

## CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

Updated December 2017

Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Paid staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

### **In implementing this Child Protection Policy Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association will:**

Ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation;

Ensure that all workers understand their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed in the organisation's **Child Protection procedures** and work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice.

Ensure that all workers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's named person for child protection;

Ensure that the named person understands his/her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Social Work);

Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner;

Provide opportunities for all workers to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people;

Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the organisation's *Complaints procedure*;

Ensure that parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in the work of the organisation and, when requested, have access to all guidelines and procedures; Endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people.

## Guidelines and Procedures

### Section 1

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who uses the services provided by **Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association**. The procedures recognise that child protection can be a very difficult subject for workers to deal with, to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with. **Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association** is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all workers and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

### Section 2 – Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Staff working with children and young people will be required to familiarise themselves with the following definitions: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect. (See appendix 1) Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association will ensure that all staff members paid or unpaid undertake training to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. It is recognised that concerns about a child's or young person's safety can come to light in the following ways:

- A child or young person alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe;
- A third party or anonymous allegation is received;
- A child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statement cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect;
- A child or young person reports an incident of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago;
- A report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or young person.

### Section 3 – A Named Person(s) for Child Protection

Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers to consult with. The named persons for Child Protection within the Association are: Mairi Taylor-Gibson

The role and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and whom they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse/neglect.
- To ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The named person(s) will record any reported incidents or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

## Section 4 – Stages to Follow if you are worried about a Child

Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of child abuse is never easy. However, it believes that the safety of the child should override any doubts or hesitations. When worrying changes are observed in a child's or young person's behaviour, physical condition or appearance staff will:

### Stage 1

Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay?" But never use leading questions.

- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously;
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child/young person makes a Disclosure;
- Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others. Notify the organisation's Named Person for Child Protection.
- Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure; The person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete the pro-forma, and ensure it is signed and dated.
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely;

### Stage 2

The Named person will take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child has been abused or likely to be abused. In this situation the Named Person will contact the police and/or York's local authority children's department (provide contact details – see Appendix 3). If a referral is made direct to the York Children's Department this must be followed up in writing.

The Named Person can also seek advice and clarity about a situation that is beginning to raise concern through the NSPCC 24-hour National Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

## Section 5 – Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff or Volunteer

Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association will ensure that any allegations made against Members or a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker must ensure that the child is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The named person for child protection should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving the named person, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that an independent person deals with the matter. (Note: this could be a committee member, director or anyone within the organisation that is in a senior position within the organisation and believed to be independent of the allegations being made).
- The named person should contact the local authority designated officer (LADO – who is based at the Child Protection Unit) for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the police.
- The individual who first received or witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible. This record should be an accurate factual description of what took place. The named person can, if appropriate, support the worker during this process but must not complete the report. This report must be available on request to the police and/or social services.
- Regardless of whether or not a police and/or social services investigation follows, **Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association** will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal, dependent on the nature of the incident.

## Section 6 – Recording and managing confidential information.

This section should include:

- A pro-forma for recording concerns/allegations of abuse, harm and neglect should be attached to the guidelines. The person who receives the allegation or has concern should complete the pro-forma.

- A summary of the organisation's commitment to manage confidential information safely, how information is stored and the circumstances under which information needs to be shared (Data Protection).
- A statement about the rights of children and young people to confidentiality unless the organisation considers they could be at risk of abuse and/or harm.

## Section 7 – Disseminating/Reviewing Policies and Procedures

All organisations should have in place a system for disseminating and reviewing their overall policies and procedures. They should be reviewed annually, signed by Trustees/Governors and/or anyone within the organisation that has overall responsibility for the service being provided. Any changes/amendments need to be clarified and shared with staff and where significant changes appear these must be relayed to parents/carers. (Best practice guidelines advise the involvement of parents/carers and young people in developing policies that affect them.)

Within this section you need to make it clear that there is a system in place for an annual review of policies and procedures, stating who will be involved and how it will be undertaken.

This policy will be reviewed, signed by Trustees and anyone within the association who has overall responsibility for work with children and young people.

## Appendix 1

Definitions of Abuse as cited in: Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2006, Chapter 1, P37-38).

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** 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/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Is 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation 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, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual outline images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**NEGLECT:** Is 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 as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical treatment.

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