

Herefordshire Green Network (HGN) Safeguarding: Protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults

November 2017

Our safeguarding policy

This policy applies to those who are representing HGN our members and / or volunteers who lead workshops or in any way will supervise, care or have significant direct contact with a vulnerable person during an HGN activity

‘Vulnerable person’ means:

- a. anyone under the age of 18, or
- b. anyone who:
 - needs (or may need) community care services because of mental disability, other disability, age or illness, and
 - is (or may be) unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and young people who work directly with HGN. This includes the children of adults who access our activities;
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guides our approach to safeguarding and child protection;

HGN believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Legal framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014

- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers: HM Government 2015.
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2015

We recognize that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identify, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and vulnerable people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer for children and young people
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for members and volunteers
- Recruiting members and volunteers professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, members and volunteers via our policy document.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, members and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

HGN – Protecting the children we work with and our staff

These guidelines have been prepared with the following aims:

- To make representatives of HGN aware of possible signs of child abuse.
- To give anyone working on behalf of HGN clear guidelines on how to respond if they suspect abuse.
- To protect our all persons working on behalf of HGN from false allegations of abuse.

Responsibility

All active members of HGN (paid or unpaid) have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies when engaged in HGN activities, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

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

Additional specific responsibilities

HGN Steering Group members have responsibility to ensure:

- The policy is accessible
- The policy is implemented
- The policy is monitored and reviewed
- Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented

The HGN Designated Safeguarding Officer is:

Their responsibilities are to:

- Ensure that all issues concerning the safety and welfare of children and young people who attend HGN activities, are properly dealt with through policies, procedures and administrative systems.
- Make sure that all members, employees, volunteers, freelancers, sessional workers, agency staff, students, anyone else working on behalf of HGN are made aware of the procedures, and what they should do if they have concerns about a child or children.
- Ensure that members, employees, volunteers, freelancers, sessional workers, agency staff, students and anyone else working with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of HGN have access to appropriate training/information.
- Carry out DBS checks for staff and volunteers whose role involves working directly with children and or vulnerable adults.
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who attends a HGN event.
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about the actions or behaviour of a member of staff, volunteer or contractor working on behalf of HGN
- Take the lead on dealing with information that may constitute a child protection concern. This includes assessing and clarifying the information and taking decisions where necessary in consultation with colleagues, the directors and statutory child protection agencies.
- Consult with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies, such as the local authority children's social care department and the police. This includes making formal referrals to these agencies when necessary.
- Consult with the NSPCC Helpline when support is needed.
- Be familiar with and work within local inter-agency child protection procedures developed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Be familiar with issues relation to child protection and abuse, and keep up-to-date with new developments in this area.
- Attend training in issues relevant to child protection and share knowledge from that training with workers and the board of Directors.
- Attend HGN Steering Group meetings as appropriate.
- Support colleagues within the organisation to recognise the needs of children and identify possible abuse or neglect
- Lead on the development and implementation of the organisation's child protection policy and related procedures as needed, with the support of the Steering Group
- Work flexibly as may be required and carry out any other reasonable duties associated with safeguarding and child protection.

- The Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Officer will consider specific training appropriate to their role as needed.

Employment and training

Safe recruitment

HGN ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:

- Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification
- All staff who will be coming into contact with children, whether paid, unpaid, employed or freelance, will undergo an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Check. It is a criminal offence for individuals barred by the DBS to work or apply to work with children or vulnerable adults in a wide range of posts.
- Full references for all staff and representatives of HGN must be taken up before they undertake any work on behalf of the organisation. No formal job offers are made until after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and 2 references). In exceptional and justifiable circumstances where DBS clearance is delayed, employment/role could commence, but the individual may not be permitted to work with children or vulnerable adults until clearance is obtained.
- All staff, freelance practitioners and anyone else working on behalf of HGN will be given a full copy of the Safeguarding Policy and will be made aware of their duty to safeguard the children they work with at all times.
- If necessitated by the role, safeguarding children will be part of new employees' induction and refresher training for existing employees will be carried out biannually. This will normally take the form of an on-line, modular course, provided by the NSPCC or similar organisation.

Criminal Bureau Records Gap Management

HGN will commit resources to providing Disclosure and Barring Service checks on members (paid or unpaid) whose roles involve contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

In order to avoid DBS gaps, the organisation will

- maintain and review a list of roles across the organisation which involve contact with children or vulnerable adults. This should be reviewed annually when the Safeguarding Policy is reviewed, or sooner if new roles involving work with children or vulnerable adults are created.
- undertake a 6-monthly rolling programme of re-checking DBS certificates are in place for holders of all identified posts. This may be maintained by using the update service via the DBS service.
- ensure existing staff (paid or unpaid) who transfer from a role which does not require a DBS check to one which involves contact with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to a DBS check.

Health and Safety

All representatives of HGN who work with children must ensure that:

- They are familiar with the Health & Safety guidelines for the locations at which they are working.

- They undertake their own risk assessment when considering new locations for events.
- All group leaders, teachers and children are familiar with the Health & Safety guidelines for the particular locations.
- They ask the group leader to tell them of any physical, emotional or cultural issues affecting participants that they should be made aware of.
- All children from School parties or other educational establishments who are engaged with HGN activities are to be supervised by a member of their own school's party at all times.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or young person under the age of 18. It can also include abuse between children under the age of 18.

- Physical abuse – this is when a child is hurt or injured by an adult or another child.
- Emotional abuse – this is when adults deny children love or affection or constantly threaten or humiliate them. Degrading punishments and ignoring a child are also forms of emotional abuse and undermine confidence or self-worth.
- Neglect – this is when a child's basic need for love, food warmth, safety, education and medical attention are not met.
- Sexual abuse – this is when a child is used sexually by an adult or young person.
- Bullying, racism and other types of discrimination are also forms of abuse.

Recognising signs of abuse

Because HGN does not work closely with individual children it might be difficult for any of our workers to observe less obvious signs of abuse, therefore the main focus here is on physical signs of abuse.

Most children regularly sustain minor injuries as a result of normal play. These include:

- bruising on shins, knees, elbows and backs of hands
- minor scrapes, grazes or cuts.

What could be abuse?

- Bruising on the cheeks, ears, palms, arms, backs of legs and feet.
- Multiple bruises in clusters, usually on the upper arms or outer thighs.
- Bruises which look as if they have been caused by fingers, a hand or an object.
- Burns to the backs of the hands, feet or legs.
- Burns which have a clear shape.
- Large bite shaped marks.

HGN Code of Conduct for People Working with Children

Children taking part in activities run by HGN are accompanied by one or more teachers or group leaders, parents or guardians who at these times are their carers (legally responsible adult).

However, representatives of HGN who work with children have a responsibility to protect both the children they work with and themselves.

- All representatives of HGN should demonstrate exemplary behaviour at all times in order to protect themselves from false allegations.

- HGN members should ensure that they are never left alone with a group of children/single child without their group leader or a parent/guardian being present.
- If for any reason one to one contact is unavoidable:
 - make sure it is for as short a time as possible.
 - ensure you are accessible to others.
 - tell someone else where you are going, who with, and why.

Persons working on behalf of HGN should not:

- Be involved in any aspect of toileting or medical care.
- Smack or punish children. All behavioural issues are to be reported to and dealt with by group leaders and/or parents/guardians. These issues could include: bullying, inappropriate language, or any action that puts the child or other people at risk of harm.
- Have any physical contact with children – other than holding hands, which is acceptable but only at a child's request.
- Otherwise individuals should refrain from physical contact, unless a child needs to be moved from a dangerous situation.
- Written permission should always be obtained from the teacher, group leader or parent before any photograph is taken or when the press or television are involved.

What to do if abuse is suspected or reported

If you are concerned about something

Anything related to the child/young person should be reported to the parent/guardian or group leader in the first instance. If you believe that there is serious cause for concern you should also contact your Child Protection Team at Social Services or the police as soon as possible.

If a child says something

- Listen carefully and try to remember what was said.
- Keep calm and try not to express shock, even if the information is shocking.
- Give reassurance that you are taking the child seriously.
- Let the child know that you will be talking to someone who needs to know.
- Inform the teacher or group leader as soon as possible.
- If you believe there is cause for serious concern you should also contact the Child Protection Team at Social Services, the NSPCC or the police immediately.
- As soon as possible afterwards write down exactly what was said: use the child's own words, not your interpretation of what was said.
- Do not ask leading questions, try to interpret what was said, or push for more information than the child/vulnerable adult wants to give.
- Do not agree to keep what you have been told a secret.
- Inform the HGN Safeguarding Officer of what has happened.

If a child, teacher or parent makes an allegation about someone working on behalf of HGN you should follow the above guidelines and also:

- As soon as possible after directly observing or hearing of a concern you must report the incident to the authorities. As before, it is important to keep a written record of any allegations made, using the person making the allegation's own words. You must inform either the Child Protection Team at Social Services, the police, or the NSPCC.

- Inform the designated HGN Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
- Ensure that the individual concerned does not continue to have contact with children/young people/vulnerable adults until the matter is resolved.

If you are concerned about the behaviour of another adult

You must report your concerns to the relevant agency (Social Services/Police) and also inform the HGN Safeguarding Officer.

Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Name: Liz Hughes

Phone/email : 07714234171 / lizhughes152@gmail.com

I confirm that I have been made fully aware of, and understand the contents of, the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Herefordshire Green Network (HGN).