

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

All children and vulnerable adults have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity, and to be treated with dignity and respect. Although hundreds and thousands of children and vulnerable adults have wonderful experiences, abuse does happen. It is the responsibility of every adult to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse.

Children and vulnerable adults may be abused regardless of their age, racial origin, social class, gender, culture, religious belief, disability or sexual identity. They are usually abused by people they know and trust; this could be from within or outside the family.

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP is committed to promoting safe, enjoyable activities and opportunities for young people and vulnerable adults. It is also important to remember that HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP has both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure a duty to care under the Children Act 1989 and the Working Together to Safeguard Children Act of 2010.

This policy seeks to ensure that the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of children and/or vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the Hesters Way Partnership's expectations.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP is committed to ensuring that children and young people and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity delivered, supported or promoted by the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP.

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP's Safeguarding Policy aims to:

- Create a healthy and safe environment at all activities;
- Ensure that children and young people and vulnerable adults are listened to and kept safe from harm;
- Ensure staff and volunteers who work with children and young people and vulnerable adults are well informed, supported and protected.

3. LEGISLATION

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Working together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Children Act 1989
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002
- The Children act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- The Police Act – DBS 1997

- Mental Health Act 1983
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

4. DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the Hesters Way Partnership to ensure the protection of children/young people and/or vulnerable adults wherever possible.

In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying
- Neglect
- Child Exploitation
- Extremism
- Financial (or material) abuse

Definition of a child:

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

Definition of Vulnerable Adults:

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This **may** include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

5. ASSOCIATED HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP POLICIES and PROCEDURES

The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and, in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the Hesters Way Partnership. These include:

- **HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP Staff Handbook**, which provide practical advice and procedural guidance on safeguarding issues.
- Health & Safety;
- Diversity;
- Confidentiality;
- Whistle blowing;
- Grievance/Disciplinary procedures;
- Complaints;
- Data protection;

- Conflict of Interest;
- Staff induction and Staff training;

6. CONFIRMATION OF READING

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP will ensure that all Staff/Volunteers/ Management Committee Trustees have been made fully aware of the contents of both the Safeguarding Policy and the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP's Staff Guidance Documents.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff (paid or unpaid) have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy, in related policies and in the associated handbook, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

We expect all staff (paid or unpaid) to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP members in developing safe practices.

Additional specific responsibilities:

Trustees have responsibility to ensure:

The appropriate Policy is in place and reviewed annually and/or with changes in legislation.

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP's designated Safeguarding Director has responsibility to ensure:

- The Policy is accessible.
- The Policy is monitored and reviewed.
- Staff/Volunteers have access to appropriate training/information
- Receive staff / volunteer concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately.
- Keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS.
- Develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies

8. SAFE RECRUITMENT

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:

- Providing the following safeguarding statement in recruitment adverts or application details – 'recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices.'
- Job or role descriptions for all roles involving contact with children and / or vulnerable adults will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities.
- There are person specifications for roles which contain a statement on core competency with regard to child/ vulnerable adult protection/ safeguarding .
- Short listing is based on formal application processes/forms and not on provision of CVs .
- Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification.
- DBS checks will be conducted for specific roles for all staff (paid or unpaid) working with children and vulnerable adults. Portable/ carry over DBS checks from another employer will not be deemed to be sufficient. It is a criminal offence for individuals barred by the ISA to work or apply to work with children or vulnerable adults in a wide range of posts.
- No formal job offers are made until after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and 2 references).
- **In exceptional and justifiable circumstances** where the lack of staff/volunteers would put children and or vulnerable adults at risk employment/role may commence prior to DBS clearance: e.g. where a portable DBS check has been seen and is used as a holding position whilst DBS checks are carried out (staff/volunteers will be chaperoned during this time). A decision will then be made regarding disclosure information.

DBS Gap Management

The Hesters Way Partnership commits resources to providing DBS check on staff (paid or unpaid) whose roles involve contact with children and /or vulnerable adults.

In order to avoid DBS gaps the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP will maintain and review a list of roles across the Hesters Way Partnership which involve contact with children/ vulnerable adults.

In addition to checks on recruitment for roles involving contact with children/ vulnerable adults, for established staff the following processes are in place. The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP will ensure that their established staff and roles are regularly reviewed through:

- A 3 year rolling programme of re-checking DBS's for holders of all identified posts.
- Existing staff (paid or unpaid) who transfer from a role which does not require a DBS check to one which involves contact with children / vulnerable adults will be subject to a DBS check.

9. TRAINING FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP is committed to encouraging a high level of awareness, understanding, good practice and appropriate support for HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP staff (paid and unpaid) and HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP members through

- i. Ensuring that a regular programme of Safeguarding and Child Protection training is delivered locally HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP staff, volunteers and member groups. The purpose of such training is to raise awareness of child abuse and the different forms it can take; to raise the level of awareness of staff and volunteers about what young people are entitled to be protected from; to ensure that all staff and volunteers are able to recognise signs which could indicate abuse; to promote the general welfare, health and full development of children during any activity or event; to assist local youth work projects to develop effective procedures for recording and responding to accidents and complaint, and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.
- ii. Induction for staff that includes
 - discussion of the Safeguarding and other relevant policies,
 - familiarisation with reporting processes
 - understanding of the role of the Designated Management Committee member
 - Initial training on safeguarding including: safe working practices, understanding child protection and the alerter guide for adult safeguarding.
- iii. Any member of HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP staff who, through their role, is in contact with children and/ or vulnerable adults will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level.

10. COMMUNICATIONS and SUPPORT FOR STAFF

Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

- Team meetings
- Management Committee meetings
- One to one meetings (formal or informal)
- Provision of a clear and effective reporting procedure which encourages reporting of concerns.
- Encouraging open discussion (e.g. during supervision and team meetings) to identify and barriers to reporting so that they can be addressed.
- Inclusion of safeguarding as a discussion prompt during supervision meetings/ appraisals.

Support

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

- Debriefing support for paid and unpaid staff so that they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with.
- Seeking further support as appropriate e.g. access to counselling.
- Staff who have initiated protection concerns will be contacted by the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP's Designated Safeguarding Director within a 1 week. Details can be found online at <https://westcheltenham.org/about>

11. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES and GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a support worker and a client. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP expects staff (paid and unpaid) and Trustees to protect their own professional integrity and that of the Hesters Way Partnership.

The following professional boundaries must be adhered to:

- Use of abusive language
- Response to inappropriate behaviour / language
- Use of punishment or chastisement
- Passing on service users' personal contact details
- Cautious or avoidance of personal contact with clients
- Accepting money as a gift/ borrowing money from or lending money to service users

The following policies also contain guidance on staff (paid or unpaid) and Trustee conduct:
Conflict of Interests Policy

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures

Further good practice guidelines are detailed in the **HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP Staff Guidance Documents**.

12. REPORTING

It is not the responsibility of an HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP employee or volunteer to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not abuse is actually taking place against a young person or vulnerable adult. However, there is a responsibility to protect young people and vulnerable adults in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action.

The process outlined below details the stages involved in raising and reporting safeguarding concerns:

- Communicate your concerns with your immediate manager / Designated Safeguarding Director (<https://westcheltenham.org/about> **Michael Sheppee (Director at HWP and All Saints Academy teacher)**);
- Seek medical attention for the vulnerable person if needed;
- Obtain permission to make referral if safe and appropriate
- If needed seek advice from / make referral to the Children/Families HELPDESK – see below
- Complete the Safeguarding Reporting form if required and submit to the local authority within 24 hours of making a contact.
- Ensure that feedback from the Local Authority is received and their response recorded.

Gloucestershire's safeguarding teams can be contacted through the **Children and Families Help Desk (01452 426565)** for new concerns during weekdays or the **Adults Help Desk (01452 426868)** for adults' concerns.

For **out-of-hours emergencies regarding children**, use the **Emergency Duty Team (01452 614194)**. For **adult emergencies**, the public line for the **Emergency Duty Team is 01452 614758**.

In being vigilant of safeguarding and child protection it is critical that all employees who have direct contact with young people and vulnerable adults are aware of the steps used to recognise signs of abuse and what to do when responding to a young person's or vulnerable adult's disclosure.

13. DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF, VOLUNTEERS OR TRUSTEES.

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP recognises its legal duty to report any concerns about unsafe practice by any of its paid or unpaid staff, or by a professional from another Hesters Way Partnership.

i Any allegation should be reported as soon as possible to the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP's designated Safeguarding Director who has responsibility for Allegations Management (<https://westcheltenham.org/about>). (Or the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP Chair, if the allegation concerns the SAFEGUARDING DIRECTOR.
If a criminal offence has been committed, the Police must be informed.

ii. Should any allegation of inappropriate behaviour be made against you, as a member of HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP staff (paid or unpaid), this must be reported immediately to the line manager at the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP / Designated Safeguarding Director (<https://westcheltenham.org/about>)

iii Should an individual member of staff, volunteer or trustee become aware of an allegation against a colleague of an incident of abuse taking place, or having taken place, it is their duty to consider such allegation to be potentially dangerous to the young person and therefore report it.

In all instances procedures detailed in the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP Staff Handbook should be followed.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY AND MANAGING INFORMATION

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the following policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

All staff must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The priority to safeguard children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the designated Safeguarding Director.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that they will keep secrets.

In dealing with any case/suspicion/allegation relating to child or vulnerable adult abuse all staff should be made aware that any breaches in confidentiality could be very damaging to the young person or vulnerable adult, family and any child protection investigations that may take place.

15. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINTS

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP is aware of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board policy on resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children / Escalation Policy and if necessary this will be taken forward by HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP's Designated Director.

Conflicts in respect of safety of vulnerable adults will be taken forward by the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP's Designated Management Committee member via the GCC Community and Adult Care Directorate

16. MONITORING

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP Board will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:

- Safe recruitment practices
- DBS checks undertaken
- References applied for new staff
- Records of supervision
- Training – register/ record of staff training on child/ vulnerable adult protection
- Concerns are being reported and actioned
- Policies are up to date and relevant
- Current reporting procedure in place
- Designated Safeguarding Director responsible for Safeguarding is in post

17. COMMUNICATING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY

The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP will make staff, volunteers, trustees, HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP members and other service users aware of the Safeguarding Policy through the following means:

- Staff / Trustee induction sessions and training
- Training and team building sessions
- Complaints Policy/Procedure
- The HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP websites <https://westcheltenham.org/about> .

This policy will be reviewed by the HESTERS WAY PARTNERSHIP every 5 years and when there are changes in legislation.

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: 15/07/29

Name: Michael Sheppee

Name: Ryan Barkle

Position: Director (Safeguarding)

Position: Chair

Signature: On file

Signature: On file

Date: 21/11/25

Date: 21/11/25