

## Hertfordshire Community Foundation

### Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy

#### Introduction

This policy explains what to do in the event that a safeguarding matter is identified or suspected, and it explains how staff and volunteers must conduct themselves to reduce the risk of becoming involved in a safeguarding matter.

#### Background

HCF is committed to the welfare and the safeguarding of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults within all the activities that we undertake.

As a grant-making organisation, HCF reviews and assesses the safeguarding policies of the organisations we fund and has occasional limited contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the course of our work.

Trustees are responsible for ensuring that people coming into contact with the charity are not harmed in any way through this contact. Accordingly, they must take all reasonable steps within their power to ensure that this does not happen. This is particularly important where beneficiaries are potentially vulnerable people.

Safeguarding should include rigorous recruitment and selection processes that involve checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all trustees, staff and volunteers who work with or come into contact with children and vulnerable adults.

#### Definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding describes measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights which allow a vulnerable person to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

A vulnerable person is:

- Someone who has care and support needs
- Someone at risk of suffering abuse or neglect or as a result of needs, can't protect himself or herself from abuse
- A child/young adult

If a person aged 18 or over has a condition of the following type, then they are considered a 'vulnerable adult' for the purposes of the Care Standards Act 2000:

- A learning or physical disability;
- A physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol and/or drugs; or
- A reduction in physical or mental capacity

#### Who is responsible for safeguarding?

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and Trustees to play a role in safeguarding by informing the designated Safeguarding Lead/s of any concerns relating to safeguarding. The concern may relate to a colleague, volunteer, grant recipient, supporters or beneficiary.

In addition, HCF's Whistleblowing policy may apply.

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads**

HCF's designated Safeguarding Leads are as follows:

- Safeguarding Lead: CEO
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Office Manager
- Board deputy Safeguarding Lead: Chair of Governance Committee

Tel: 01707 251351

Emergency contact no: 07823 333012

The role of the Designated Safeguarding leads is to act as the main source of advice and expertise in the context of all safeguarding matters. It is their responsibility to enable safeguarding concerns to be reported and to refer concerns to key safeguarding agencies. Where deemed appropriate, they will be responsible for referring safeguarding matters to Hertfordshire County Council and/or the police. This may result in the initiation of an enquiry under S42 of the Care Act 2014.

### **Reporting a safeguarding concern**

Where a member of staff or a volunteer or Trustee has a safeguarding concern, they should discuss the matter, without judgement, with the alleged victim and seek their permission to refer the matter to HCF's Safeguarding Lead. If the alleged victim does not give consent, it may still be reportable to the HCF Safeguarding Lead if the concern is deemed potentially significant and where it is thought that to report it is in the best interest of the alleged victim.

Staff and volunteers should follow these stages if they become aware of a safeguarding issue:

1. Record what was said, noticed or written as soon as possible;
2. Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
3. Record the date and time of notification; and
4. Respect confidentiality and file documents securely

The matter should be raised in the first instance with HCF's Safeguarding Lead, the CEO. In the event that the CEO is not available matters may be referred to either the Office Manager or Chair of the Governance Committee. Matters should be reported either by email or by phone as soon as an issue is identified.

### **Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse**

Child abuse is quite rare; however, it is important that all staff and volunteers understand the different forms of abuse that some children may experience and the signs and symptoms of such abuse.

There are four types of abuse which can cause long term damage to a child or young person. These are defined below:

**Physical abuse:** May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Possible signs of abuse include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries, such as bruising cuts or burns;
- The child discloses abuse, or describes what appears to be an abusive act;
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child;
- Unexplained change in behaviour, such as withdrawal or sudden outbursts of temper;
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour;
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- Difficulty in making friends; and/or
- Eating disorders, depression, self-harm or suicide attempts.

**Vulnerable adult abuse may include:**

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission.
- Self-neglect

## Statement of Policy

Hertfordshire Community Foundation does not allow any Trustee, staff or volunteer, during the course of her/his involvement with the Foundation, to be alone with any child or vulnerable adult.

If any situation arises whereby a Trustee, member of staff or a volunteer is to be with a child or a vulnerable adult, then that visit must be arranged so that the Trustee, member of staff or volunteer is accompanied at all times by a person fully covered by any Disclosure and Barring Service ( DBS ) checks.

At no time is the Trustee, member of staff or volunteer to be in a situation where she/he is alone with the child/vulnerable adult in any circumstances related to the role he or she has within Hertfordshire Community Foundation.

As part of HCF's commitment to safeguarding, members of staff and volunteers shall, where appropriate, undergo safeguarding training.

Should HCF's way of working change in the future, such that the demands and requirements of DBS or other vetting would apply, this Policy will be reviewed at that point and amended as necessary.

I have read and understood HCF's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult policy.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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| <p><b>By: Governance Committee</b><br/><b>Approved by the Board: March 2025</b><br/><b>Next review date: January 2027</b></p> |
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