



Helensburgh First Aid

Safeguarding Policy (Child Protection)

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Safeguarding Children Policy

Helensburgh First Aid aims to ensure that any child is kept safe from harm while they are with volunteers in our organisation. In order to achieve this we will ensure our volunteers are, where appropriate, carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Recruitment

- All applicants to our organisation will be asked to attend an interview
- Applicants will be asked to provide references and these will always be taken up prior to confirmation of appointment.
- Successful applicants will be asked to complete a self-declaration form prior to a PVG record being accessed.

Screening

The applicant will be asked to complete a Disclosure Record prior to the applicant commencing volunteering at events.

Training

Volunteers will receive induction training, which will give an overview of Helensburgh First Aid and ensure they know its purpose, services and structure. Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practicing skills needed for their role. Training on specific areas such as health and safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new volunteers and will be regularly reviewed.

Supervision

All volunteers will have a designated mentor who will provide regular feedback and support.

It is an offence for an individual who is barred to undertake the type of regulated work from which they are barred.

It is an offence for an organisation to offer regulated work to someone who is barred or fail to remove a person from regulated work if they have been notified that they are barred.

It is an offence for an organisation not to refer an individual to Disclosure Scotland where the grounds have been met.

Helensburgh First Aid will ensure that all Trustees involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.

Reporting Abuse

All concerns must always be referred to the Helensburgh First Aid Safeguarding Officer and may also require a referral to social work and/or police for appropriate investigation. Where the grounds for referral are met a referral would also be made to Disclosure Scotland.

Helensburgh First Aid Code of Conduct – Safeguarding Children

You Should

- ✓ Play your part in helping to develop an ethos where all people matter and are treated equally, and with respect and dignity
- ✓ Always put the care, welfare and safety needs of a child first
- ✓ Respect a child's right to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them
- ✓ Listen attentively to any ideas and views a child wants to share with you
- ✓ Respect a child's culture (for example their faith and religious beliefs)
- ✓ Respect a child's right to privacy and personal space
- ✓ Respond sensitively to children who seem anxious about participating in certain activities
- ✓ Speak to your Event Team Leader immediately if you suspect that a child is experiencing bullying or harassment
- ✓ Be aware of the vulnerability of some groups of children to being isolated and hurt (for example, children with disabilities and learning difficulties)
- ✓ Wherever possible ensure that when you are working with children you are at least within sight or hearing of other volunteers
- ✓ Listen carefully to any child who 'tells you' that they are being harmed and report what you have discovered immediately to your Event Team Leader
- ✓ Report immediately any suspicion that a child could be at risk of harm or abuse
- ✓ Never dismiss what a child tells you as 'lies' or exaggeration
- ✓ Always avoid physical interventions unless it is absolutely necessary in order to prevent a child harming themselves or others or causing serious damage to property
- ✓ Never underestimate the contribution that you can make to the development of safe communities for children

You Should Not

- × Exaggerate or trivialise another volunteer's concerns about a child or ignore an allegation or suspicion of abuse in the hope that it will either 'go away' or that 'someone else will deal with it'
- × Discuss personal issues about a child or their family with other people except with your Event Team Leader when you are concerned about the child's wellbeing
- × Be drawn into any derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children
- × Allow a child to be bullied or harmed by anyone in the organisation
- × Allow children to swear or use sexualized language unchallenged

You Must Never

- × Engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- × Never allow others to or yourself engage in touching a child in a sexually provocative manner
- × Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- × Engage in rough or physical contact with a child
- × Never form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with children
- × Harass or intimidate a child because of age, 'race', gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, socio economic class or disability
- × Never invite or allow a child to stay with you at your home

These guidelines have been introduced to provide practical guidance for those volunteering directly with children on practices to keep the child safe and to promote a safe operating environment for the volunteer. These guidelines complement and should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct. Breach of these guidelines may be dealt with under Helensburgh First Aid's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Awareness of Abuse

Introduction

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

It is helpful to consider and understand the different ways in which children can be abused. The following definitions show some of the ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child but are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

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. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying

Bullying is abuse and/or intimidation by a person, persons or an organisation against another or others. Bullying may be a specific act or it may be institutional. Bullying can be perpetrated by both genders and is generally an abuse of a perceived power relationship. Specifically, bullying may include verbal abuse and intimidation, acts of physical or sexual abuse and coercion. Whatever its form, bullying is unacceptable within any organisation and it is expected that it always will be challenged and addressed appropriately.

Recognising Abuse

Some Facts about Abuse

- Most children, who are abused, are abused by someone they know.
- Much abuse goes unreported and therefore unrecognised.
- Disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse.
- Children are far more likely to be physically abused by their parents than sexually abused.
- Children rarely make false accusations that they have been abused and in fact frequently deny the abuse or take back an accusation after they have made it.
- Children who have been abused are often very good at hiding their unhappiness and distress.
- Abuse has serious long-term consequences and if untreated, can be devastating and last into adulthood.
- Child sexual abuse is equally common among all social classes, cultures and ethnic groups.
- In most reported incidents of sexual abuse the abuser is someone known to the child.
- A child is never to blame for abuse.
- It is not only men who sexually abuse children – it is estimated that 10% of all abuse is sexual abuse carried out by women.

Indicators of Abuse

When children and young people are abused there are sometimes (but not always) some common indicators which can be divided into 'behaviours' and 'physical signs'.

Some of these include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if they are on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describing what appears to be an abusive act involving her/him.
- Someone else – a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Distrust of adults particularly those with whom the child previously had, or would normally be expected to have a close relationship.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour over time eg. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or explicit behaviour in games.
- Reluctance to participate in physical activity.
- The child is unable to make friends or prevented from socialising with other children.
- Increasingly unkempt appearance.

Effects of Abuse

Abused children can suffer changes in normal behaviour and can suffer long-term damage that may follow them into later life.

The main effects of abuse on children are as follows:

- Pain and distress.
- Behavioural difficulties, like becoming angry and aggressive.
- School related problems.
- Developmental delay – physically, emotionally and mentally.
- Low self-esteem.
- Depression, self-harm – sometimes leading to suicide.

- Difficulty in forming relationships as adults.
- Sometimes, if untreated, abusive relationships with own (or other) children.
- Permanent or temporary injury.
- Children may die.

Factors that might increase the likelihood of risk:

- Young children who might have difficulty telling others.
- Disabled children who might have difficulty communicating or accessing people to tell.
- Children who are already experiencing some form of discrimination (eg. racial harassment) as they are more isolated from other adults/children. They may also perceive the abuse as a part of the ongoing discrimination.
- Poor relationship between children and parents/carers.
- High levels of stress.
- History of violence in the family.

The damage inflicted by bullying can be frequently underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm. In these circumstances, bullying should be considered as child abuse and treated as such.

Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Introduction

All suspicions and disclosures must be reported swiftly and appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused, particularly in cases of possible abuse or where there is a misplaced loyalty to a colleague. These feelings must not interfere with your judgement about any action to be taken.

Action to Take

The volunteer receiving a disclosure from a child concerning abuse **should**:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Tell the child s/he is not to blame and was right to tell.
- Take what the child says seriously.
- Keep questions to a minimum.
- Reassure the child, but do not make promises of confidentiality.
- Make a full written record of what has been said, heard or seen using the child's own words.
- Refer the matter as soon as possible on the same day. Reporting concerns should not be delayed until a written record has been made.

Action to Avoid

The person receiving information concerning disclosure **should not**:

- Panic.
- Allow their shock or distaste to show.
- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Approach the alleged abuser.
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.

Responding to Suspicions Involving an Individual from outwith Helensburgh First Aid

Concerns that a child/young person may be experiencing abuse/neglect by an individual outwith Helensburgh First Aid may come to light because:

- A child/young person has alleged that they are being abused;
or
- Helensburgh First Aid has received a third party report that a child/young person is being abused;
or
- There are signs and indicators which could point to abuse.

The volunteer should immediately report this to the Event Team Leader who will make a full written record of the disclosure using the designated child protection reporting form. Sign and date it and pass it to the Safeguarding Officer. Reporting concerns should not be delayed until a written record has been made.

If the Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, the Event Team Leader should contact any other Trustee. If the child is considered to be in immediate danger the Event Team Leader should immediately contact the police direct and then the Safeguarding Officer.

The Safeguarding Officer will report the concerns to the child protection agencies (ie. Police and/or Social Work).

Concerns should not be shared with parents/carers. This would not be appropriate if they were suspected of/had knowledge of the abuse. In this instance, advice should be sought from the police/social work services before speaking to parents/carers.

Responding to Suspicions Involving a Volunteer of Helensburgh First Aid

Concerns that a child/young person may be experiencing abuse/neglect by a volunteer of Helensburgh First Aid may come to light because:

- A child/young person alleges that they have been harmed by a volunteer;
or
- A parent/carer or other individual from outwith Helensburgh First Aid alleges that their/a child has been harmed by a volunteer;
or
- Other volunteers from within Helensburgh First Aid may have witnessed or have concerns about a volunteer's behaviour towards children/young people.

The volunteer should make a full written record of the disclosure using the designated child protection reporting form. Sign and date it and pass it to your Event Team Leader who will immediately pass concerns to the Safeguarding Officer. Where the concern is about the Event Team Leader, it must be reported directly to the Safeguarding Officer. Reporting concerns should not be delayed until a written record has been made.

Once the concerns have been reported, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Establish the basic facts.
- Conduct an initial assessment of the facts in order to determine the appropriate course of action.
- Consult external agencies such as the police and social work services for advice at any time. This is important because they may hold other important information which, when considered alongside the current concerns, builds a significant picture of concern.

The purpose of the initial assessment is to clarify the nature and context of the concerns. It should determine whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused/harmed or is at risk of abuse or harm.

- Subject to the nature and seriousness of the situation, if it is not clear at this stage whether a criminal offence may have been committed, the volunteer *may* be approached as part of the information gathering process.
- The volunteer will, for the duration of any investigation established after the initial investigation, be subject to a precautionary suspension. This is not a disciplinary measure, but is designed to protect both the volunteer and Helensburgh First Aid.
- Interviewing children about possible abuse and criminal offences is the sole remit of specially trained police officers and social workers.

Any volunteer who harms a child (or places a child at risk of harm) will be disciplined as per Helensburgh First Aid's disciplinary policy and may ultimately be removed from their position of working with children. Where a volunteer is removed, Helensburgh First Aid will be legally bound to make a referral to Scottish Ministers for the individual to be considered for listing on the *Children's List* in accordance with the *Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007*.

Support for the Reporter of Suspected Abuse

Helensburgh First Aid will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith (without malicious intent) reports their concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child/young person may be being abused.

List of Contact Numbers

HFA Safeguarding Officer

Tel: 07810 188 336

HFA Trustee - Chairperson

Tel: 07753 619 305

HFA Trustee - Secretary

Tel: 07957 062 437

HFA Trustee - Logistics Officer

Tel: 07940 820 892

Social Work Services for Helensburgh and Lomond

Tel: 01546 605517

Social Work Services for Alexandria and Dumbarton

Tel: 01389 608080

Social Work Services for Clydebank

Tel: 0141 562 8800

Emergency Social Work Out of Hours Service

Tel: 0800 811505

Police Scotland

Tel: 101

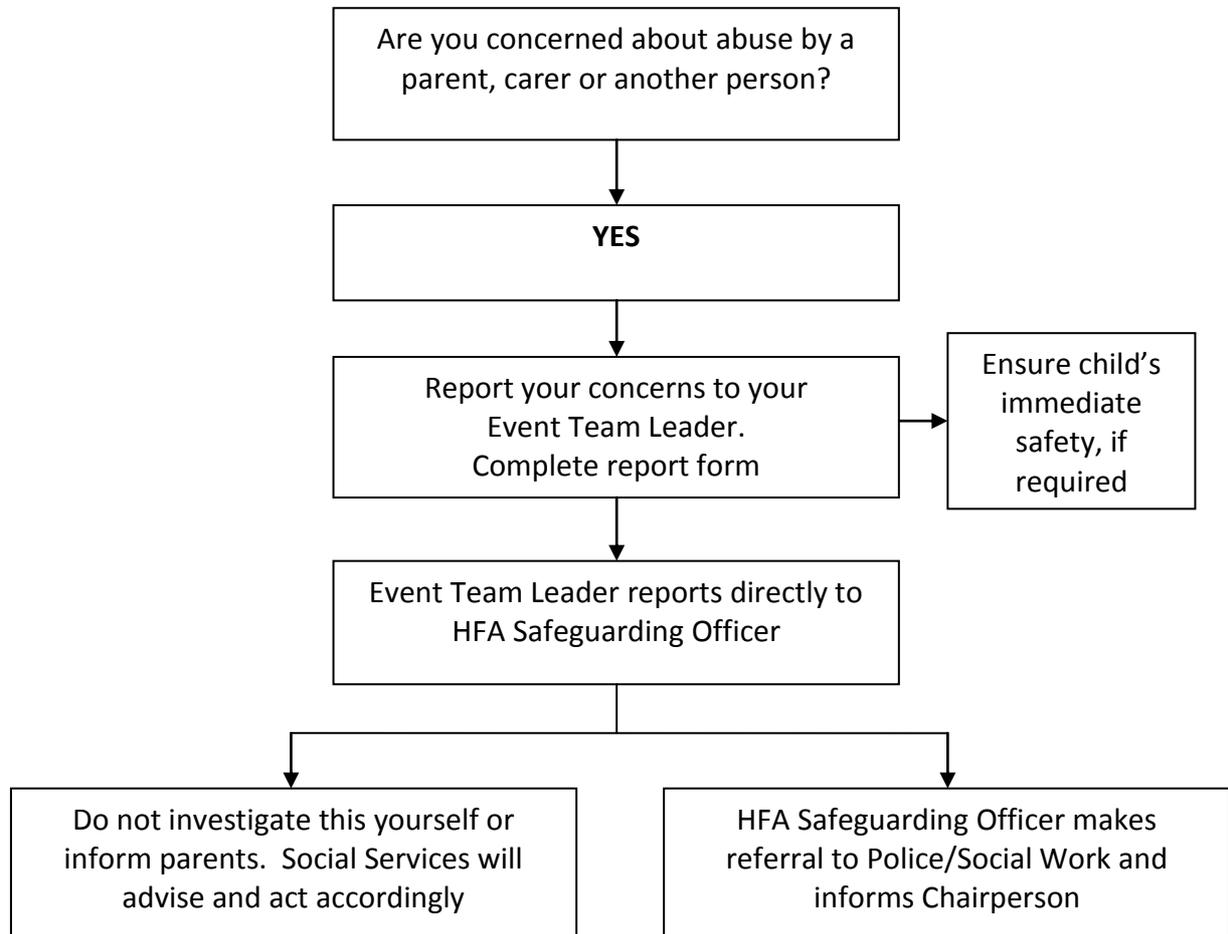
ChildLine

Tel: 0800 1111

National Child Protection Line

Tel: 08000 223 222

Flowchart: Responding to Suspicions – Non HFA Volunteer



Flowchart: Responding to Suspicions – HFA Volunteer

