crime has been committed and/or
 - b) the relevant local authorities
 - c) relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Charities commission
 - d) service commissioning teams
 - e) family/relatives as appropriate (seek advice from adult social services)
- III. The Chief Executive will keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring.

9. What are your roles and responsibilities?

All staff, management, trustees and volunteers at the Institute of Acoustics are expected to report any concerns to the Chief Executive. If the allegation is against one of Institute of Acoustics members, volunteers, trustees or directors, seek advice from the Chief Executive. If the allegation is against the Chief Executive, seek advice from The President.

The Chief Executive is responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern. Feedback will be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the Data Protection Act. If the police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

10. Complaints procedure

The Institute of Acoustics promotes transparency and honesty when things go wrong. All staff and volunteers should apologise and be honest with members, students users and other relevant people when things go wrong.

