

Volunteers: Safeguarding Children and Young People: Policy and Procedures

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Author	Jo Karasinski
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Volunteer Training delivered	As per Volunteer training timetable
<p>The policy on the HWWB website is the only policy that is updated. Please note that it is the individual HWWB staff, board member or volunteer to ensure that they are reading the most current version of this policy. This can be done by checking the version number shown above against the version number of the policy filed here: www.healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</p> <p><u>If required this policy can be supplied in different formats</u> Tel: 01635 886 210 or email: contact@healthwatchwestberks.org.uk</p> <p>All personal data collected in relation to this policy will be held in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.</p>	

Responsibilities

1 HWWB Board

Have overall responsibility for volunteers within HWWB

2 HWWB Chief Officer (CO)

HWWB Board have delegated to the HWWB CO the responsibility for developing policies and procedures for volunteering at HWWB and to ensure these are implemented effectively.

3 HWWB Staff and volunteers

All HWWB staff and volunteers are required to read and implement all volunteer policies and procedures.

Volunteers: Safeguarding Children and Young People: Policy and Procedures

1. Scope

This policy refers to children and young people, for the purposes of this policy a child, as defined by the Children Act 1989 and 2004, is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday

Healthwatch West Berkshire (HWWB) safeguarding children and young people policy ensures there are robust procedures in place to ensure the needs of any children and young people 'in transition' are addressed as they move into adulthood. **It is compulsory for all board members and volunteers to follow it when engaged in activities on behalf of or representing HWWB.**

HWWB recognise that the degree to which board members and volunteers interact with children and young people (CYP) will vary according to the nature of their work but even those not directly working with CYP might have access to sensitive information or come across concerns.

Those board members and volunteers who work directly with CYP are subject to stringent selection and management procedures and will also be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check. The cost of this check will be met by HWWB.

Those who might occasionally be asked to engage with CYP on behalf of Healthwatch West Berkshire (HWWB) will be expected to have a thorough knowledge of and adhere to the Code of Behaviour (See Appendix 2, Page 8).

Please note that it is an HWWB requirement that none of board members or volunteers should ever be left alone with a child.

2. Policy Statement

HWWB values children and young people and recognises their vulnerability and their right without exception to protection from abuse. Our board members and volunteers will place paramount importance on promoting the welfare of

children at risk and recognise their responsibility to protect them from any form of abuse. We guide those who work with CYP so that they show respect for their welfare in all that they do, and in doing so, we also protect the welfare of our board members and volunteers and the good reputation of Healthwatch West Berkshire. CYP should be given information, advice and support in a form which they can understand and have their views included in decisions affecting them.

Healthwatch West Berkshire will endeavour to safeguard CYP by:

- bringing this policy to the attention of all new and existing board members and volunteers during their induction training, regardless of whether or not they will undertake roles that are identified as having regular contact with CYP.
- making sure that our board members and volunteers who work regularly with CYP are carefully selected and all references robustly scrutinised.
- provide clear internal procedures for identifying and dealing with concerns about possible abuse and identify these as being of the highest priority
- ensure the effective implementation of HWWB procedures by advising board members and volunteers of these, including details of how to report any concerns using our HWWB Escalation policy.
- expecting board members and volunteers who have contact with CYP to abide by a clear Code of Behaviour (see Appendix 2) and to report any breaches of the code by colleagues
- any concern for the welfare of a child must be discussed with the Volunteer Co-ordinator/CO without delay and further action taken as necessary
- reviewing our policy and practice every 2 years

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Nominated safeguarding lead - Andrew Sharp, CO Healthwatch West Berkshire will:

- Investigate and report complaints to the social care authorities as appropriate
- ensure that accurate records of any incident, disclosure or complaint in relation to safeguarding are maintained

3.2 Board Members and volunteers

It is possible that anyone working on behalf of HWWB may come into contact with CYP who make a disclosure of abuse or share information that raises concerns about abuse. It is therefore important that, where appropriate, board members and volunteers are made aware of key issues outlined in the policy and carry out a duty to report any infringements of the policy or code as well as any disclosure or suspicion of abuse.

See Appendix 1 (Page 5) HWWB procedure for protecting CYP from significant harm including dealing with discovery and disclosure of abuse.

4. Monitoring and review of the Safeguarding of CYP Policy and Procedures

- this policy is reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure it is up-to-date and complies with regulations and good practice
- moderation of the message board and the social networking media such as Facebook and Twitter will be monitored regularly to ensure that current procedures are working satisfactorily
- the Chief Officer will have the opportunity to review of incidents to check that these have been dealt with appropriately and to flag the need for improvements where relevant so that prompt action can be taken. Constructive feedback is given where procedures were not followed accurately
- information is monitored, e.g. how many board members or volunteers were rejected at the screening stage etc. Implications for future procedures are clarified

Appendix 1

Procedure for protecting CYPs from significant harm including dealing with discovery and disclosure of abuse

1. Definitions

1.1 Significant harm

Introduced under the Children's Act 1989, significant harm relates to the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of a child and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm.

Whilst the definition of significant harm is open to interpretation, it is most often a compilation of significant events, which interrupt, change or damage a child's physical and psychological development. Certain factors, such as the degree and extent of physical harm and the frequency and duration of abuse and neglect, will be taken into consideration to determine whether this is the case. This is not to say that a single traumatic event, e.g. a violent assault, may not constitute significant harm.

1.2 Abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts and can occur in any relationship. Sometimes children are abused by other children or by adults who are trusted by them, or placed in a supervisory position in relation to them e.g. a teacher, foster carer, staff member at a children's home etc.

There are four defined categories of abuse, that may contribute to significant harm occurring. In reality, the experience of many CYP who have suffered significant harm will include more than one aspect of abuse. The four main categories are:

- physical abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse

1.3 Disclosure

It may happen that a CYP feels able to tell one of board members or volunteers about abuse they are suffering or likely to suffer - this is known as a 'disclosure'.

2. Responsibilities of HWWB Board Members and Volunteers

All HWWB board members and volunteers have a duty and responsibility to prevent abuse of CYP occurring and report any abuse that is discovered, suspected or disclosed.

If a complaint is about a colleague, an allegation about themselves or a disclosure of abuse or likelihood of abuse from a CYP, the fundamental rule is that prompt action is essential. Doing nothing is not an option when any kind of abuse is suspected or disclosed.

It is not the responsibility of our board members or volunteers to investigate or to decide whether a CYP is being abused. This is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead.

3. Dealing with a disclosure

Where a CYP discloses to a board member or volunteer, the following important points should be remembered:

Do not:

- **interrogate** - accept the CYP's disclosure calmly, do not interrupt and listen
- **make false promises** - at the outset, clarify that the information provided by the CYP cannot be kept secret and must be passed onto an appropriate person
- **allow yourself to be left alone with a child** - even if a child requests privacy in order to disclose something, there should always be two adults visible at all times.
- **be judgemental or jump to conclusions**

Do:

- **reassure** - the CYP calmly and gently that the confidence has been heard, and that s/he has done the right thing in speaking to someone.
- **listen carefully** - to what they are telling you, stay calm, get as clear a picture as you can, but avoid asking too many questions at this stage.

- **explain that you have a duty to tell the designated safeguarding lead** - and that their concerns may be shared with others who could have a part to play in protecting them.
- **be honest** - tell the CYP that they may need to repeat the disclosure within the course of an investigation
- **gather contact details where possible** - board members and volunteers who are given information from someone whom they suspect may be guilty of abusing a CYP in their care should attempt to gain the individual's contact details
- **take notes** - comprehensive notes should be taken either during or immediately following any conversation.

4. Reporting disclosures

4.1 Emergency situations

In some situations it may first be necessary to take emergency protective action by calling the emergency services e.g. if the person has been physically harmed or is being threatened.

Action to report suspected abuse or disclosures should be taken immediately afterwards or first if it is not necessary to call emergency services. Information should be recorded using an incident reporting form to ensure consistency

4.2 Dealing with a reported disclosure

Where a disclosure is made to a board member or volunteer the incident should be reported to Andrew Sharp the safeguarding lead. They will take the decision whether to inform social services and the involved patient/carers, depending on the nature of the incident.

If the Safeguarding Lead is not present or contactable by telephone, the local social services department Child Protection Team should be contacted direct - prompt action is paramount. If the matter is of a criminal nature, the local police station should be contacted.

In most circumstances, parents or carers will be informed of the company's decision to contact social services, unless it is thought not to be in the best interests of the child to do so. In all cases, advice from the relevant social care authorities will be sought before contact with parents or carers is made.

If suspected abuse is being reported action must be taken to report the information to the relevant authority. The CYP must be made aware that this is the case but that all other information concerning the disclosure will be kept confidential and under no circumstances be discussed with others unless necessary and appropriate.

Further Guidance is available with
SeAp's link [Safeguarding Children Policy](#)

Appendix 2

Code of behaviour for Healthwatch West Berkshire Staff and Volunteers

1. Introduction

This Code of Behaviour, clarifies what is acceptable behaviour and what is not acceptable. All board members and volunteers who work with CYP, whether on a regular unsupervised or occasional supervised basis will be required to sign a copy of the Code of Behaviour to confirm that they have received it and understand their responsibilities under it.

All agreements and Codes of Behaviour will be stored securely by the company for a period of five years following the termination of employment or volunteer relationship, which is the current legal requirement.

2. Principles underpinning the HWWB Code of Behaviour

- everyone is treated with respect
- the best interests of the CYP are paramount over any other concern.
- our environment must be such that CYP feel safe and valued
- adults should be sensitive to child protection issues in all that they say and do
- all staff and volunteers should protect Healthwatch West Berkshire's good reputation by following these procedures at all times
- The Code of Behaviour guidelines below should be followed at all times

3. Breaches to the code of behaviour

- no infraction of the safeguarding policy and procedures will be tolerated
- breaches of this Code will be dealt with through the company's disciplinary procedures for staff and volunteers

4. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

No member of staff or volunteer will physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a CYP and the following guidelines should be followed at all times. This covers where relevant online/social media activities:

DO

- respect a CYP's right to personal privacy
- take seriously all allegations made by CYP and act on suspicions immediately in accordance with chapter 5 of the protection of CYP policy
- encourage CYP to approach an independent person to discuss any problems they may be having
- provide access for CYP to talk to others about any concerns
- abide by Healthwatch Northamptonshire's policies and guidelines at all times
- encourage CYP and adults/carers to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments such as counselling, dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse
- plan activities so that they involve more than one person being present, or at least in sight or hearing of others
- maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients.

DO NOT

- contact CYP outside the project or activity or swap correspondence or personal contact details
- permit abusive youth peer activities like initiation ceremonies or bullying
- allow or engage in inappropriate language, suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind that could be misunderstood
- do things of a personal nature that CYP can do for themselves (e.g. dressing)
- to any individual
- allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes
- exaggerate or trivialise CYP abuse issues
- deter a CYP from making allegations through fear of not being believed
- allow yourself to be left alone with a CYP at any time

- take pictures of CYP in a state of undress particularly in their bedroom or in the swimming pool

ALWAYS immediately share concerns on any of these matters with your line manager/ a Safeguarding Officer or if not contactable social services

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Screening determines whether the policy has any relevance for equality, i.e. is there any impact on one or more of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

1 Name of policy/procedure being assessed:	HWWB - Policies - Volunteers - Safeguarding Children and Young people
2. Is this a new or existing policy/procedure?	New
3. What is the function of the policy/procedure?	To guide board members and volunteers on the procedures HWWB has in place to safeguard children and young people whom they may meet in the course of their role with HWWB
4. What is it trying to achieve and why?	Safeguarding children and young people who may be exposed to significant harm and provide guidelines on how to deal with identified harms
5. Who is intended to benefit and how?	Children and young people exposed to significant harm and to establish procedures for board members and volunteers to follow and in doing so help to protect vulnerable CYP
6. Is there any potential for differential impact (negative or positive) on any of the protected characteristics?	No
7. Is there any possibility of discriminating unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against people from any protected characteristic?	No
8. Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?	No
9. Does the policy explicitly involve or focus on a particular equalities group i.e. because they have particular needs?	No
Signed - prime author of the policy under review Signature: Jo Karasinski Name: JO KARASINSKI Position: Volunteer Co-ordinator Date: 17/12/2015	

