

Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The Harbour Project for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Swindon (hereafter: The Harbour Project) is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse.

Living a life in safety and free from abuse and neglect is a fundamental right of every person. All of us need to act as good neighbours and citizens in looking out for one another and seeking to prevent the isolation which can easily lead to abusive situations and put adults at risk of harm.

The Harbour Project is committed to working with the main statutory agencies – Local Councils, the Police and the NHS and other local voluntary organisations to promote safer communities, prevent harm and abuse and to deal with suspected or actual cases of abuse. Our procedures aim to make sure that the safety, needs and interests of adults at risk are always respected and upheld, having regard for their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding upon any action. This includes upholding their human rights.

All staff and volunteers have a duty of care, in all settings and roles within The Harbour Project and are the frontline in preventing harm or abuse from occurring and also empowering the person at risk to take action where concerns arise.

Who is an 'adult at risk'?

An 'adult at risk' is someone who is 18 years or over who may be in need of community care due to a mental health problem, learning disability, physical disability, age or illness. At The Harbour Project, we recognise that many of our visitors are experiencing trauma (often unofficially undiagnosed) as a result of what they have been through, both in their country of origin and on their journey to safety. They may be socially isolated, unsure of the UK protocols and norms, fearful of authority (and therefore more likely to acquiesce or be submissive as a result). They are also statistically more likely to be financially disadvantaged and at risk of financial abuse, therefore making them a likely target for exploitation. They may also lack appropriate levels of English to communicate their needs clearly. As a consequence, they may find it difficult to protect themselves from abuse and/or exploitation.

Types of Abuse

There are different types of abuse, including:

- **Physical Abuse** – this is 'the use of force which results in pain or injury or a change in a person's natural physical state'. Physical abuse can also be 'the non-accidental infliction of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment'.

- **Sexual Abuse** – examples of sexual abuse include the direct or indirect involvement of the adult at risk in sexual activity or relationships which they do not want or have not consented to.
- **Domestic Violence or Abuse** – includes any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behavior, violence or abuse between family members aged 16 or over.
- **Emotional and psychological Abuse** – this is the behaviour that has a harmful effect on the person's emotional health and development, or any form of mental cruelty that results in mental distress, the denial of basic human and civil rights such as self-expression, privacy and dignity.
- **Institutional Abuse** – institutional abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of an adult at risk by a regime, or individuals within settings and services, that adults at risk live in or use. Such abuse violates the person's dignity, resulting in lack of respect for their human rights.
- **Modern Slavery** – including human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation or debt bondage.
- **Discrimination** – discriminatory abuse exist when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunities to some groups or individuals.
- **Financial and material Abuse** – this is the use of a person's property, assets, income, funds or any other resources without their informed consent or authorisation. It includes theft, fraud, exploitation and the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Self-Neglect** – neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or wellbeing.
- **Forced Marriage** – this is a marriage in which one or both parties are married without consent or against their will.
- **Radicalisation** – the aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views, and persuade vulnerable adults to the legitimacy of a cause.

What to do if an adult experiencing abuse tells you about it

If an adult experiencing abuse or neglect speaks to you about this, assure them that you are taking them seriously. Listen carefully to what they are saying, stay calm and get a clear and factual picture of the concern.

Be honest and avoid making assurances that you may not be able to keep, for example, complete confidentiality. Be clear and say that you need to report the abuse. Do not be judgemental and try to keep an open mind.

Do not keep concerns relating to potential abuse of vulnerable adults to yourself. Confidentiality may **NOT** be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the adult.

All staff, professionals and volunteers of any service involved with adults at risk should inform the **Project Manager** if they are concerned that an adult has been abused or may be at risk of harm.

If you hear about an incident of abuse from a third party (this is when someone else tells you about what they have heard or seen happen to a vulnerable adult at risk), encourage them to report it themselves or help them to report the facts of what they know.

Allegations against a staff member

If the alleged abuser is a staff member or a volunteer, the investigation will follow the [ACAS Code of Practice for disciplinary and grievance procedures](#) (March 2015).

Abuse of service users is an act of gross misconduct and may also be a criminal offence.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report staff actions which are abusive/exploitative of service users or which are unethical.

The Harbour Project promote ways to encourage the reporting of concerns, including letting visitors know how to report concerns to outside organisations such as the Police or other statutory bodies.

Any allegation against a member of staff or a volunteer must be reported to the designated officer (Project Manager) immediately.

What to do if you suspect abuse

Everyone with a duty of care to an adult at risk should:

- Act to protect the adult at risk.
- Deal with immediate needs and ensure the person is, as far as possible, central to the decision making process.
- Report the abuse to an appropriate person or service (Project manager)
- If a crime has or may have been committed, contact the police to discuss or report it.
- Record the events.

A concern may be a direct disclosure by the adult at risk, or a concern raised by staff or volunteers, others using the service, a carer or member of the public, or an observation of the behaviour of the adult at risk, or the behaviour of another.

How to make a report of suspected abuse

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All concerns of abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult at risk can be discussed in confidence with the Adult Safeguarding Team at:

Tel: 01793 463555 (Out of hours: 01793 436699

E-mail: adultsafeguarding@swindon.gov.uk

However, if a serious crime has taken place or there is a need for an immediate police response to protect the adult at risk, consider dialling 999.

All safeguarding incidents and referrals will be recorded in Airtable.

Staff and volunteer recruitment

We take up references for all posts (staff, trustees and volunteers) prior to appointment. We use Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks to help us assess suitability for working with vulnerable adults.

We provide an Induction programme for new staff, trustees and volunteers to enable everyone to undertake their roles safely and confidently, as well as ongoing training as appropriate to the role and professional development of the individual and our organisation.

We regularly review our recruitment procedures in response to changes in legislation and systems external to our organisation.

Confidentiality

There is nothing in legislation that prevents the sensible sharing of relevant information to prevent harm to an individual or to assist in the prevention or detection of crime. Confidentiality is crucial to all of our relationships. Confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of vulnerable adult(s).

Personal Information for all people (staff, volunteers, trustees and Harbour Visitors) is kept securely and is not shared unless there is reason to do so. All staff, trustees and volunteers understand that any personal information that they learn about a Harbour Visitor in the course of their work should not be discussed outside the organisation, until and unless it is necessary to share with designated agencies. Information will be shared on a 'need-to-know' basis only.

It is important that only those who need to know particular safeguarding concerns, allegations or disclosures actually know, to avoid rumour and gossip that could have a detrimental impact upon the Visitor and/or other people involved.

Communication

We will communicate this Policy to all staff, volunteers, and trustees. For our Visitors (depending upon language ability), we will use appropriate methods to get the essence across.

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We support and encourage all Visitors, volunteers and staff to speak up and contact the Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy) where this is:

- A *concern* (a worry, issue or doubt about practice or treatment of a Visitor or colleague, or their circumstances), or
- A *disclosure* (information about a person at risk of or suffering from significant harm) or
- An *allegation* (the possibility that a volunteer, staff member, trustee could cause harm a child or young person at the Harbour).

Staff or volunteers can report things that aren't right, illegal or neglectful, putting someones health and safety in danger or covering up wrongdoing.

We would prefer people to use internal processes whenever possible to make a report as above, but this does not prevent them from making a report or referral to Statutory Agencies such as the Police or Social Services, in their own right as a private individual. We also support our staff or volunteers to raise concerns or to disclose information which they believe shows malpractice (whistle-blowing – disclosure in the public interest).

Accountability

Our appointed Safeguarding Officer is the Chair of Trustees, David Rowlands and is supported by Nan Bains as deputy, who will be available to all staff, volunteers and Harbour Visitors to speak to if they have concerns, issues or complaints regarding the safety, well-being or conduct of Harbour Visitors, volunteers or staff.

David Rowlands can be contacted on david47rowlands@gmail.com

Nan Bains can be contacted on nan.bains@harbourproject.org.uk or on 01793 611682.

The Safeguarding Officer and Deputy will have access to appropriate training to support them in these roles. They will liaise with appropriate local and national agencies, maintain Safeguarding Policies and records, keep confidentiality, adhere and promote this policy within The Harbour, and support individuals in the event that they come to any harm.

Children and Young People's Safeguarding Policy

A. Introduction

We, The Harbour Project for Swindon Refugees and Asylum Seekers (The Harbour Project), are committed to a practice which protects children and young people from harm. We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff, trustees and volunteers (as set out in this document)
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, involving parents and children appropriately
- following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff, trustees and volunteers
- providing effective management for staff through supervision
- providing support and training for staff, trustees and volunteers
- Appointing and naming a Safeguarding Officer and deputy to demonstrate our commitment to Safeguarding. The Safeguarding Officer will, at all times, be the Chair of Trustees.
- Adopting safe recruitment practices in selection and appointment of all staff, trustees and volunteers.
- Working in partnership with other agencies to have in place appropriate procedures for reporting and making referrals (as necessary).

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice on an annual basis.

B. Statement of Intent

It is the policy of The Harbour Project to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by providing services and activities which minimise risk and are as safe as we can make them. We aim to protect children and young people who use the Project from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm, neglect and exploitation. The Harbour Project is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people can feel comfortable and secure while engaged in any of the organisation's programmes/activities. Everyone involved with the organisation should at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and values of The Harbour Project.

Children and young people who come as Visitors to the Harbour are usually part of family units or are 'Cared For' by the Local Authority. The majority of the activities organised by the Harbour Project are for adults, or families. With the exception of the Homework Club, children/ young people's participation in activities is as part of a family unit – so, for example, children can only come on trips or join in activities as long as their parents/ guardians are also present.

C. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Children & Young People.

Children and young people have a right to information, especially any information that could make life better and safer for them. The Harbour Project will act to ensure they have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties. When sharing information, we will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing.

b. Parents.

Parents/persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation. We achieve this by:

- publicising information on all our family activities
- publishing the named Safeguarding Officer and Deputy, and how to make a complaint in the Drop-in
- keeping a full copy of the 'Children and Young People's Safeguarding Policy' Policy available in the Drop-in.

c. Staff, Trustees and Volunteers.

As an organisation which offers support and guidance to children and young people, it is imperative that each member of The Harbour Project staff is aware of their responsibilities under the Child Protection legislation and has a working knowledge of The Harbour Project procedures. Each member of staff will receive updated training in Safeguarding every three years.

d. Designated Safeguarding Officer

Our appointed Safeguarding Officer is the Chair of Trustees, David Rowlands and is supported by Nan Bains as deputy who will be available to all staff, volunteers and Harbour Visitors to speak to if they have concerns, issues or complaints regarding the safety, well-being or conduct of Harbour Visitors, volunteers or staff.

David Rowlands can be contacted on david47rowlands@gmail.com

Nan Bains can be contacted on nan.bains@harbourproject.org.uk or on 01793 611682.

- The Safeguarding Officer and Deputy will have access to appropriate training to support them in these roles. They will liaise with appropriate local and national agencies, maintain Safeguarding Policies and records, keep confidentiality, adhere and promote this policy within The Harbour, and support individuals in the event that they come to any harm.
- Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual children and young people/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis.

D. RECRUITMENT

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We take up references for all posts (staff, trustees and volunteers) prior to appointment. We use Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks to help us assess suitability.

We provide an Induction programme for new staff, trustees and volunteers to enable everyone to undertake their roles safely and confidently, as well as ongoing training as appropriate to the role and professional development of the individual and our organisation.

We regularly review our recruitment procedures in response to changes in legislation and systems external to our organisation.

E. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND OTHER HARBOUR POLICIES

This Policy complements, and should be considered alongside other Harbour Project Policies, specifically:

- Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Trustee Policy
- Data Protection Policy

This Policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- 1989 Children Act
- HM Government 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'.
- Swindon Safeguarding Partnership
<https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk>

Child Protection law applies to all those children and young people under the age of 18. It is important not to assume consent if the young person is over 16 years.

This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees. National guidance stresses that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff and volunteers should be made aware of their role in keeping children safe.

F. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in The Harbour Project has concerns, a record should be made. Details must include, as far as practical:

- name of child or young person
- Age
- Home Address
- Date of Birth (if known)
- Name and address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
- Telephone numbers (if available)

Also:

- What has prompted the concerns
- Name of the person who has expressed concerns
- Dates & times of any specific incidents, including details of any disclosure or conversation with the child.

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- Name of the Safeguarding Lead in Swindon LSCB (If a referral is made)
- Date & Time of call to Swindon LSCB

The Designated Person (or Deputy) will immediately inform the Swindon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub by telephone. Telephone number: 01793 463555. Out of hours telephone number: 01793 436699.

A record of the referral will be kept in Airtable.

G. DISCLOSURE

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Child Protection will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Listen to the child, rather than question him or her directly.
- Offer him/her reassurance without making promises, and take what the child says seriously.
- Allow the child to speak without interruption.
- Accept what is said—it is not your role to investigate or question.
- Do not overreact.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement.
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event,
- Use the child's words or explanations—do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say.
- Contact the Safeguarding Officer (David Rowlands) or Deputy (Nan Bains) for advice/guidance. The Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy) may then discuss the concern/suspicion with other staff/ volunteer (on a need-to-know-basis) , and, if appropriate, make a direct referral. If the Safeguarding Officer (or deputy) is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer/member of staff with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation themselves.
- Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

H. CONFIDENTIALITY

There is nothing in legislation that prevents the sensible sharing of relevant information to prevent harm to an individual or to assist in the prevention or detection of crime.

Confidentiality is crucial to all of our relationships, but the welfare of the child or young person is paramount. Confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the child or young person.

Personal Information on all people (staff, volunteers, trustees and Harbour Visitors) is kept securely and is not shared unless there is reason to do so. All staff, trustees and volunteers understand that any personal information that they learn about a Harbour Visitor in the course of their work should not be discussed outside the organisation, until and unless it is necessary to share with designated agencies. Information will be shared on a 'need-to-know' basis only.

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It is important that only those who need to know particular safeguarding information actually know, to avoid rumour and gossip that could affect the child/ young person, parent/ carer detrimentally.

I. COMMUNICATION

We will communicate this Policy to all staff, volunteers, and trustees. For our Visitors (depending upon language ability), we will use appropriate methods to get the essence across.

We support and encourage all Visitors, volunteers and staff to speak up and contact the Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy) where this is:

- A *concern* (a worry, issue or doubt about practice or treatment of a Visitor or colleague, or their circumstances), or
- A *disclosure* (information about a person at risk of or suffering from significant harm) or
- An *allegation* (the possibility that a volunteer, staff member, trustee could cause harm a child or young person at the Harbour.

Staff or volunteers can report things that aren't right, illegal or neglectful, putting someones health and safety in danger or covering up wrongdoing.

We would prefer people to use internal processes whenever possible to make a report as above, but this does not prevent them from making a report or referral to Statutory Agencies such as the Police or Social Services, in their own right as a private individual. We also support our staff or volunteers to raise concerns or to disclose information which they believe shows malpractice (whistle-blowing – disclosure in the public interest).

J. RECORD-KEEPING

- All records, information and confidential notes will be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.
- Only the Designated Persons will have access to these files.

K. Code of Behaviour - guidelines for all The Harbour Project staff, trustees and volunteers

a. ATTITUDES

Staff, trustees and volunteers are committed to:

- treating children and young people with respect and dignity
- always listening to what a child or young person is saying
- valuing each child and young person
- recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
- encouraging and praising each child or young person.

b. EXEMPLIFY THIS CODE OF BEHAVIOURS

Staff, trustees and volunteers will endeavour to:

- provide an example, which we would wish others to follow

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- use appropriate language with children and young people and challenge any inappropriate language used by a young person or child or an adult working with young people
- respect a young person's right to privacy.

c. ONE TO ONE CONTACT

Staff, trustees and volunteers will:

- not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others; staff should always try to be visible to others in their contact with children
- in the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person, make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible
- if privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts.

d. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Staff, trustees and volunteers should never:

- engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay
- do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves

If such an incident arises, for example, where a child or young person has limited mobility, The Harbour Project staff should seek a member of school staff or leader of the youth organisation to deal with such an incident.

- allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

e. GENERAL

Staff, trustees and volunteers should:

- be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned
- never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts
- never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person, even in fun.
- Be mindful of the use of photography and inclusion of children and young people within external communication and social media. Photographs should never be taken without the express consent of the parent/ guardian.

L. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about what to do if you are worried a child is being abused, see the Swindon LSCB website: <https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk>