

## Mentoring Programme: Safeguarding and Welfare Guidance

Version 1.0 | March 2026

### 1. Purpose

This guidance outlines the safeguarding responsibilities of all participants in the Elizabeth Casson Trust Mentoring Programme. Our main concern is the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved. This guidance provides clear guidance on identifying, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns.

### 2. Scope

This guidance applies to all mentors, mentees, Operations Team Members, Trustees and Mentoring Champions participating in or involved with the programme.

### 3. Key Principles

- **Safety First:** The wellbeing of participant mentors and mentees is fundamental.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Everyone has a role to play in maintaining a safe environment.
- **Clear Boundaries:** The mentoring relationship is professional. It is not a therapeutic or supervisory one.
- **Confidentiality with Limits:** While mentoring conversations are confidential, this confidentiality is not absolute. It is your duty to report any concerns about a mentor or mentee's safety or wellbeing.

### 4. Your Responsibilities as a Mentor and Mentee

#### A) Understand the Boundaries

- If a mentee or mentor discloses personal issues that are beyond the scope of mentoring (e.g., a mental health crisis or domestic abuse), your responsibility is to listen supportively and guide them to appropriate professional help, not to solve the problem yourself.
- The aim of a mentoring relationship is to support professional development.

#### B) Recognise Potential Concerns

Be alert to signs that a mentor, mentee or another individual known to a mentor or mentee may be at risk of harm. Harms could include:

- Disclosure of abuse, neglect, or exploitation (past or present).
- Indicators of significant mental distress or risk of self-harm or suicide.

- Concerns about another professional's (or person's) behaviour towards a vulnerable individual.

### C) Respond Appropriately

- **Record what has been reported.** Make a concise, **factual note** of what was shared, using the person's own words where possible. Do not include your opinions or interpretations.
- **Do not promise complete confidentiality.** If someone begins to disclose a sensitive issue, you can say: *"I want to support you, but I need to be clear that if you or someone else is at risk of serious harm, I have a responsibility to share that with the Trust to ensure we can get the right help."*
- **Listen calmly** and reassure the person that they did the right thing by telling you.

### D) Report Without Delay

- If you have a safeguarding concern about yourself or another participant, you must report it immediately.
- If you are in any doubt whether your concerns are reportable, please err on the side of caution and contact us to discuss the issue further. We will be happy to help.
- **How to report:** Email the dedicated Mentoring Inbox at [mentoring@elizabethcasson.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@elizabethcasson.org.uk) with the subject line **"URGENT: Safeguarding Concern."** Please flag the email as important.
- In your email, briefly state the concern, using the factual notes you made. State that you require guidance or need to escalate the issue.
- You will receive an acknowledgement by the end of the next working day.

## 5. What Happens Next: The Escalation Process

1. **Initial Review:** The Operations Team receives the report and conducts an initial proportionate risk assessment within 48 hours.
2. **Escalation to Mentoring Champions:** If the concern is significant (e.g., potential harm, conflict of interest, wellbeing crisis), the Operations Team will immediately escalate it to the on-call Mentoring Champions for specialist guidance.
3. **Trustee Reporting:** If the risk is assessed as high and falls within the Trustee reporting threshold, the Operations Team will formally report it to the Trustee board to ensure appropriate oversight and action. Reporting will be limited to the information necessary for the Trustees to fulfil their fiduciary duty; personally

identifiable information (PII) will be redacted or summarised where disclosure is not strictly required for oversight.

4. **Support and Action:** The Mentoring Champions and Operations Team will then work with the individuals involved to determine the most appropriate course of action, which may include stopping the mentoring relationship or connecting the participant with external support services. The Operations Team will consider if they will share this information – with consent – with employers.

By participating in this programme, you agree to follow this guidance. Your vigilance and commitment to reporting are essential to this programme.

*Created: 26 March 2026*

*Next review date: March 2027*