

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT & PROCEDURES

This policy will enable the Horsham & Shipley Community Project (HSCP) to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe the vulnerable people with whom it works alongside and who may be involved in any of the activities organised by the organisation. HSCP acknowledges that significant numbers of vulnerable people are abused and that HSCP has a duty to have a Safeguarding Policy and to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Hence HSCP acknowledges its duty to set out procedures to follow and puts in place preventative measures to try and reduce those numbers and to know what to do in the event of abuse.

The Policy Statement and Procedures have been drawn up in order to enable HSCP to:

- promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
- to ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.
- and to stop that abuse occurring.

The Policy and Procedures relate to the safeguarding of vulnerable people, including both young people and vulnerable adults.

Vulnerable adults are defined as people aged 18 or over who

- are receiving or may need community care services because of learning, physical or mental disability, age, or illness
- are or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

(No Secrets, Department of Health, 2000)

Young people are defined as people aged between 5 and 24 years. For the purposes of this policy, a young person aged under 18 years is regarded as a child.

The policy applies to all trustees, volunteers, service users, carers and parents and anyone working on behalf of the HSCP.

In order to implement the policy the HSCP will work:

- to promote the freedom and dignity of the person who has or is experiencing abuse
- to promote the rights of all people to live free from abuse and coercion
- to ensure the safety and well being of people who do not have the capacity to decide how they want to respond to abuse that they are experiencing
- to manage services in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse
- recruit session leaders and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- provide effective management for session leaders and volunteers through supervision, support and training

HSCP :

- will ensure that all trustees, session leaders, volunteers, service users, and carers/families are familiar with this policy and procedures
- will act within its Data Protection Policy and will usually gain permission from service users before sharing information about them with another agency

- will pass information to the appropriate agency when more than one person is at risk. For example: if the concern relates to a worker, volunteer or organisation who provides a service to vulnerable adults or children
- will inform service users that where a person is in danger, a child is at risk or a crime has been committed then a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency without the service user's consent
- will make a referral to the appropriate agency as appropriate
- will endeavor to keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse
- will ensure that the Safeguarding Officer understands his/her responsibility to refer incidents of abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/ Adults' CarePoint Team)

The Safeguarding Officer for Safeguarding in HSCP is Russell Wood.

Procedures

1. Introduction

The HSCP provides access to various activities, including Walking football, Pétanque, Men's Shed activities, Walking and Cycling groups, and various supporting activities such as gardening, site maintenance etc, primarily to retired local people. Children may be accompanying any adult at any activity on the site. These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any adult or child who access services provided by HSCP. The procedures recognise that adult and child abuse can be a difficult subject for workers to deal with. HSCP is committed to the belief that the protection of vulnerable adults and children from harm and abuse is everybody's responsibility and the aim of these procedures is to ensure that all session leaders, trustees, volunteers, sessional workers and anyone working on behalf of the HSCP act appropriately in response to any concern around abuse.

2. Preventing Abuse

HSCP is committed to putting in place safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within the services it offers and that all those involved within HSCP will be treated with respect.

Therefore this policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Equal Opportunities
- Data Protection
- Health & Safety
- Members Agreement

HSCP is committed to safer "recruitment" practices for trustees and volunteers. This may include Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, ensuring references are taken up if appropriate and adequate training on Safeguarding is provided for session leaders and volunteers.

Trustees will be required to have DBS checks.

Any outside organisation which gains access to the facilities of the HSCP umbrella to run a session, but which is not organised directly by the HSCP, must, before accessing the facilities, prove that it has a robust Safeguarding Policy and procedure in place, and that at least one person from that outside organisation trained in Safeguarding must be present during the time of the session. By way of example, such sessions may include training or matches run by a junior football club, activities run by a local scouts club, or the dementia society.

The organisation will work within the current legal framework for reporting session leaders or volunteers that are abusers.

3. Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

HSCP is committed to ensuring that the Safeguarding Officer, all trustees and volunteers in positions of responsibility undertake training to gain a basic awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse. All session leaders, volunteers and others working in direct or indirect contact with vulnerable people as part of the organisation's activities, or as part of the environment where the activities take place, must be alert to the signs of abuse.

"Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons" (No Secrets: Department of Health, 2000)

Abuse includes:

- physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint
- sexual abuse: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material
- psychological or emotional abuse: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation
- financial or material abuse: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- neglect and acts of omission: including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs
- discriminatory abuse: including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- institutional or organisational: including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practices, lack of person-centred care or treatment

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts.

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, session leaders members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

4. Safeguarding Officer

HSCP has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will be available for workers to consult with.

Safeguarding Officer: Russell Wood
Mobile Number : 07803 259190

Deputy Safeguarding Officer : Philip Gibbs
Mobile number : 07786 070939

Should either of these named people be unavailable then trustees, session leaders or volunteers should contact the appropriate agency. See below for contact details.

The roles and responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officers are:

- to ensure that all session leaders, volunteers and trustees are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that a vulnerable person may be experiencing, or has experienced abuse or neglect.
- to ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred to the appropriate agency where necessary.
- to follow up any referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed.
- to reinforce the utmost need for confidentiality and to ensure that session leaders and volunteers are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security. This is because it is around the time that a person starts to challenge abuse that the risks of increasing intensity of abuse are greatest.
- to ensure that session leaders and volunteers working directly with service users who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision.
- if appropriate session leaders or volunteers will be given support and afforded protection if necessary under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998: they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome

5. Responding to People who have Experienced or are Experiencing Abuse

HSCP recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of abuse is never easy.

Any suspicion or allegation must be reported as soon as possible on the day of the occurrence to the Safeguarding Officer. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child or adult, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour, or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.

How to respond if you receive an allegation:

- Reassure the person concerned
- Listen to what they are saying
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously
- Don't start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions
- Don't promise to keep it a secret

If you witness abuse or abuse has just taken place the priorities will be:

- To call an ambulance if required
- To call the police if a crime has been committed
- To preserve evidence
- To keep yourself, session leaders, volunteers and service users safe
- To inform the Safeguarding Officer in your organisation
- To record what happened in log where safeguarding adults & Children concerns will be recorded

All situations of abuse or alleged abuse will be discussed with the Safeguarding Officer or their deputy. If a trustee, or volunteer feels unable to raise this concern with the Safeguarding Officer or their deputy then concerns can be raised directly with the relevant agency. The alleged victim will be told that this will happen. This stage is called the alert.

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 (alert) will be made to the relevant agency. If the individual experiencing abuse does not have capacity to consent a referral will be made without that person's consent, in their best interests. The Safeguarding Officer may take advice at the above stage from the relevant agency.

6. Managing Allegation Made Against Session Leader or Volunteer

HSCP will ensure that any allegations made against a member or session leader will be dealt with swiftly. Where a session leader/volunteer 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.

The safety of the individual(s) concerned is paramount. The Safeguarding Officer must undertake a risk assessment immediately to assess the level of risk to all service users posed by the alleged perpetrator. This will include whether it is safe for them to continue in their role or any other role within the service whilst the investigation is undertaken. This action does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible for, or is to blame for, any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a totally professional manner. The Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the appropriate agency to discuss the best course of action and to ensure that the HSCP's disciplinary procedures are coordinated with any other enquiries taking place as part of the ongoing management of the allegation.

The Safeguarding Officer will ensure that the Chair of Trustees of HSCP or in his/her absence the other Trustees are fully briefed. An agreed statement will be prepared for the purpose of accurate communication with external sources and for the protection of the legal position of all parties involved.

The Safeguarding Officer will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely following the procedures detailed in the Data Protection Policy.

7. Recording and Managing Confidential Information

HSCP is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around Safeguarding issues should be shared only with those who need to know. For further information, please see HSCP's Data Protection Policy.

All allegations/concerns should be recorded in a log where safeguarding concerns will be recorded. 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. Access to this information will be restricted to the Safeguarding Officer and his Deputy.

8. Disseminating/Reviewing Policy and Procedures

This Safeguarding Policy and Procedure will be clearly communicated to session leaders, trustees, volunteers, service users, parents and carers. The Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for ensuring that this is done.

The Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually by the Trustees. The Safeguarding Officer will be involved in this process and can recommend any changes. The Safeguarding Officer will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to session leaders, trustees and volunteers. It may be appropriate to involve service users in the review and service users and parents/carers need to be informed of any significant changes

Signed:

Name: Philip R Gibbs , Position: Chair of Trustees

Date: 1 February 2026, Review date: 1 February 2027

Name of Organisation: Horsham & Shipley Community Project , Charity Number: 1178797