



Safeguarding Policy

Purpose: to inform staff and volunteers at HCA of their responsibilities when working with members of the public.

Approved by: HCA Governing Body

Responsibility for update: Head of Centre

Applies to all staff and volunteers who work with members of the public.

Safeguarding Statement

Highfields Centre is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This safeguarding policy outlines our dedication to preventing harm, responding to concerns, and ensuring the welfare of everyone who uses our services.

We believe it is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that we positively promote participation and a genuine environment for all who use our services. Our commitment is to create an environment in which all our members, young people, older adults, and vulnerable people are safe. Staff and volunteers employed by Highfields Community Association are all DBS checked and are made aware of our Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

In order to have an effective policy, which protects everybody we have a set of procedures that are in place and communicated to all staff to ensure that they are implemented.

This policy and procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the public is of primary concern, particularly children and those who are in a vulnerable situation.
- All people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to safeguarding from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, and the responsibility of the Social Services Department and the Police to conduct where appropriate a joint investigation. Children and Young People's Service, 1 Greyfriars, Leicester, LE1 5PH, Tel 0116 252 7004/Emergencies: 0116 255 1606
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Definition of Abuse

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes them harm, endangers life, or violates their rights. Abuse may be:

- Physical - hitting, shaking, throwing, or causing physical harm.
- Sexual - involves forcing a child, young person, or vulnerable adult to take part in physical activity, rape, and grooming.
- Emotional - making a child or adult feel worthless or inadequate. This includes serious bullying or causing children or adults to feel frightened or in danger.
- Psychological - repeatedly being made to feel unhappy, humiliated, afraid or devalued by others.
- Financial or material - stealing or denying access to money or possessions.
- Neglect- is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs.
- Discriminatory - abuse motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards race, religion, gender, disability, or cultural background.

Responsibility

All staff and volunteers are required to take shared responsibility for the safety of any members of the public they come into contact with.

They must be aware of and abide by the Code of Good Practice (Appendix A).

The managerial responsibility for any programme or activity rests with the individual who is directing or organising the activity. This person is expected to:

- Ensure that the activity is planned, organised and delivered in accordance with the national government guidelines on Regulated Activity. A list of Regulated Activity for adults is available at www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/12/Regulated-Activity-Adults-Dec-2012.pdf and further general information about the Disclosure and Barring Service is available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs. A useful leaflet that includes a list of Regulated Activity for children is available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/disclosure-and-barring/leaflet-england-wales?view=Binary
- Ensure that everyone involved in the event knows who is responsible for safeguarding and how to report any concerns.
- Arrange appropriate checking, training, induction and guidance for all staff and volunteers.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and complete the appropriate documentation.
- Complete a health and safety risk assessment.

The HCA Governing Body has responsibility for the oversight of HCA's Safeguarding Policy, with delegated responsibility to the Head of Centre.

Safeguarding in Recruitment

Highfields Community Association is committed to safeguarding children and adults. To reduce the risk and help ensure the organisation only employs those who are suitable to work with these groups, the following measures are implemented and apply to all employees and volunteers at the Centre.

Pre-employment checks

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

The HCA Governing Body will ensure that all staff and volunteers who are in Regulated Activity have had a satisfactory DBS check before allowing them to undertake that activity.

A 'satisfactory' check is defined as having no criminal convictions (including cautions, reprimands, and final warnings) relevant to the post.

All staff and volunteers in Regulated Activity must report any subsequent criminal convictions to the Centre.

Proof of Identity

We will ask to see proof of identity such as birth certificate, driving licence, or passport combined with evidence of an address. Proof of identity documents should always include some form of photographic identity.

Right to Work Checks

All new employees must have evidence that they have permission to work in the UK and to do the type of work that is offered to them.

Interview Process

We will endeavour to have at least two panel members present to ensure objectivity and diversity of perspectives.

We will ensure that all interview panel members are trained in safer recruitment practices and understand the importance of safeguarding.

In assessing suitability of each candidate, we will evaluate the candidate's qualifications, skills, and experience in relation to the job requirements.

We will ask about the candidate's understanding of safeguarding principles and their commitment to them.

We will assess the candidate's ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively, especially if the role involves interacting with children and vulnerable adults.

We will use behavioural interview questions that prompt candidates to discuss how they have handled situations in the past, as this can provide insights into their behaviour and decision making.

We will ask hypothetical scenario related questions about safeguarding and ask how the candidate would respond.

We will assess whether the candidate's values align with HCA's mission, values and safeguarding principles before making any appointments.

Training and Induction

We will ensure that all volunteers, newly appoint and existing staff and trustees are provided with induction that will cover our safeguarding policy, how it is implemented and the process for reporting concerns and named staff for any issues or questions they have about safeguarding.

We are committed to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and trustees have access to ongoing training and support, so that they are well informed and able to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

We will regularly assess the training needs of staff, volunteers, and trustees to determine who requires safeguarding training and at what level (e.g., basic awareness, advanced training).

We will ensure that all staff, volunteers, and trustees have completed their safeguarding training relevant to their roles and ensure that the training is regularly updated through refresher training.

We will maintain records of all safeguarding training sessions, including attendance and completion certificates. These records will be used to track compliance and identify any individuals who may need additional training or support.

This policy and procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on safeguarding, disclosure, and barring.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about safeguarding.

In all other circumstances, at least annually. **Appendix A**

1. Legal Framework

The HCA Governing Body will ensure that the policy operates within the current legislative framework.

The following legislation and guidance are relevant to this policy and set of procedures:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Counter - Terrorism and Security Act (2015), section 26 The Prevent Duty
- Serious Crime Act (2015), Mandatory reporting duty for known cases of female genital mutilation.
- Statutory Guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018)
- Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children (August 2018)
- Statutory Guidance: Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, and carers (DFE July 2018)
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2003 and Offender Rehabilitation Act 2018
- Protection of Freedom Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (amended in 2012)
- The Equality Act 2010 (The Act)
- Human Rights Act 1998

2. Safeguarding Policy Umbrella

This is an umbrella policy supported by the following HCA policies:

- Safeguarding and Recruitment Policy
- Prevent Strategy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Alcohol and Drugs Policy
- Online Safety Policy for Young People and Adults Safeguarding Training and Support Guideline
- Whistle-blowing policy
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- Student Code of Conduct
- Induction and training for staff
- Reference: HCA Staff Handbook 2024 - Safeguarding, Recruitment and Selection and Drugs and Alcohol Policies.

3. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

- The Governing Body of HCA is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the Centre's ethos and adhered to in the Centre's day to day practice.
- Ensuring there is a nominated safeguarding governor who ensures accountability for safeguarding and attends appropriate training, and to guide governors on their strategic responsibilities.
- Liaising with the Head of Centre over all matters regarding safeguarding issues.
- Ensuring a member of the management team is appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who leads on and has clear oversight of all safeguarding work.
- Ensuring the DSL produces an annual report to the governing body of safeguarding activity, outlining the number of cases dealt with and other statistics which do not identify individuals.
- Ensuring that all Centre staff and volunteers (including governors) receive safeguarding awareness training at the required frequency.

4. The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- The DSL will assess the information provided, using multi-agency thresholds criteria and consider if significant harm has happened or there is a risk that it may happen. If the evidence suggests the threshold of significant harm or risk of significant harm has been reached; or they are not clear if the threshold is met, then the DSL will contact the Social Services Department.

- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern.
- Act a point of contact with the safeguarding partners.
- Act as a source of support, advice, and information for all staff.
- The DSL should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role.

5. Preventing and Minimising Abuse

Highfields Community Association is committed to safer recruitment policies and practices for paid staff, volunteers, and trustees. This includes enhanced DBS disclosures for staff and volunteers, ensuring references are taken up and adequate training on Safeguarding is provided for staff and volunteers.

6 Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Highfields Community Association is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers undertake training to gain basic awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse and will ensure that the named person and other members of staff and volunteers have access to training around Safeguarding Adults and Children.

7. Highfields Community Association has appointed two staff who are responsible for dealing with Safeguarding concerns. We also have a safeguarding lead from our Governing Body. The named persons for Safeguarding at Highfields Centre are:

Aiyub Zamakda (Senior Adult Worker), and

Fatimah Li (Senior Youth Worker)

Monica Hingorani (Nominated safeguarding lead for HCA's Governing Body).⁸ Responding to People Who Have Experienced or Are Experiencing Abuse

Highfields Community Association recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. Anyone who has contact with adults at risk and children and hears disclosures or allegations or has concerns about potential abuse or neglect has a duty to pass them on appropriately.

Reporting Procedures:

Through our induction, regular training, and supervision with staff, we will ensure that that all staff, volunteers and trustees are aware of our safeguarding policy, its implementation, and the reporting procedures to the nominated safeguarding leads.

We will ensure that all staff, volunteers, and trustees are aware of the reporting procedures. In particular we will make sure that they are aware of:

What to do if a young person or vulnerable adult wants to speak to them about alleged abuse.

The need to arrange a safe space and place where they can talk to them as soon as possible.

The need to stay calm and reassuring.

The need to explain to the young person that is the complaint is of a serious nature that it may be necessary to inform the other responsible staff such as the safeguarding leads.

The need to listen to everything the person has to say and under no circumstances to interrogate them.

To record the discussion and ensure that the designated safeguarding lead is provided with information about any concerns.

The steps they need to take if the young person or vulnerable adult is under immediate danger and who to contact (i.e., 999)

The steps they need to take if they have any concerns about a member of staff or volunteer and when it is suitable to contact a family member or carer.

All situations of abuse or alleged abuse will be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead. The alleged victim will be told that this will happen. This stage is called the alert.

The named person can then take advice from the safeguarding Adults/Child Protection Team and/or other advice-giving organisations.

If it is appropriate and there is consent from the individual, or there is a good reason to override consent, such as risk to others, a referral to Safeguarding Adults/Child Protection Team will be made, using Leicester City Council Referral process below.

If the individual experiencing abuse does not have the mental capacity to understand what is happening to them, a referral will be made without the person's consent.

9. Making a Referral

- Once you have established that you believe there is an allegation of abuse, you have a duty to make a referral to Safeguarding Adults/ Child Protection Team.
- Prior to making a referral, you will need to gather as much information as you can about the allegation.
- Lack of access to necessary information should **NOT** delay referral.

Referrals can be made to:

Leicester City Council's Safeguarding Team.

- A referral will then lead to the implementation of the next stages of the Multi agency Safeguarding Adults/Child Policy and Procedures. The Safeguarding Lead should have an overview of the process so they can explain it to the person concerned and offer all relevant support to the process. This could be practical support e.g., providing a venue, or information and reports and emotional support.
- Information should be provided to the individual. This could be about other sources of help or information that could enable them to decide what to do about their experience, enable them to recover from their experience and enable them to seek justice.

10. Managing Allegations Made Against Member of Staff or Volunteer

Highfields Community Association will ensure that any allegations made against a member of staff, volunteer or trustee will be dealt with swiftly.

Where a member of staff/volunteer/trustee is thought to have committed a criminal offence, the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed, the police should be contacted immediately.

Where the allegation involves alleged abuse of a vulnerable adult, a referral should be made following the process identified in paragraph 9 above. The safety of the individual concerned is paramount and it should be ensured that they are safe and away from the person(s) who are alleged perpetrator/s.

11. Recording and Managing Confidential Information

It is extremely important that when an allegation is made against a member of staff that HCA make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an investigation is being considered.

The legislation imposing restrictions makes it clear that 'publication' of material that may lead to the identification of the staff member who is subject of the allegation is prohibited. 'Publication' includes 'any speech, writing or other communication in whatever form, which is addressed to the public at large or any sections of the public.' This means that a person who, for example publishes details on a social networking site would be in breach of the reporting restrictions (if what was published could lead to the identification of the staff member concerned).

All information will be confidential and in accordance with Highfields Community Association's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies.

All allegations/disclosures/concerns should be recorded in Highfields Centre incident log. The information should be factual and not based on opinions, record what the person tells you, what you have seen and witnesses if appropriate.

The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with data protection legislation.

12. Supporting those Involved

As an employer, Highfields Community Association will act to manage the stress inherent in the allegation process. Support for the individual is vital to fulfilling this duty. Individuals will be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and explained the likely course of action.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will keep the person who is subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual, for example through the Occupational Health Service.

13. Disseminating/Reviewing Policy and Procedures

Highfields Community Association will ensure that the safeguarding Policy and Procedures are reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. The named persons for Safeguarding will be involved in this process and can recommend any changes.

The named persons will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to staff, volunteers, and service users.

14. The policy will be reviewed annually.

15. Code of good practice for staff and volunteers

The following guidelines are intended to be a common-sense approach that both reduces opportunities for abuse and helps to protect staff and volunteers from any false allegation.

You should:

- Treat all people with respect and respect their right to personal privacy.
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children aged under 18 or that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Exercise caution when discussing sensitive issues.
- Exercise caution in initiating any physical contact.
- Operate within the guidance offered by this Code.
- Challenge all unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- Keep parents, guardians and carers fully informed of all anticipated activities where relevant.

You should NOT:

- Spend excessive time alone with children under the age of 18 away from others.
- Engage in physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Make over-familiar or sexually suggestive comments or approaches even as a joke.
- Let allegations, over-familiar or sexually suggestive comments or approaches go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature that a person can do for themselves.
- Take photographs, videos, or other images of people without the express permission of the person in question or their parent, guardian, or carer where relevant.

Useful Contacts

Highfields Centre Designated Safeguarding Leads

Fatimah Li (Children and Young People) - Contact 0116 253 1053

Aiyub Zamakda (Adults) - Contact 0116 253 1053

Monica Hingorani (Governing Body) - Contact 0116 253 1053

Child Protection Team at Leicester City Council - 0116 454 1004 (24-hour service)

Vulnerable Adults Team at Leicester City Council - 0116 - 454 1004

Leicestershire Police - Call 999 in an emergency.

Date: 09/10/2023

Reviewed by: Priya Thamotheram - Head of Centre

Next Review Date: 09/10/2024

Policy Owned by: Highfields Centre Governing Body

