

Hyh Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Herts Young Homeless (**hyh**) recognises that individuals using its services have the same human values, rights and responsibilities as anyone else. At all times therefore they should be shown the same dignity and respect as others in society. **hyh** condemns all forms of abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding means ensuring that children and adults at risk are kept safe and prevented from suffering harm. All hyh workers are committed to behaving in a vigilant manner in order to identify risks and concerns about children and adults at risk and to respond appropriately. All hyh workers receive initial and ongoing training and supervision in relation to safeguarding.

Definitions

Abuse:

- Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons
- Abuse is when a person has been caused harm, or is likely to be caused harm by another. This would include causing harm to the physical, sexual, emotional, financial or material wellbeing of the individual.
- Harm may be caused by direct acts, or by failure to provide adequate care. It may be systematic and repeated or may consist of a single incident.

There are many different forms of abuse (see **policy 2.01** for further details).

Child / Adult at risk

- A child is anyone under the age of 18 years old
- An adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who: has needs for care and support and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves from that experience, or risk of, abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs. (Care Act 2014)

hyh workers:

- All **hyh** employees, including those on fixed term contracts, casual workers and agency workers.
- All **hyh** volunteers

Responsibility of hyh workers

All hyh workers have a responsibility to act where they suspect abuse may be taking place or an allegation of abuse has been made. DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION.

Where abuse is alleged, the initial response by **hyh** workers should be limited to listening carefully to what the child or adult at risk says so as to:

- Clarify the concerns
- Offer re-assurance about how he or she will be kept safe
- Explain what action will be taken

The initial response is not an investigation. The child or adult at risk must not be pressed for information, led, cross-examined or given false assurances of absolute confidentiality. Such well-intentioned actions could prejudice Police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse and risks causing additional harm to the child or adult at risk.

If the child or adult at risk can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to Children's Social Care or Adult Services, s/he should be asked his/her view.

Regardless of the child's/adult at risk's view, it remains the responsibility of the **hyh** worker to take whatever action is required to ensure the safety of that child/adult at risk and any other children/adults at risk.

It is a duty of all hyh staff to report all safeguarding concerns to their Line Manager and/or others in accordance with the procedures set out below. Any suspected abuse must be reported even if no allegation has been made by a service user. There may be instances when a safeguarding issue must be reported without the service user being informed.

Hyh Education team follow a service specific safeguarding disclosure procedure. This procedure outlines action to be taken when a safeguarding concern is raised, where the young person is not a hyh service user and full details are not known. This includes informing the education provider, verbally and in writing, of the nature of the concern and any information to support further investigation or action by the provider.

Procedure if an allegation of abuse is made or abuse is suspected or if there is any safeguarding concern

If an allegation of abuse is made or a **hyh** worker suspects a case of abuse or has a safeguarding concern they must:

- Take immediate action to ensure the safety of the person and others, including by calling the emergency services if necessary to prevent immediate danger to any person.
- Remain calm
- Reassure the person and be clear in your communication
- Listen carefully to the person and take what they are saying seriously
- Record what is being said as accurately and fully as possible

- Advise the person of your course of action where appropriate, explaining that you will need to talk to other people in order to help them
- Remember all types of abuse are serious
- Keep the matter strictly confidential and do not alert the alleged abuser
- **Inform their Line Manager.** In the absence of the Line Manager, another frontline Manager, Director of Services or Chief Executive must be contacted. The Nominated Safeguarding Representative may also be involved in reviewing the case. If for any reason it is inappropriate to involve the Line Manager or any senior manager, the hyh confidential Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure should be used to report the matter immediately to the Chair of Trustees or the Chair of the Governance Committee.
Note: if the worker is unable to contact their line manager and they have no additional concerns regarding the referral they are going to make, they can make the referral and update their line manager afterwards by telephone or email.
- **Actions** on Salesforce should be completed immediately after or as soon as practical after the event occurs. **At the maximum this should be within two working days, except in exceptional circumstances which must be discussed with your line-manager.** This is in line with the record keeping and write up policy. It must include all necessary information such as dates, times, incident, actions taken and outcomes. It should not however cause any delay in taking any of the immediate required steps outlined above or the actions required below. All safeguarding cases are recorded on the database.
- All workers must ensure their Line Manager is updated at all times if new information or concerns arise in relation to the case and on *completion of the tasks below*.

The Line Manager will make an assessment of the situation; it is not the responsibility of the worker to do this. If the Line Manager assesses that a referral is required, the Line Manager will advise the worker to make a referral (See – Making a Referral) and will provide support to the worker to do this as needed.

The Nominated Safeguarding Representative will be available for clarification and or an assessment of the situation if the Line Manager requires assistance.

If the alleged abuser is a hyh worker

If the alleged abuser is a **hyh** worker then the alleged abuser should **not** be informed that any allegation has been made until **hyh's** Chief Executive Officer has been advised of the situation and confirmed their course of action. In the Chief Executive Officer's absence the Director of Services should be informed. If for any reason it is inappropriate to involve the Chief Executive Officer or Director of Services, the **hyh** Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure should be used to report the matter immediately to the Chair of Trustees or the Chair of the Governance Committee.

Following any proven investigation of allegation of abuse or suspected abuse against a **hyh** worker they will be subject to the **hyh's** disciplinary procedure.

Ensuring immediate safety

The safety of children/adults at risk is paramount in all decisions relating to their welfare. Any action taken by **hyh** should ensure that no child/adult at risk is left in immediate danger.

The law (s.3 (5) Children Act 1989) empowers anyone who has actual care of a child to do all that is reasonable in the circumstances to safeguard her/his welfare. A teacher, foster carer, child-minder or any professional should for example, take all reasonable steps to offer a child immediate protection from an aggressive parent.

If the child or adult at risk needs immediate protection, the Police (999) should be called and then Children's Social Care or Adults Services informed.

If the child or adult at risk needs immediate medical attention an ambulance (999) should be called. If there is concern about abuse or neglect (including parents or carers not attempting to seek the necessary medical help) **hyh** must inform Children's Social Care and/or the Police and any known statutory adult social care agencies working with the adult at risk.

When a child/young person has been reported missing to the Police and then makes contact with **hyh**, we need to strongly advise them that they should contact the police or Children's services to let them know they are safe. Inform the child/young person that we will contact Children's services to inform them that we have received contact from the child/young person and we will be passing on any information to CS to safeguard them.

Consent

In all cases, where appropriate (Unless by discussing it you will put the person at risk of harm, their mental capacity prevents you from being able to do so or the complexities of the situation), discuss your concerns with the alleged victim and the options available to them and seek their consent for steps you believe to be necessary. Explain that you are obliged to discuss your concerns with a manager within your organisations.

If consent has not been given it may be deemed appropriate to go against the alleged victim's wishes where;

- They or others are at risk of serious harm
- Staff assess that they are unable / incapable of making an informed decision for themselves.
- They are not the only ones affected and risks to others need to be considered, e.g. where a child/adult at risk is involved, their safety will always be paramount.

Where consent was not given this should always be to authority the information has been passed onto.

Duty to refer to Children's Services or Adult Services

hyh workers have a professional duty to make a referral to Children's/Adult's Social Care if there are signs that a child under the age of eighteen, an unborn baby or an adult at risk:

- Is suffering or has suffered abuse and / or neglect
- Is likely to suffer abuse and / or neglect or (With agreement of a person with parental responsibility) would be likely to benefit from family support services

The timing of such referrals must reflect the level of perceived risk, but should usually be within a working day of the recognition of risk.

A Referral must **always be made for a pre-birth assessment in any of the following circumstances:**

- There has been a previous unexpected death of a child whilst in the care of either parent where abuse /neglect is/was suspected;
- There are children in the household / family currently subject to a Child Protection Plan or previous child protection concerns;
- Children in the household / family currently subject to a Child Protection Plan or previous child protection concerns;
- A sibling (or a child in the household of either parent) has previously been removed from the household either temporarily or by court order;
- There is knowledge that parental risk factors e.g. domestic violence, mental illness / impairment or substance misuse may impact on the unborn baby or child's safety or development;
- There are concerns about parental ability to self-care and/or to care for the child e.g. unsupported young or learning disabled mother;
- There are maternal risk factors e.g. denial of pregnancy, avoidance of antenatal care (failed appointments), non-co-operation with necessary services, non-compliance with treatment with potentially detrimental effects for the unborn baby for example with substance misuse;
- Any other concern exists that the baby may be likely to suffer significant harm, including a parent previously suspected of fabricating or inducing illness in a child;
- Where the concerns centre around a category of parenting behaviour e.g. substance misuse, the referrer must make clear how this is likely to impact on the baby and what risks are predicted.

Making A Referral

Referring Children:

After the discussion with a Manager, if you have reason to believe a child may be at risk you should contact Hertfordshire Children's Services on: **0300 123 4043**

All conversations must be followed up by completing the online safeguarding/child protection contact form www.hertfordshire.gov/childprotection

You will need to complete the registration process before you will be able to complete the online contact form. After your referral has been submitted, you will receive a unique reference number and you can track the progress of the referral by calling 0300 1234043.

Referring an Adult at Risk:

If you have reason to believe an adult may be at risk of suffering abuse or neglect you should refer directly via Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board website, by completing the online form below: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/report-a-concern-about-an-adult/hertfordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/hertfordshire-safeguarding-adults-board.aspx>

After completing the online form you will receive an email, which will provide a copy of the information completed online, this must be saved in Salesforce following the Record Keeping and Write up procedures.

Referrals outside of normal working hours

Referrals to Children's/Adults Social Care outside normal Client Services Centre hours (08.00 - 20.00 Monday – Friday & 09.00 - 16.00 Saturday) are diverted to the Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

Referrals to the Police CAIU should be made on 0845 3300222. The CAIU normal hours are 09.00 – 22.00 Monday – Friday & 09.00 – 17.00 week-ends and Bank Holidays.

Any emergency calls outside of these hours should be made via the 999 system.

Information to be provided with any referral

Where available, the following information should be provided with the referral (but absence of information must not delay referral):

- Cause for concern including details of any allegations, the source/s of these, timing and location of incident/s
- Child's/adult at risk current location and emotional and physical condition
- Whether the child/adult at risk needs immediate protection
- Full names, date of birth and gender of child/ren/ adult at risk (including all surnames used)
- Family address (current, when last moved and previous address)
- Identity of those with parental responsibility
- Identity of any carers
- Names and date of birth of all household members and any known regular visitors to the household (including all surnames used)
- Details of child's/ adult at risk's extended family or community who are significant for the child
- Ethnicity, first language and religion of children/adult at risk's parents / carers
- Any need for an interpreter, signer or other communication aid
- Any special needs of child/ren/adult at risk and other household members
- Any significant / important recent or historical events / incidents in child/ adult at risk or family's life, including previous concerns

- Details of any alleged perpetrators (if relevant)
- Background information relevant to referral e.g. positive aspects of parents' care, previous concerns, pertinent parental issues e.g. mental health, domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, threats and violence towards professionals
- Referrer's relationship and knowledge of child/adult at risk and parents / carers
- Known current or previous involvement of other agencies / professionals e.g. schools, GPs
- Information regarding carer or parental knowledge of, and agreement to, a referral being made.