



# PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
<b>INTRODUCTION &amp; RATIONAL</b>	<p>SSG Activities is a high-quality provider of activities and activity-based opportunities which offers services to wide range of bespoke projects across a varied customer base. Each SSG Activity project accesses the wide range of different types of activities in a unique blend to suit different customer outcomes, venues, participants and structure for delivery resulting in SSG Activities delivering many different project designs.</p> <p>To support the SSG Activities operational team in the successful execution of these different projects, a standardised and consistent framework has been created which will collate all the information relating to project quality standards.</p>
<b>PURPOSE &amp; USAGE</b>	The purpose of the SSG Activities quality standards policy is to clearly outline the SSG Directors' expectations relating to ensuring quality standards are maintained and monitored within the delivery of projects.
<b>CONTENTS</b>	Whistleblowing
	Quality assurance
	Feedback and complaints
	Staff Onboarding, including safer recruitment, training and development
	Equipment and resources

## SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY

### **WHISTLEBLOWING**

Definition: Whistleblowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation.

SSG is committed to delivering a high quality service, promoting organisational accountability and maintaining our customers confidence. This policy provides individuals in the workplace with protection from victimisation or punishment when they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the organisation. The policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace, in order to promote good governance and accountability in the public interest. The Act covers behaviour amounting to: a criminal offence; failure to comply with any legal obligation; a miscarriage of justice; danger to health and safety of an individual and/or environment; deliberate concealment of information about any of the above.

This policy is designed to nurture a culture of openness and transparency within the organisation, which makes it safe and acceptable for employees and volunteers to raise a concern they may have about misconduct or malpractice, whether deemed deliberate or otherwise.

An employee or volunteer who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise such a concern should normally report the matter to the manager who will advise the employee or volunteer of the action that will be taken in response to the concerns expressed. Concerns should be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible. If an employee or volunteer feels the matter cannot be discussed with the manager, he or she should contact a Director for advice on what steps to follow.

A disclosure in good faith to the manager will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible and the employee or volunteer will not suffer any personal disadvantage as a result of raising any genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice within the organisation.

A full company investigation will be undertaken in line with SSG policies which will result in recommended outcomes based on the finding of this investigation. In the event a member of SSG staff member is found to be in breach of operational policy, they will be dealt with in line with the SSG Human Resource policy.

## SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

SSG Activities takes standards within its activity delivery very seriously and implements an annual quality assurance programme to ensure these are understood and maintained by all delivery staff members. We require delivery staff to make themselves available for all elements of this programme which the operational management team judge to be relevant to the work they are undertaking for SSG Activities.

The following elements are included within the SSG Activities delivery quality assurance programme:

- **Internal Training:** SSG senior staff will make available an annual programme of internally designed and delivered training workshops covering a wide range of whole company, project and activity topics for all delivery staff to attend.
- **External Training:** SSG will work with a range of professional organisations and National Governing Bodies to provide staff with nationally recognised courses.
- **Sharing Best Practice Forums:** regular team meetings take place to share important information to improve provision through improved staff practice.
- **Supportive Observations:** non graded observation of practice allows senior staff to watch practitioners and provide meaningful feedback in a mentoring style to help the staff member reflect on and improve their delivery standards.
- **Formal Observations:** graded observations are used for more technical activities and projects where participant progression and development is paramount. These standardised graded formal observations judge delivery effectiveness alongside pre-set assessment criteria and provide staff with verbal and written feedback regarding areas of strength and for improvement.
- **Instructor of the Year Awards:** this annual award scheme recognises the higher performing staff members within specific areas of delivery. This is judged from a number of factors including formal observations, customer feedback, etc.
- **Online Delivery Platform:** online platform for delivery staff is filled with ideas and resources for high quality delivery of activities and is constantly updated by SSG senior staff.
- **Programme Briefings and Reviews:** team meetings take place before and after adhoc projects and at set points for the projects that run all year round to ensure staff teams are fully knowledgeable about projects and can have input into what works and what needs to be considered for improvement.
- **Quality Assurance Days:** opportunities for all SSG Activities staff to come together and have a say in key elements of the business and also be informed of any new developmental strategies being introduced.

It is considered critical to their employment with SSG that staff members remain fully compliant, up to date and knowledgeable around any element of delivery they are allocated to work on. In the event the operational management judge a staff member to have not maintained the required standards around knowledge and ability they may be restricted and/or removed from projects and/or sessions.

**SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY**

## SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY

### FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

SSG Activities welcome feedback from customers, whether positive or negative. We systematically record all feedback received and use this to inform us of what elements are working well for our customers and what aspects of our services may need developmental focus for improvement.

Services reviews take place regularly and we use all feedback we receive relating to specific services as part of our continuous improvement strategy.

We believe that customers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our service and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the services. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

We accept that in some cases customers may believe it necessary to register a formal complaint if they feel they have not received the level of service outlined to them by the company. In such cases SSG ask customers to follow our complaints procedure to ensure the appropriate measures are taken to address the issue/s outlined in the complaint.

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our services to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure:

#### How to complain

**Stage 1:** Any customer who is uneasy about an aspect of the service provision first of all talks over his/her worries and anxieties with the Lead Instructor, Project Lead or Manager, on the same day if possible. They will complete a 'Comments Log' Sheet to record the comments made.

**Stage 2:** If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the customer moves to Stage 2 of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the SSG Activities Business Manager, using the official SSG complaints form. The Business Manager will discuss the complaint with the Operations Manager, and decide on a course of action. All complaints will be fully investigated by the Operations Manager. The customer will receive a response to the complaint within 28 days of the complaint being received from the Business Manager.

**Stage 3:** If the customer remains unsatisfied with the response relating to their complaint, they can appeal this decision which will result in the complaint and all supporting evidence being considered by one of the SSG Directors. The Director's decision is considered final from SSG Activities' perspective.

In the event a customer wishes to seek some form of financial compensation which is beyond a refund or credit, the matter will no longer be dealt with by SSG Activities management or Directors and the customer will be passed to the SSG insurance legal department.

## SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY

### STAFF ONBOARDING including SAFER RECRUITMENT and TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

SSG Activities consider that recruiting the most appropriate people to join our staff team is of the highest importance. This alongside the continuous training and development of these staff is critical to maintaining the highest standards in the services we offer.

When recruiting staff to SSG Activities we undertake a seven-phase process, which requires them to undertake three key stages before they are approved for deployment onto projects. The stages a new staff member undertakes are as follows:

**Stage 1:** 'Selection sessions' are run to allow SSG Activities to make an initial judgement on individuals applying for work. During the selection session individuals undertake the following three elements:

- An introduction to SSG and the work we do
- Team building activities to demonstrate character
- An informal interview to establish information about the individual and their background

**Stage 2:** Candidates approved from stage 1 will then be *'observed'* in a session at the level they are likely to enter work with SSG (assistant Activity Leader, Activity Leader or Activity Instructor).

**Stage 3:** *'Right to work'* and *'ready to work'* processes must be completed. *'Right to work'* requires the candidate to complete a series of online training sessions in key areas and to pass a background check to ensure suitability for the work SSG staff undertake. *'Ready to work'* requires the completion of basic competency training at the level the staff member will enter the company (assistant Activity Leader, Activity Leader or Activity Instructor).

Once all the onboarding process is complete and depending on what other training may be required, staff can be deployed into projects and sessions deemed appropriate.

SSG operates an annual developmental training workshop programme called *'Training4Competency'*. This programme provides professional training across a wide range of delivery and professionalism areas. The aim of these is to share ideas, good practice and increase the standard of delivery through increased confidence and competency of the staffing team.

Within *Training4Competency* there are internal workshops and external courses. The internal workshops are designed and delivered by SSG senior personnel, utilising the range of specialisms that exist within that team. All workshops are approved by the lead HR Director and must meet required standards before they are added to the programme. SSG also work with a wide range of external organisations and National Governing Bodies to provide nationally recognised training qualifications for staff to access.

There are mandatory and optional Training4Competency workshops and courses. All staff **must** undertake the following four whole department workshops:

- Safe care and safe practice
- Understanding & Managing SEND
- First Aid
- Basic Practitioner Competency

## SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY

All other workshops are optional but staff are limited to the projects and/or sessions they can work on until they have completed certain workshops and demonstrated competency.

In addition to the comprehensive *Training4Competency* programme, SSG Quality Assurance policy ensures a range of other methods are used to ensure staff continue to develop in a positive direction during their employment.

**SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY**

**EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES**

## SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY

SSG believe that high quality care and meaningful play is promoted by providing participants with safe, clean, attractive, age and stage appropriate resources, toys and equipment. We aim to provide children with resources and equipment which help to consolidate and extend their knowledge, skills, interests and aptitudes.

- We provide equipment and resources which are safe and, where applicable, conform to the BSEN safety standards or Toys (Safety) Regulation (1995).
- We provide sufficient quantity of equipment and resources for the number of participants.
- We provide resources which promote all areas of participants' learning and development, which may be child or adult-led.
- We select books, equipment and resources which promote positive images of people of all races, cultures and abilities, are non-discriminatory and avoid racial and gender stereotyping.
- We provide equipment and resources which promote continuity and progression, provide sufficient challenge and meet the needs and interests of all participants.
- We provide furniture which is suitable for children and furniture which is suitable for adults.
- We store and display resources and equipment where children can independently choose and select them on projects where this appropriate.
- We check all resources and equipment regularly as they are set out at the beginning of each session and put away at the end of each session. We repair and clean, or replace any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment.
- We keep an inventory of resources and equipment. This will record the date on which each item was purchased and the price paid for them.
- We use the inventory to:
  - review the balance of resources and equipment so that they can support a range of activities across all areas of play, learning and development;
  - record the dates and results of checking the resources and equipment.
- We provide adequate insurance cover for the setting's resources and equipment.
- We plan the provision of activities and appropriate resources so that a balance of familiar equipment and resources and new exciting challenges is offered.

The equipment we own and use are the 'tools of our trade' and without them we could not facilitate our projects effectively. Therefore, it is the expectation that all staff take personal responsibility for this equipment when using, transporting and/or storing it.

The equipment, storage, storage areas, safe transportation and maintenance and care of equipment is the responsibility of the staff. Participants must never be permitted inside any of the SSG Activities storage areas.

The Operations Manager has the overall responsibility for ensuring stores stay clean and tidy, safe and fit for purpose. However, it is the shared responsibility of anyone using that store to adhere to the standards and expectations of that store manager and follow any guidance or training given for the use of that storage area.

## SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY

In the event there is an issue or problem with a storage area it is the responsibility of the person who discovers the issue or problem to report it to the Operational Management team. The Operational Management team are expected to regularly check equipment stores and ensure standards are maintained through their supervision.

Every item of equipment has a 'home' in which it is stored and it is the responsibility of the Operational Management team to ensure this 'home' is accessible, safe, fit for purpose and obviously labelled.

All staff must ensure they abide by the storage guidance given to ensure equipment is stored in the correct place in the correct way so as to achieve the best life term of the equipment.

Staff must:

- Empty equipment from bags, boxes and crates into the correct places;
- Put all transportation items in the correct places;
- Place all equipment away in the correct way, as instructed.

Staff must not:

- Leave equipment in bags, boxes and crates;
- Leave transportation items (with or without equipment in) in unauthorised areas of the stores;
- Place equipment into the wrong area;
- Leave equipment outside of stores without putting it away;
- Leave equipment in SSG vehicles (without authorisation);
- Put equipment away in a way other than instructed.

All equipment must be returned to storage areas on the same day unless otherwise agreed by an appropriate manager. If staff are unsure where items of equipment and/or perishable resources are kept please speak to a member of the Operational Management team who will be able to advise you.

It is the expectation of SSG management that when delivery staff have responsibility for using equipment it is done so in an appropriate and safe way in which the equipment was designed to be used.

The health and safety aspect of using the equipment must be clearly communicated and staff must ensure that it is used in the correct way and that safety information is always given to any user clearly and concisely.

It is the responsibility of the delivery staff using the equipment that they know exactly (by the number) each and every item of equipment they have and that each and every item is returned after use.

It is vitally important that staff accurately sign out and sign in all items of equipment they take from the stores. They must inform the designated store manager of any items of equipment that are lost or broken during use, via the correct reporting process.

When transporting equipment, it is the responsibility of the driver of the vehicle to ensure the vehicle is safe, legal and all equipment is loaded in a way that it will not cause harm to people or the equipment.

## **SSG ACTIVITIES – PROJECT QUALITY STANDARDS POLICY**

If staff are unhappy with the way equipment is loaded into a vehicle by others, they should not move the vehicle until authorised by an appropriate manager or the vehicle is reloaded appropriately.

When loading a vehicle with multiple pieces of equipment, heavy items should be placed into the vehicle first and lighter/more fragile items placed on top. Care should be given to ensure nothing is loaded onto each other that may cause damage to any equipment. It is advised all items of equipment are collected outside the vehicle before loading begins to ensure the best and safest methods of loading are achieved.

When large levels of equipment transportation are required this must be planned well in advance of the day of transportation and, where necessary, numerous trips may be made or additional vehicles brought in.

All delivery staff are responsible for ensuring equipment is always safe to use. In the event it does not reach expected standards, use stops with immediate effect. If equipment is known to be damaged this must be reported to the appropriate Operational Manager to allow for it to be removed from use and maintenance to be arranged.

Operational Managers are expected to regularly check equipment safety and that any damaged or unsafe equipment is addressed immediately with an objective to either ensure that equipment is back in use as quickly as possible or it is decommissioned and a replacement put in place.

All delivery staff are expected to ensure they have the required levels of perishable equipment (resources) available for all sessions they deliver where needed. Staff using perishable equipment (resources) are expected to do so in a responsible manner and ensure minimum wastage of these resources, returning as much as they can after the session.