

## Home-Start North West Kent Safeguarding Children Policy

**At Home-Start NWK we believe that every child has the right to live free from abuse of any kind**

We have a responsibility to keep children safe and we are committed to protecting children in all of our activities. We will do everything in our power to ensure children who come into contact with local Home-Start schemes in England, in any capacity, are safeguarded.

**We will seek to keep children safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- keeping them at the centre of everything we do;
- adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and policies for staff and volunteers;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with staff and volunteers, along with children, parents and carers;

**This policy applies to all trustees, employees, self-employed contractors and those working pro bono for local Home-Start schemes and is based on the following principles:**

- Safeguarding and promoting the well-being and welfare of children, protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable them to have the best outcomes
- the welfare of children is paramount
- no child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs
- a child is any young person under the age of 18.
- all people, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, culture or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and no person or group of

people should be treated less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs;

- 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, parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare
- children and parents will be informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate
- all concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately - this may require a referral to children's social care services, the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff, trustees and other volunteers, and in emergencies, the police
- we have a commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting that include checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all trustees, staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect contact with children; in the case of trustees, because of their position within the charity.
- We have a complaints procedure which is an open and well publicised way in which adults and children can voice concerns about unacceptable and/or abusive behaviour towards children

The safeguarding policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant policies and procedures including (but not limited to) the Health and Safety Policy and data protection/GDPR.

### **Why does this policy matter?**

The purpose of this policy is to

- protect children who come into contact with the local Home-Start in the course of its work
- inform our partners, beneficiaries and the general public of our overarching principles in relation to safeguarding
- provide all staff and volunteers with the overarching principles and procedures that guide our approach to safeguarding

**If you are unsure what this policy means, or how it relates to you, please contact the designated safeguarding lead**

### **Scope of the Policy**

This policy has been developed in accordance with the requirements and principles established by the relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' and the Charity Commission, and sets out the responsibilities of those who work for local Home-Starts, including trustees, employees, volunteers and consultants.

Home-Start will treat any breach of this policy very seriously. For those who work for us, failure to follow this policy could lead to disciplinary action, which may ultimately result in dismissal. For those

who work with us, we reserve the right to immediately terminate any contract and, for trustees, to require them to immediately cease being a trustee.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously.

### **Safeguarding/Child Protection roles at Home-Start [insert name here]**

All those who work for or with Home-Start share the responsibility for safeguarding & protecting children and vulnerable adults but there are individuals within Home-Start with specific safeguarding responsibilities.

**Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding: Pamela Hill**

**Strategic Safeguarding lead: Debbie Bowler**

**Designated Safeguarding Persons: Rosie Neale & Paula Foley**

**A description of the Safeguarding roles within local Home-Starts can be seen in Appendix 3**

### **Understanding and recognising abuse**

The categories of abuse for children are as follows:

#### **Physical Abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

## **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy e.g. as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

1. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
2. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
3. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
4. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

At Home-Start we define abuse in its widest possible terms i.e. as treatment that causes harm to a child. The protection of children is our shared responsibility and if you have any concerns a child is being maltreated, or you have safeguarding concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff or someone working with or for the local Home-Start, do something about it, by following the flow charts set out below.

Although not specifically a category of abuse, extremism is something we are very aware of at Home-Start.

As set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 "Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and

girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as “the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist”.

### Remember

It is better to err on the side of caution and get it wrong than do nothing and then something happens to that child. Calling 999 is always an option

### What you should do to safeguard children

You must:

- be aware of situations which may present risks to children
- assess, plan and organise your work so as to minimise these risks
- where practicable be visible to others when working with children. If working alone with children use the ‘Looking After Children in the Absence of their Parents’ policy
- sign the Safeguarding policy and Safeguarding code of conduct, as a requirement of the Home-Start Agreement

### The reporting process

If you have a safeguarding concern about a child, or a child makes a disclosure of possible abuse to you – **follow Flowchart One**

If you have a safeguarding concerns (or allegations) about a member of staff, or equivalent, abusing a child – **follow Flowchart Two**

### What to do if you have a safeguarding concern

#### Flowchart One

Volunteer, Staff member or Trustee has a safeguarding concern about a child, or a child makes a disclosure of possible abuse



Inform the Designated Safeguarding Person, or in their absence the Strategic Safeguarding lead. In the case of a disclosure make it clear you cannot keep the information confidential.



If necessary the Designated Safeguarding Person makes contact with local children's social care for advice

### **Flowchart Two**

Concern/allegation about a volunteer, trustee or member of staff or someone working on the local Home-Start's behalf abusing a child



Inform Designated safeguarding person, or in their absence the Strategic Safeguarding lead unless the allegation is about this person, in which case inform most senior member of staff/trustee not implicated



The person to whom this information has been given makes contact with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice and guidance

### **Escalating Concerns**

It is important to note that if you raise a safeguarding concern or pass on an allegation, you have a responsibility to ensure your concern is addressed to your satisfaction.

Therefore, if you feel that your concern has not been addressed (and that the child has not been protected) you should escalate the matter to the Strategic Lead for safeguarding with responsibility for safeguarding and then, if necessary, to the trustee with responsibility for safeguarding.

For information on local procedures, including escalating concerns, look at your Local Safeguarding Children Board website for relevant information.

### **Legal issues**

#### **Information Sharing & Confidentiality**

[You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child. Information should always be shared if you think a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse.](#)

The protection of children must take precedence over other legal rights. Please be assured that as long as information is shared in an appropriate manner and in good faith, the law will protect you. You should ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and shared promptly.

For further guidance see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

### **Serious Incidents (Charity Commission)**

It is a requirement of the Charity Commission that all charities inform them of serious incidents that may occur. The Charity Commission defines a serious incident as “an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- loss of your charity’s money or assets
- damage to your charity’s property
- harm to your charity’s work, beneficiaries or reputation<sup>1</sup>

It is the responsibility of the trustees to report a serious incident. More details can be found on the Charity Commission website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity#what-to-report>

### **Useful Contacts**

You must be aware of the contact details of your local children’s social care, the police, relevant health professionals and the LADO

For e-safety concerns <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> is a useful resource.

The NSPCC can also be a useful source of information <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection>

### **Review of Policy**

The safeguarding policy must be reviewed, approved and endorsed by the board of trustees annually or when legislation changes.

## **Appendix One**

### **Definitions**

#### **“Safeguarding” and “Child Protection”**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

The definition of safeguarding is much broader than child protection and is set out in "[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)" - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children". This is the statutory guidance that sets out the legislative requirements and expectations of individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018* does not separate safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This is the definition:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Separate to safeguarding children is "child protection". Child protection is defined in the Children Act 1989 as where there is "reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm". The Children Act 1989 introduced significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect are all categories of significant harm. Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development.

In simple terms, safeguarding is the overall well-being of the child and every professional and every organisation is responsible for the safeguarding of children. Within that there is child protection, when it is thought a child is either being maltreated or is at risk of maltreatment.

### **Age of a Child**

A child becomes an adult in law at 18 in the UK, this is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many people use the term "young people" but there is no legal definition for the age of a "young person". 16 and 17 year olds are children, in legal terms.

### **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

The role of the LADO is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and is governed by the local authorities' duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

The LADO must be contacted within one working day in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services;

- consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

### **Regulated Activity**

The new definition of regulated activity in relation to children comprises, in summary:

- i. unsupervised activities: teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, or provide advice/guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children;
- ii. work for a limited range of establishments ('specified places'), with opportunity for contact: e.g. schools, children's homes, childcare premises. Not work by supervised volunteers;

Work under (i) or (ii) is regulated activity only if done regularly<sup>2</sup>

The definition of Regulated Activity for adults defines the activities provided to any adult as those which, if any adult requires them, will mean that the adult will be considered vulnerable at that particular time. These activities are: the provision of healthcare, personal care, and/or social work; assistance with general household matters and/or in the conduct of the adult's own affairs; and/or an adult who is conveyed to, from, or between places, where they receive healthcare, relevant personal care or social work because of their age, illness or disability.

The position of trustee of a vulnerable groups' or children's charity is not a regulated activity in itself. It is only if trustees have close contact with these vulnerable beneficiaries that they would fall within the scope of regulated activity and be eligible to obtain an enhanced DBS check and barred list check. A trustee of a charity who no longer falls within the definition of regulated activity would be eligible to obtain an enhanced DBS check (but without a barred list check)<sup>3</sup>.

## Appendix 2

### Related Home-Start Policies & Procedures

- [Safer recruitment and selection of staff policy](#)
- [Recruitment, supervision and management of volunteers Policy](#)

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550197/Regulated\\_activity\\_in\\_relation\\_to\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550197/Regulated_activity_in_relation_to_children.pdf)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people#endnote>

- [Staff supervision and appraisal policy](#)
- [Looking After children in the absence of their parents](#)
- [Ensuring the Quality of the Home-Start service](#)

Home-Start complies with Home-Start Quality Assurance standards and undertakes self-assessments in order to check and improve its practice. Each local Home-Start must complete the safeguarding checklist on an annual basis and respond to any identified need for development
- Internal reporting of Reputational Safeguarding Threats ([serious incidents](#)) Please report any events that meet the criteria to Home-Start UK. The criteria and HSUK contact can be found [here](#)
- Use of [a Record of Concern and Action](#) (ROCA) This form should be seen as a helpful tool that ensures safeguarding/ welfare concerns are fully considered and any necessary action taken. It should assist you in process of assessing information in the context of your knowledge of the family, whether there is a concern with a child or an adult

## Appendix 3

### Roles and responsibilities within local Home-Starts

#### **Roles and Responsibilities within the Scheme**

The trustees retain ultimate responsibility for promoting the welfare of children supported by Home-Start. They should agree:

- the member of staff with responsibility for undertaking the ***Strategic Safeguarding Lead***. This is normally the senior staff member.
- It is recommended that each organiser/co-ordinator responsible for managing staff or volunteers supporting families should be a ***Designated Safeguarding Person***.

Note: In some smaller schemes both roles may be carried out by one person.

#### **The role of the Home-Start scheme Strategic Lead is to:**

- Model and promote Home-Start's commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of their work and conduct
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy and procedures and code of conduct are available and understood by all trustees, staff and volunteers, and that these are integrated into practice
- Ensure the scheme's Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children are updated and reviewed annually in line with Home-Start, national and local guidance
- Ensure appropriate training provision and dissemination of information for trustees, staff and volunteers on safeguarding issues
- Take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding issues and providing information, advice and support to trustees, staff and volunteers
- Support the Designated Safeguarding People with their responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe, by
  - ensuring the provision of regular, recorded supervision
  - maintaining an overview of records of concern and action (ROCA) and referrals to children's social care and collate safeguarding concerns raised by the scheme to identify patterns
  - ensuring that the Safeguarding Adviser or nominated trustee contribute to this overview, in particular where the Strategic Lead is a lone organiser
  - ensuring records are kept appropriately, in line with policy and practice
- Maintain up to date knowledge of national and local safeguarding procedures and liaise appropriately with local agencies with regard to any issues

- Notify and liaise with scheme trustees and Home-Start UK and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) around any allegations of harm or inappropriate behaviour made against staff, volunteers and trustees
- Immediately inform the Chair of Trustees and Home-Start UK in the event of the serious harm or death of a child ([see guidance](#))
- Where possible identify and liaise with a local Specialist Safeguarding/Child Protection Adviser

### **A Designated Safeguarding Person's role is to:**

Model and promote Home-Start's commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of their work and conduct

- Take responsibility for dealing with concerns about the safety of children raised by staff or volunteers who they supervise, following the scheme's policies and procedures
- Maintain a clear, factual, dated and signed/initialled record of contact with each supported family, in accordance with Home-Start guidance on record keeping
- Inform the scheme's Strategic Lead for Safeguarding of concerns raised and processes followed; ensuring records of concern and action (ROCA) are discussed, signed off and actioned appropriately
- Liaise with relevant agencies and the Local Safeguarding Children Board where appropriate about concerns, in accordance with Home-Start's confidentiality policy
- Ensure the safeguarding/child protection policy is available to families, including parents/carers and children and young people in Home-Start
- Liaise with the scheme's Strategic Lead for Safeguarding about any concerns, including where there are allegations against trustees, staff and volunteers; in accordance with Home-Start and local child protection policies and procedures
- Immediately inform the scheme Strategic Lead and Home-Start UK in the event of the serious harm or death of a child ([see guidance](#)) and liaise with other agencies as appropriate

### **Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding**

Each scheme nominates a trustee who has a working knowledge of Safeguarding or who undertakes local training in order to fulfil that role.

The role of the trustee is to

- provide a sounding board for staff with a Strategic Lead or Designated Persons role in order to consider the most appropriate course of action to take where there is a safeguarding concern in a family
- support the strategic lead to use local procedures appropriately (e.g. for referral, for escalation or dispute resolution)
- contribute to Board discussions about scheme capacity in working with more complex families, including those where there are safeguarding concerns
- sign off any Record of Concern & Action forms completed by the safeguarding lead where there is a lone organiser

- support the Board and strategic lead to monitor and review systems, policy and procedures to ensure good safeguarding practice within the scheme and compliance with the Home-Start Quality Assurance Standards
- undertake spot checks of family and volunteer files
- In some schemes, the specialist adviser may agree to undertake 'case load' supervision of the senior worker, at the request of the trustees

### **External Local Specialist Safeguarding Adviser to the trustees and staff**

Wherever possible each scheme identifies a practicing local safeguarding adviser to support and advise the scheme with regard to local issues and procedures.

The local specialist adviser is available to the trustees, strategic lead and designated people as appropriate within the Home-Start scheme and may

- provide a confidential sounding board where there is a safeguarding concern in a family
- support the use of local procedures appropriately (e.g. for referral, for escalation or dispute resolution)
- update trustees and the strategic lead about local safeguarding developments and changes to procedures, policies and agencies
- contribute to Board discussions about scheme capacity in working with more complex families, including those where there are safeguarding concerns
- support the Board and strategic lead to monitor and review systems, policy and procedures to ensure good safeguarding practice within the scheme and compliance with the Home-Start Quality Assurance Standards
- In some schemes, the specialist adviser may agree to undertake 'case load' supervision of the senior worker, at the request of the trustees

**Adopted by Board of Trustees January 2021**