

Hear Together: Safeguarding Children Policy

Purpose

Hear Together supports deaf and hard of hearing children and adults to live well with hearing loss.

This policy applies to anyone working on our behalf, including our trustees, managers, staff and volunteers.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who use Hear Together's services from harm.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from nspcc.org.uk/learning.

Principles

We believe that:

- Nobody who is involved in our work should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation.
- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- The Board and staff have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- We all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which our people not only feel safe, but also able to speak up, if they have any concerns.

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

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Recognising additional risks which make some children and adults more vulnerable.
- Appointing a nominated Safeguarding lead for children and young people.
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies and procedures for staff and volunteers.
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Planning programmes/activities consider potential safeguarding risks, to ensure these are adequately mitigated.
- Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.
- This safeguarding policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board annually. We will complete an annual audit of safeguarding ([Safeguarding and child protection self-assessment tool | NSPCC Learning](#))
- Trustees are aware of and will comply with the Charity Commission guidance on [safeguarding and protecting people](#) and also the [10 actions trustee boards need to take](#) to ensure good safeguarding governance.

We will ensure that:

- The organisation is led in way that makes everyone feels safe and able to speak up.
- Safeguarding risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks, as part of our risk management processes.
- All relevant checks are carried out in recruiting staff and volunteers.
- All appointments that require DBS clearance and safeguarding training are identified, including the level of DBS and any training required.

- A central register is maintained and subject to regular monitoring to ensure that DBS clearances and training are kept up-to-date.
- We respond to any concerns sensitively and act quickly to address these.
- Personal data is stored and managed in a safe way that is compliant with data protection regulations, including valid consent to use any imagery or video.
- Our staff, volunteers and others undertake any necessary training and are aware of:
 - Our safeguarding procedures and their specific safeguarding responsibilities on induction, with regular updates/reminders, as necessary.
 - The signs of potential abuse and how to report these.
- We comply with the Code of Fundraising Practice to keep fundraising safe, including fundraising that involves children.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Reporting Concerns

If a crime is in progress, or an individual in immediate danger, call 999, as you would in any other circumstances.

If you are a beneficiary, or member of the public, make your concerns known to a member of staff who will alert a senior member of the team.

For staff and volunteers, you should make your concerns known to your line manager, or other supervisor. If you feel unable to do so, speak to a member of the management team.

The trustees are mindful of their reporting obligations to the Charity Commission in respect of Serious Incident Reporting and, if applicable, other regulator. They are aware of the Government guidance on handling safeguarding allegations.

Contact details

Nominated child protection lead: Sarah Allen

Email: sarah@hearttogether.org.uk

Phone: 07939 146061

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

Approval and Review

Policy Owner	Sarah Allen
Effective date	November 2023
Review date	November 2024

Appendix 1 – Signs of Abuse

Physical Abuse.

- bruises, black eyes, welts, lacerations, and rope marks.
- broken bones.
- open wounds, cuts, punctures, untreated injuries in various stages of healing.
- broken eyeglasses/frames, or any physical signs of being punished or restrained.
- laboratory findings of either an overdose or under dose medications.
- individual's report being hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated.
- vulnerable adult's sudden change in behaviour.
- the caregiver's refusal to allow visitors to see a vulnerable adult alone.

Sexual Abuse.

- bruises around the breasts or genital area.
- unexplained venereal disease or genital infections.
- unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding.
- torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- an individual's report of being sexually assaulted or raped.

Mental Mistreatment/Emotional Abuse.

- being emotionally upset or agitated.
- being extremely withdrawn and non-communicative or non-responsive.
- nervousness around certain people.
- an individual's report of being verbally or mentally mistreated.

Neglect.

- dehydration, malnutrition, untreated bed sores and poor personal hygiene.
- unattended or untreated health problems.
- hazardous or unsafe living condition (e.g., improper wiring, no heat or running water).
- unsanitary and unclean living conditions (e.g., dirt, fleas, lice on person, soiled bedding, faecal/urine smell, inadequate clothing).
- an individual's report of being mistreated.

Self-Neglect.

- dehydration, malnutrition, untreated or improperly attended medical conditions, and poor personal hygiene.
- hazardous or unsafe living conditions.
- unsanitary or unclean living quarters (e.g., animal/insect infestation, no functioning toilet, faecal or urine smell).
- inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing, lack of the necessary medical aids.
- grossly inadequate housing or homelessness.
- inadequate medical care, not taking prescribed medications properly.

Exploitation.

- sudden changes in bank account or banking practice, including an unexplained withdrawal of large sums of money.
- adding additional names on bank signature cards.
- unauthorized withdrawal of funds using an ATM card.
- abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents.
- unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions.
- bills unpaid despite the money being available to pay them.
- forging a signature on financial transactions or for the titles of possessions.
- sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming rights to a vulnerable adult's possessions.
- unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family.
- providing services that are not necessary.
- individual's report of exploitation.

Appendix 2: Links & Resources:

[NCVO: Online safeguarding resources.](#)

[Gov.UK – Guidance: Handling safeguarding allegations](#)

[NSPCC: Writing a safeguarding policy](#)

[CC: Infographic; 10 actions trustees need to take.](#)

[CC: Safeguarding duties of charity trustees](#)

[CC: Safeguarding - policies and procedures](#)

[CC: How to protect vulnerable groups](#)

[CivS: How to bring your charity's safeguarding up to scratch](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children: Statutory framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)