

New Forest Homes for Ukraine (NFHU)

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

We fully recognize our legal and moral duty and responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and adults by informing Social Services (or any other appropriate authority) of any incidents where children or adults are perceived to be at risk.

A child is defined as any young person under the age of 18 years (including the unborn child). An adult is defined as anyone over the age of 18 years.

NFHU has appointed Virginia Darley as the named individual to oversee safeguarding children and adult matters.

NFHU will seek to increase the awareness of directors and volunteers through the provision of information.

Purpose and scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, and volunteers who work for, in conjunction with or on behalf of NFHU.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their duties to uphold the welfare and rights of children and young people ,and adults in need.
- Ensure that all staff fulfill their responsibilities to prevent and minimize the impact on adults and children from experiencing neglect, harm or abuse.
- Ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers can recognize the signs of suspected neglect, harm or abuse.

The purpose of safeguarding under the Children’s Act (2004) and Care Act (2014) is both reactive and proactive and includes;

- Preventing harm and reducing the risk of abuse or neglect to children and adults with care and support needs
- Stopping abuse and neglect wherever possible

Definitions

There are various definitions for safeguarding adults and children within legislation and there are situations which can put adults and children at risk.

The Equalities Act (2010) states that people with a protected characteristic may be more vulnerable to abuse at times and at certain stages of their life.

Adult in need

From April 2015 safeguarding responsibilities apply to an adult in need who;

- Has the need for care and support
- Is experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse and neglect, AND

- Is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect because of the care or support needs.

The Care Act (2014) identifies the following as an illustrative, but not exhaustive, guide to types and patterns of abuse;

- Physical
- Domestic
- Sexual
- Psychological or emotional
- Financial or material
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory
- Organisational
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self neglect and hoarding.

Other forms of abuse are;

- Honour based violence
- Forced marriages
- Female genital mutilation
- Hate crime
- Mate crime

Adult safeguarding means protecting a person's right to be free from abuse and neglect and ensuring good outcomes based on the key principles set out in the Care Act (2014) which are;

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

Children and young people

Safeguarding children and promoting the welfare of children is defined as;

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

Child protection is an important part of safeguarding but refers specifically to actions undertaken to protect children who are at risk of or suffering from significant harm. Categories of child abuse are;

- Physical
- Emotional

- Neglect
- Sexual

Other forms of abuse are;

- Domestic
- Hate crime
- Forced marriage
- Honour based violence
- Female genital mutilation
- Modern slavery
- Missing/exploited/trafficked

The five universal ambitions for every child (Every Child Matters 2003) are;

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

Legal Framework

The Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework

Safeguarding Processes

Staff or volunteers who have concerns that an adult or child in need is at risk or has been abused must raise it with the safeguarding head.

The safeguarding head will make a referral to the appropriate agency.

In an emergency and with the immediate danger or risk of harm the referral should be immediately to the police.

After the referral is received by the local authority, an enquiry will be established to determine whether any additional action should be taken.

Under the Children Act 1989 there is a statutory duty to share information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

NFHU should attempt to obtain the parent or carer's written consent to share information and explain what the information will be used for.

The Data Protection Act 1998, the General Data Protection Act 2018, and the Care Act 2014 enable information to be shared to safeguard adults in need.

The Adults consent to sharing is required and the following principles apply. The information should be;

- necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared

- shared only with those who need it
- be accurate and up to date
- be timely
- shared securely

All information sharing decisions should be recorded.

1. Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. At the point of disclosure, confirm to the participant that he/she will take the correct responsible step in bringing this matter to the attention of the safeguarding head.
2. If possible, write brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking. These may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said. Keep your original notes, however rough and even if you wrote on the back of something else. It is what you wrote at the time that may be important later – not a tidier and improved version you wrote up afterwards. If you don't have the means to write at the time, make notes of what was said as soon as possible afterwards.
3. Do **not** give a guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret. If you are told about abuse, you have a responsibility to report it. If asked, explain that if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell people who absolutely must know.
4. Do not ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened, e.g. "Did he do X to you?" Just ask "What do you want to tell me?" or "Is there anything else you want to say?"
5. Inform the safeguarding head. Do not tell anyone else what you have been told and discuss whether any steps need to be taken to protect the person who has told you about the abuse. This may need to be discussed with the person who told you.
6. **Never** attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people, etc. – Social Services and police adults are the people trained to do this. You could cause more damage and spoil possible criminal proceedings.
7. If it is necessary to report the abuse, this must be done as soon as possible. The safeguarding head should refer the matter to the Hampshire Social Services Department and if a child, to the child's local county Children's Services Department. Follow their requests about what to do next. The matter is then in their hands.
8. Never think abuse is impossible in your group, or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.

Allegations made against NFHU staff or volunteers

NFHU will take all necessary measures to recruit staff and volunteers who uphold the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, alongside the tenets of the Care Act. Where this fails NFHU will treat all allegations against staff or volunteers seriously.

The safeguarding head will;

- Raise a safeguarding referral
- If appropriate inform the police through the usual channels

- Inform the member of staff or volunteer in broad terms the nature of the allegation

Roles and responsibilities

The Board of NFHU ensures that safeguarding obligations are met.

The director responsible for safeguarding maintains awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and assures effective reporting of any concerns.

This policy was approved by the Board at their meeting on 17 May 2022