

Safeguarding Children Policy

Policy Statement:

This policy applies to all staff including Directors, paid staff, parent reps, volunteers and sessional workers or anyone working on behalf of Herts Parent Carer Involvement CIC (HPCI). It shows a commitment to protecting and safeguarding children against potential harm or actual harm. It fully accepts and promotes the principle enshrined in the Children Act 1989 that **the welfare of the child is paramount**.

The policy also demonstrates a commitment to working with statutory bodies and voluntary agencies to promote the safety and welfare of children and acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult. HPCI will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

HPCI does not work directly with children, but we do work with parents, and will endeavour to safeguard any children we may be made aware of by following the procedure if a concern is raised about a child's welfare.

The definition of a child for the purpose of this document is anyone under the age of 18 years. For concerns about anyone over 18 years of age please see our Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy.

HPCI has an appointed Leise Cooper who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns. In her absence, staff can directly call any of the contact numbers listed below for Children's Services or the Police.

The named person for child protection within HPCI is:

Leise Cooper - Director

Email : leise@hertsparentcarers.org.uk

Mobile number 07815 458355

Emergency contact number 07815 458355

Other Key Contacts

Hertfordshire Children's Services **0300 123 4043**

Police (Child Abuse Investigation Unit CAIO) **0845 33 00 222 (999 in an emergency)**

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board 01992 588757

All staff of HPCI are to:

- Understand and apply this policy and procedure in their activities;
- Identify opportunities and undertake appropriate training to support them in their role;
- Act appropriately at all times and be able to challenge inappropriate behaviour in others;
- Be able to recognise harm; and
- Know how to report any concerns in a timely and appropriate way.

In addition, senior members of the organisation are to:

- Encourage all staff and volunteers to understand this policy and procedure
- Offer opportunities to undertake safeguarding training and refresher training if appropriate
- Ensure that the policy and procedure is adhered to and to undertake regular compliance audits
- Ensure that a whistle blowing policy is developed, agreed and communicated with all staff and volunteers

The role and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person maybe subject to abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The named person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

Outcomes for children and their families

HPCI is committed to the protection and safety of children. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. HPCI will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in HPCI through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by HPCI

Every adult who works with or on behalf of HPCI is aware of the contents of this policy and understands what the reporting procedures are if there are any activities that may be unsafe or may present a risk of harm, or if the child or young person (or their parent(s) / carer(s)) makes a disclosure of abuse or an allegation against an adult working with them. Such disclosures or allegations will be taken very seriously to ensure that the child is protected.

All adults working for or with HPCI will have been appropriately recruited and DBSs or Enhanced DBSs will be applied for and references taken up for those who have access to sensitive personal data. No HPCI staff will be working directly with children. Their induction into the organisation will include basic child protection training and a briefing on this policy.

Safeguarding Concerns involving HPCI staff

Should a member of staff of HPCI become the subject of a Child Protection Enquiry, that is an enquiry undertaken by a qualified social worker under Section 47 of The Children's Act 1989, as part of their life outside of their work for HPCI, then the Directors of HPCI would make an immediate decision that the individual accused of abuse should be suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. HPCI would not act on concerns below that threshold. HPCI would only be able to act as such if we were aware of the Enquiry. Such information would always be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The decision to reinstate someone who has been subject to such enquires should be influenced by the advice from social services or the police.

Legal framework

The Children Act 1989 sets out that the child's welfare is paramount and safeguarding and promoting it is the priority. The Children Act 2004 set out a duty on local authorities to work closely with those providing services to children and young people.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf) sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. It is important that all practitioners working to safeguard children and young people understand fully their responsibilities and duties as set out in primary legislation and associated regulations and guidance.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out key principles which are enshrined within these acts and the statutory guidance. From 15 January 1992, when the treaty came into force, every child in the UK has been entitled to over 40 specific rights. These include:

- the right to life, survival and development
- the right to have their views respected, and to have their best interests considered at all times
- the right to a name and nationality, freedom of expression, and access to information concerning them

- the right to live in a family environment or alternative care, and to have contact with both parents wherever possible
- health and welfare rights, including rights for disabled children, the right to health and health care, and social security
- the right to education, leisure, culture and the arts
- special protection for refugee children, children in the juvenile justice system, children deprived of their liberty and children suffering economic, sexual or other forms of exploitation.

The rights included in the convention apply to all children and young people, with no exceptions.

(http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/ParentsRights/DG_4003313)

Recognition of Abuse and Neglect

Definition of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

An abused child is any boy or girl, under 18 years of age, who has suffered from, or is believed likely to be, at risk of significant risk of physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

Physical abuse

(Including when masqueraded as discipline and chastisement)

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 or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. [...]

Physical abuse often arises from a wish to chastise. English law allows smacking by parents in that parents can use the defence of “reasonable chastisement” but only in a charge of common assault.

The introduction of section 54 of the Children Act 2004 changed the law, to remove the reasonable chastisement defence for actual bodily harm. Actual bodily harm includes minor visible injuries such as a graze, a scratch, an abrasion or bruising around the eye. Common assault implies a transient trifling injury such as reddening of the skin or no injury at all. The use of an implement to hit a child though not specifically prohibited is more likely to leave a mark. Thus the law allows a parent to smack a child where doing so leaves no mark upon the skin, so only light smacks are permitted. “Over chastisement” which implies at least actual bodily harm would be against the law and the reasonable chastisement defence would not apply. This means, for example, that a parent can no longer justify beating a child on the grounds that child is difficult to raise.

Although the reasonable chastisement defence only applies to the criminal law the concept influences decisions taken in the family courts. The defence applies only to parents and adults acting in loco parentis with the parent’s permission. Physical chastisement, i.e. corporal punishment, of any form has been prohibited in state schools since 1986, private since 1998 and by child minders since 2003.

It is important that all professionals treat injuries caused to children by their parents as an assault and do not condone or excuse this because their intention was to discipline the child. Professionals should be cautious about referring to such assaults as “over-chastisement” as this can have the effect of minimising the impact on the child of the injuries or implying the child’s behaviour was a contributory cause.

There is evidence that even smacking allowed within the law is harmful to children. For example, minor forms of regular smacking of pre-school children is associated with an increased risk of antisocial behaviour after 2-3 years

even when allowing for other parenting risk factors and the presence of such behaviour at study entry. Maternal depression and violence between adult partners are associated with a greater risk of smacking children than either factor present alone regardless of child behaviour. Parents who experience physical punishment in their childhood are more likely to smack their own children.

The following definition is taken from a previous version of Working Together (Working Together 2010)

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 or carer fabricates the symptoms or, or deliberately induces illness in a child

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

Emotional Abuse

The following definition is taken from a previous version of Working Together (Working Together 2010)

*Emotional abuse is a form of **Significant Harm** which involves 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 insofar 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 cyberbullying) 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.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Physical, mental and emotional development delay
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- *Extremes of passivity or aggression*

Sexual Abuse

The following definition is taken from a previous version of Working Together (Working Together 2010)

*Sexual abuse is a form of **Significant Harm** which 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 also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, 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.*

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The

possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

Neglect

The following definition is taken from a previous version of Working Together (Working Together 2010)

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. Once a child is born neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- *provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)*
- *protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger*
- *ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-giver)*
- *ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.*

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The

possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

This policy applies to Herts Parent Carer Involvement and covers any activities we undertake.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Herts Parent Carer Involvement Board

Date meeting held : _____

Signature of the Chief Executive : _____

Date Signed : _____

Signature of Directors : _____

Frequency policy to be reviewed : Annually

Date policy to be reviewed : January 2019