

# Child Protection Policy



**Reviewed May 2020**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Management Committee to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

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## **Safeguarding Children Is the Responsibility of Us All**

Horton Community Farm (HCF) recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Act 1989. Anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.

Any group or organisation working with children needs to be alert to the possibility of abuse occurring. It is the responsibility of us all to put the welfare of children and young people first and to recognise behaviours that can put children at risk.

We are aware that some children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives, such as domestic abuse or substance misuse.

We aim to create a safe and respectful environment for learning and play within which children and young people can thrive and HCF can practise with the help and security of clear guidance.

These guidelines are for the use of all paid staff, volunteers and visitors. We will make the guidelines available to the parents and carers of children and young people to whom we offer a service. Through the guidelines we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected.
- All members of HCF are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns.
- All paid staff and volunteers who come into contact with children as part of their role are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures.
- All paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate support and training.

## **Recognising Signs of Abuse**

It can often be difficult to recognise abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a stranger.

If you are worried about a child, it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

**Examples and definitions of the different type of abuse are enclosed in Appendix A.**

## **Named People Role**

- **Charlie Gray** is HCF's designated child protection person and has undergone child protection training. It is the responsibility of this person to make themselves available for consultation by staff, volunteers, visitors, children and their families.
- The name of the designated person and their duties should be displayed in the HCF offices so that everyone (including parents and carers) is aware of who to talk to if they have concerns.
- In the absence of the designated child protection person the deputy is **Jonathan Pollard or Laura Buston**.

The named person's role includes:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of what they should do if they are concerned that a child / young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.
- Ensuring that all staff know and understand the child protection policy and how to follow procedures.
- Making referrals through the child protection procedures and ensuring that information is shared and recorded appropriately.

## **What to Do with Your Concerns?**

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse by an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour.
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously.
- Do **not** attempt to question or interview them yourself.

- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. **Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret.**
- Inform your designated child protection officer as soon as possible.
- Make a written record of the incident or events, as soon as possible.

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your designated child protection officer, who will decide what to do next.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with social workers and the police. It is normally the responsibility of your designated child protection officer to make a referral to these agencies, but if you judge the situation to be an emergency and/or you require advice in the absence of the designated officer, you must report your concerns directly, using the contacts listed at the back of these guidelines.

Social Services will advise you when or whether to inform the child's parents or carers about any concerns. If they decide to pursue a child protection investigation, you should:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, to keep the child safe.
- Attend a child protection conference if you are invited. You will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the child, which is why it is important to keep records of your concerns.
- Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences.

#### **PRACTICE TIPS**

You can find more detail about the identification of abuse and what to do about it in the booklet, "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused". This is available from the DfE website, <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguardingchildren>. Information about the procedure for investigating allegations of abuse is contained in the Bradford Child Protection Procedures, available from the [Local Safeguarding Children Board](#).

## **Good Practice**

- All staff are responsible for children while they are engaged in HCF activities and must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to.
- All staff working with children should receive regular supervision from a more experienced staff member and be encouraged to attend basic child protection training.
- No member of staff should be left alone with a child where they cannot be observed by others.
- Under no circumstances should visitors be allowed to wander around HCF delivery areas unaccompanied when children and young people are present.
- Where possible there should always be at least two adults present with a group of children - it is vital that the ratio of adult child is adequate to ensure safety. For children under 8 the ratio should be no more than 1:8; for children under 5 it should be no more than 1:6.
- Staff should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose.
- If a child is not collected after a session it is reasonable to wait approximately half an hour for a parent or carer to arrive. If the parent or carer cannot be contacted, staff should contact Social Services or the police and request assistance.

## **Outings and Trips**

- All vehicles hired for outings must be insured, roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts.
- All drivers should travel with at least one escort. Drivers and escorts should have up to date CRB checks and been subject to appropriate recruitment procedures. All drivers and escorts should agree to abide by these guidelines.
- Roll call will be taken at the start of a journey and again before commencing the return journey; if travelling in more than one vehicle, children will be encouraged to travel in the same vehicle there and back.
- Staff accompanying trips will carry the contact numbers for the home organisation and emergency services in the event of an alert being necessary.

- If a child goes missing while on a trip, staff should instigate an immediate search. If the child cannot be found within half an hour, the appropriate security staff and the police should be notified.
- If, having notified security staff and the police, the child cannot be found, the parents/carers of the child will be notified immediately.
- The care of the remaining children is paramount. It is imperative that they return to the home site as quickly as possible, while a senior staff member remains at the visit site to coordinate contact between security staff and the child's parents/carers.

## **Child Protection Procedures**

All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or is suffering abuse, you should tell the designated child protection officer.

Your designated officer is:

- Charlie Gray
- 07403 394142

If the designated officer is not available, speak to another member of staff.

## **Bradford Children's Social Services Contacts**

In an emergency, contact a social worker directly:

In office hours, either:

- Child Protection Unit
- 01274 434343

or:

- Social Services
- 01274 437500

Out of office hours:

- The Emergency Duty Team
- 01274 431010
- Bradford Police Child Protection Unit
- 01274 376061
- NSPCC Helpline
- 0808 800 5000



## **Allegations Made Against Members of Staff or Volunteers**

Organisations that work or come into contact with children and young people need to be aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse will be made against members of their staff or volunteers. Allegations can be made by children, young people, parents and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has taken place.
- Children can misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else.

All allegations should be brought to the notice of (the designated child protection officer) immediately. In cases where the allegation is made against this person, the complainant should approach the Chair of the HCF Board of Trustees or take the following action him or herself:

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and away from the person alleged to have abused a child.
- Contact social services in the team relevant to where the child lives (see section 7).
- Contact the parents or carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker/officer in charge of allegations.
- Irrespective of any investigation by Social Service or the police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure; consideration must be given as to whether the member of staff or volunteer should be suspended from duty while the investigation is carried out.
- Consider whether the person has access to children anywhere else and whether those organisations or groups need to be informed.
- Act upon the decisions made in any strategy meeting.

All incidents should be investigated within the organisation after any external investigation has finished, to review practice and put in place any additional measures based on lessons learned.

## Support

It is important that you also develop support systems for the person who faces an allegation. HCF has an advisory Board, it could be that a member is nominated to fulfil this role. As well as providing support through listening, this person could advise on appropriate outside help, such as counselling or legal services.

### **PRACTICE TIPS**

Well-functioning organisations encourage an environment where people feel safe to express their concerns about the practice of others. The term 'whistleblowing' is often used pejoratively; if a staff member, volunteer or visitor has concerns, they should not be victimised in any way for expressing them.

## Safe Recruitment

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff or volunteers who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed:

- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment and for the names of two referees.
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) who will be working potentially unsupervised with children should have a new criminal records check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before they start employment with you - anyone who refused to do so should not be employed.
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and perceptions of acceptable behaviour.
- References should be received before an individual begins work. Referees should be reminded that references should not misrepresent the candidate or omit to say things that might be relevant to their employment.
- All appointments to work with children should be subject to an agreed probationary period.
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description.

- These guidelines should be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of an induction process.

## Safeguarding Children in Bradford

The Bradford Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) is responsible for coordinating the arrangements made by different local organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The BSCB will approach individual organisations as and when their advice and experience in particular areas could be valuable to the production of guidance or information to the public.

The BSCB coordinates multi-agency training programmes on child protection related topics; it is recommended that all designated child protection officers and senior officials attend one or more of these courses to gain the knowledge necessary to be able to offer advice and consultancy within their organisation.

The board's website is <https://saferbradford.co.uk/>

## Implementation Checklist

These child protection procedures will only be effective if all staff and volunteers in your organisation and understand them. This checklist is designed to help you to go through that process:

Identify designated child protection officer (CPO)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CPO name and contact details to procedure		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CPO attends training on child protection and updates that training regularly		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
all staff and volunteers have a copy of child protection procedures		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
all existing staff and volunteers who have contact with children have Enhanced CRB Disclosures before they start work		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
that the premises conform to health and safety guidelines		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Registered adoption of model policy	To further	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **Appendix A**

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It is against the law to discipline a child by deliberately doing any of these things. Physical abuse can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child to seek attention; this is called fabricated illness, or Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy. Symptoms that indicate physical abuse include:

- Bruising in unusual places, such as the face or the back
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child
- Bites
- Burn and scald marks; small round burns that could be caused by a cigarette
- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers of scars of different sizes or ages

Children who have been physically hurt can be fearful of others. They may also wear clothes that cover most of their body to cover their injuries and be resistant to explaining how the injury happened.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. Some level of emotional abuse is involvement in all types of ill treatment of a child. Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others, or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention-seeking behaviour
- Exceptionally low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism
- Excessively withdraw behaviour or fearfulness
- Anxious behaviour, such as rocking, hair twisting or self-harm
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from harm or danger, or failing to access appropriate medical care and treatment when necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse. Symptoms of physical and emotional neglect can include:

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Inadequate nutrition, leading to ill-health - a child may look too thin, too fat and/or undernourished
- Constant hunger; stealing or gorging food
- Failure to seek or to follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Repeated wearing of inappropriate clothing for the weather

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative, or involve no contact, such as watching sexual activities, harassment or looking at pornographic material. Encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways is also abusive. Under the Sexual offences Act 2003, any sexual activity - contact or non-contact - with a child under the age of 13, is a crime. Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

### **Allegations or disclosure**

- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted diseases, urinary infections
- Excessive preoccupation with sex, inappropriately sexualised play, words or drawing
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults

Other children and young people may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders; obsessive behaviours
- Self-mutilation; suicide attempts
- School/peer/relationship problems