H.O.P.S
Healing Opportunities
Provision Scheme

# Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy & Procedures

Registered Charity Number 1137794

Reviewed Feb 2025

## PART A

## Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy statement

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

HOPS supports individuals on the path to good health. We work only with adults. Focusing upon holistic therapies and group activities we support individuals who can be dealing with stress, emotional difficulties or other wellbeing concerns. Many of our beneficiaries are unpaid carers. The majority of adults HOPS is in contact with may not regularly be classed as adults at risk of harm. An adult at risk can be anyone over the age of eighteen, including service users, staff or volunteers (see the 'Definitions' section below). Whilst personal characteristics may make an individual more vulnerable i.e., disability and communication difficulties, it is the situation around an individual which may increase risk or place them at potential risk of harm. It is therefore vital to be open to the possibility that any adult may be at risk and that this can be temporary or on-going depending on the support and protective factors around them.

**As stated, HOPS works solely with adults (18 years and over). We do not deliver therapies to anybody under the age of 18 years nor do we engage children or young people in our classes and courses. We do not collect, record or store data regarding children and young people.**

**However, whilst children and young people are not directly involved in our services and activities, we acknowledge that our staff and those delivering on behalf of HOPS may, occasionally come into contact with such. HOPS, at times, delivers services for other organisations often at their venues. In these circumstances there could be children and young people present, albeit the responsibility of the other organisation and/or their parents / responsible adult.**
**For these reasons HOPS has developed this policy and procedures document.**

## Purpose of this policy statement

• to protect children and young people who come into contact with HOPS' services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services

• to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of HOPS, including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, freelance contractors and students.

## Context

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection

## We believe that:

• Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind

• We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

## We recognise that:

• the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take and that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
• some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
• working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

## We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

• valuing, listening to and respecting them
• adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
• providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
• recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
• recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk/fororganisations]
• making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
• using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
• using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
• creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
• ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
• ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
• building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

## Contact details

| | |
|---|---|
| Designated Safeguarding Lead: | Susan Nolan<br>hopsdevelopment@gmail.com<br>0191 5483722 |
| Deputy Safeguarding Lead: | no current appointment |
| Trustee Safeguarding Lead: | Margaret Grainger |
| This Policy was last reviewed on: | 6th February 2025 |
| Previous review date: | 11th December 2023 |

Signature:

## PART B

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

**INTRODUCTION**

This document seeks to provide a basic awareness of the potential abuse of children and young persons and assists in helping to recognise abuse and thereafter to deal sensibly and sensitively with it. We must not forget that we also have a duty to safeguard ourselves and the organisation that we belong to.

The core principles of equal opportunities and equality must apply to all persons with whom we come into contact regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

**DEFINITIONS AND FORMS OF ABUSE**

Child protection and safeguarding means protecting children from abuse and identifying and stopping abuse that might already be happening.

A Child is defined as: A person under the age of 18 years.

**Abuse**

Abuse of a child or young person under the age of 18 is defined as follows.

- Abuse is a deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a child or young person's safety, well-being and development. Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional.
- Neglect of a child or young person also constitutes abuse and can be defined as failing to provide or secure for a child or young person the basic needs of physical safety and well-being.
  Remember that abuse may not fall easily into these categories

    - Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts.
    - Abuse is neglect, physical injury, emotional abuse (including bullying), financial or material abuse or sexual abuse.
    - In many cases, vulnerable persons are subjected to a combination of forms of abuse, such as neglect and emotional abuse.
    - Abuse can be an omission to act and may be the unintended consequences of a person's actions.
    - Abuse can occur within any relationship.
    - Abuse can take place in the home, at school or anywhere where vulnerable persons spend their time, including voluntary organisations.

**HOW TO IDENTIFY ABUSE AND WHAT ACTION TO TAKE**

**How disclosure happens**

Children and young people may disclose abuse in a variety of ways, including:

- directly– making specific verbal statements about what has happened to them.
- indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong.

- behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate).
- non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

Children and young people may not always be aware that they are disclosing abuse through their actions and behaviour.

**How to identify abuse**
To be read in conjunction with the NSPCC Guide: Definitions and signs of child abuse. Guidance for professionals who work with children on how to recognise the signs of child abuse. July 2020

The abuse of vulnerable persons can manifest itself in several ways. The following are some common signs to be aware of:

- Unexplained or untreated bruising or injuries.
- being afraid of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people
- knowing about or being involved in 'adult issues' which are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, for example alcohol, drugs and/or sexual behaviour
- Having angry outbursts or behaving aggressively towards others
- Becoming withdrawn or appearing anxious, clingy or depressed
- Self-harming or having thoughts about suicide
- Showing changes in eating habits or developing eating disorders
- Regularly experiencing nightmares or sleep problems
- Regularly wetting the bed or soiling their clothes
- Running away or regularly going missing from home or care
- Not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused. There may well be other reasons for changes in a child's behaviour such as a bereavement or relationship problems between parents or carers.

**What to do following a disclosure**

- You should listen attentively and let them know it was right to tell someone about their worries.
- Stay calm and make sure that the person feels safe and knows that they are not to blame for what has happened.
- Explain that you will have to tell someone else about the abuse if it is to stop. Never agree to keep it a secret.
- Never promise that you can make it better.
- Do not investigate.
- Collect all available relevant facts and appropriate information.
- Make a written record of the concern – record as much detail as possible and as soon as possible after the disclosure, noting the exact words that may have been used to describe any abusive act or threats which will help those who will investigate the allegation.
- Tell the person involved what you are going to do about the concern and note any views that they may have regarding how they wish the matter to be dealt with.
- Tell only the people who need to know – such as your safeguarding officer.
- Consider the balance between listening to someone's wishes and needing to refer information where others may be at risk.

- Inform the person involved about the outcome of any process.
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the person.
- Seek advice before telling any other person implicated in the abuse about the conversation, you could be placing the person at further risk by doing so.

Whatever you feel when you hear a suspicion or allegation you must not:

- Appear shocked, disgusted or angry.
- Press the person for details; it is not your responsibility to conduct an investigation.
- Make comments or judgements other than to show sympathy and concern.
- Promise to keep it secret, as you have a duty to pass on information.
- Give the individual assurances that this type of incident will never happen again as such guarantees cannot be upheld.
- Contaminate evidence where an allegation of sexual assault has been made.
- Help anyone to bathe, wash, clothe or rearrange a room where an assault is alleged to have taken place.

Do not worry that you may be making things worse by reporting your concerns - few things are worse than allowing the abuse to continue.

If you discover that the person is physically injured and in need of immediate medical assistance, you must summon help by calling an Ambulance or the person's doctor. If the abuse amounts to a criminal assault, you must also consider contacting the Police.

**Confidentiality**

Never promise a child that you will keep the things they are telling you a secret. Explain that you need to share what they have told you with someone who will be able to help.

If a child or young person needs confidential help and advice direct them to Childline. Calls to 0800 1111 are free and children can also contact Childline online.

**Responding To Allegations or Suspicions & Reporting Concerns**

There is a process for reporting and reacting to witnessed, suspected or alleged abuse and/or violation of the Safeguarding Policy.

If you have concerns, you must act - it is the duty of every citizen to take positive action.
**If a person is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.**

- Refer the matter to HOPS' Safeguarding Lead. This should be within 24 hours. They will inform the correct authorities, if necessary, who are trained to deal with this problem and will take responsibility for what happens next. This may not be direct action, but our information is always taken seriously.
- Where an allegation suggests a criminal offence may have been committed, then the police should be contacted immediately.
- If your concerns are about a person within HOPS to whom you would normally go to seek advice on this issue, contact Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership (details below).

- If the Safeguarding Lead is not able to be contacted, go through Deputy or Trustee Safeguarding Lead. If neither available, then report to Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership (details below) or the Police.
- The HOPS Board should be informed immediately of any serious incident(s), and
- An annual report should be submitted to the Board to allow them to verify the effectiveness of this policy and procedures which includes:

    - data regarding any incidents, allegations or investigations;
    - where appropriate, a summary of actions undertaken and any outcomes if known;
    - lessons to be learnt where appropriate
    - summary data relating to Safeguarding training provided.

Do not worry that you may be mistaken. It is better to have discussed it with someone with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.

www.safeguardingchildrensunderland.com

You can contact **Children Safeguarding** - Sunderland on **0191 561 7007** (Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5.15pm and Friday, 8.30am to 4.45pm); or the Emergency Duty Team on 0191 520 5560 (Evenings and weekends).

Do not worry that you may be mistaken. It is better to have discussed it with someone with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.

**PROTECTING YOURSELF AND HOPS**

It can be the case that people who pose no risk are sometimes vulnerable to accusations of abuse. Although this can and does occasionally happen, it is important to remember that it is an unusual occurrence and that by taking the steps outlined below you will do much to minimise any chances of becoming inappropriately accused.

**Recognised Good Practice**
To ensure that you protect children from harm and protect yourself from false allegations, you must adopt a personal code of conduct. A code of conduct, at its simplest, is a list of key principles of good practice. The following list should form the basis of your code. Learn these principles and add to them as appropriate:

- Respect all individuals.
- Place the safety and wellbeing of at risk persons first
- Always work in an open environment - avoid private locations
- Always try to ensure that you are never alone with an at risk person.
- HOPS does not take direct responsibility for children and young people.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with at risk persons.
- Involve carers, parents and/or guardians wherever possible.
- Avoid any horseplay, sexually suggestive comments or language.
- Remember that it is okay to touch a child in a way that isn't intrusive or disturbing to him/her or to observers.
- Make sure that any allegations or suspicions are recorded and acted upon.

Do not:

- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay.
- Touch a child in an intrusive or sexual manner.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child, such as going to the toilet or changing clothes.

## Responsibilities & Roles

The HOPS Board has overall responsibility to ensure the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy; and there are designated individuals to whom people can talk about safeguarding matters.

In normal circumstances the Safeguarding Lead will be the CEO. When staffing allows, a Deputy will be designated. In the absence of the Lead or a Deputy, refer to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead
The responsibilities of the HOPS Lead include:

- promoting awareness and implementation of the policy throughout the organisation;
- monitoring implementation of the policy and reporting annually to the Board;
- maintaining knowledge of best practice and statutory requirements;
- reporting information, as appropriate to relevant bodies.

The Safeguarding Lead is the point of contact for other members of staff, volunteers, participants, and for other organisations such as Social Services, the Police, or the Local Authority if a problem relating to abuse should arise.
The Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the appropriate authorities if a complaint about possible abuse is made.
The name and contact details of the Safeguarding Lead should be given to existing and new members of staff.
It is important to note that the Safeguarding Lead is not an expert and is not there to sit in judgement on anybody - their principle task is to ensure that children and young people get the support and protection they need and deserve, and to act as a link to the professional caring agencies.
HOPS will maintain open lines of communication where understanding abuse and listening and responding to concerns are the main priority. HOPS will create an atmosphere of support and encouragement for those who feel it necessary to report concerns. HOPS will continue to promote a positive environment for giving and receiving feedback.
In addition to formal Performance Review meetings, staff may utilise regular one to one meetings to discuss general safeguarding matters with the manager. These meetings will allow the manager to provide ongoing support and monitoring to those staff who work directly with vulnerable individuals. Should staff have concerns which they do not feel able to discuss with the manager, they may speak with one of HOPS's designated individuals.

This Policy has been approved & authorised by HOPS trustees and signed on their behalf:

Name: Susan Nolan

Position: CEO

Date: 13th February 2025

Signature: