



SAFEGUARDING POLICY VULNERABLE YOUNG ADULTS AND CHILDREN

This policy provides guidance on procedures to be adopted in the event a disclosure is received from a known client during face to face or video counselling and any woman or young person accessing telephone emotional support; or a suspicion arises that a child or young person may be experiencing or be at risk of significant harm.

This policy applies to any person acting for or on behalf of HARCSAC.

One Trustee will act as the named Safeguarding Trustee. This person will be responsible for ensuring that all the work of the charity is conducted in accordance with this policy and other good practice in relation to safeguarding children. For the purpose of child protection legislation, the term 'child' refers to anyone up to the age of 18 years.

HARCSAC provides support to young women aged 18 years and above. These young people have the same rights to confidentiality as adults. See HARCSAC's policy on the protection of vulnerable adults in relation to 18-year-olds.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PROCEDURES

HARCSAC will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are undertaken
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with staff, volunteers, and service users
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training.

CHILD ABUSE

Child Abuse is significant harm being done or threatened to the child. Significant Harm is defined as Physical, Sexual, Emotional Abuse or Neglect, Honour based, Forced Marriage, Trafficking, Prostitution, Female Genital Mutilation.

The above list is not exhaustive.

How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse where the child is known to a client:

- If the abuse is not current and there are no safeguarding issues for the client or others known to the client – no further action is required.
- If the abuse is ongoing and/or there is a possibility that they or others may be at risk from the abuser, counsellors should explore this with the client who should be encouraged to consent to sharing the information with an appropriate authority.



How to respond to disclosures of abuse where the child is not known to a client:

Although we cannot give ongoing support to young people under the age of 18 it is the policy at HARCSAC to try to help a child to become safe from abuse. The volunteer will:

- use age-appropriate language throughout the call
- work with the child to try to make them feel safe and in control of what happens next
- explain to the caller that we do not know their identity or where they are calling from unless they choose to tell us
- explain that we want to try to help them, and we understand that they are very frightened
- confirm that we believe them
- support the child in gentle and honest terms. Support may take the form of providing them with details of child specialist services, encouraging them to speak to a trusted adult ie teacher, youth worker, family member and/or encouraging them to contact our service again.
- let the caller decide if they want to identify themselves. Prior to making the decision, the caller must be made aware that we are then duty bound to contact an appropriate authority ie local authority Safeguarding Children Team or Police on their behalf. The reasons for this policy must be explained
- encourage the caller to disclose their name and address

Adult callers may also disclose information about continuing abuse of a child or young person. If the child/young person is identifiable we are obliged to report this situation to the local authority Safeguarding Children Team or the Police and this must be discussed with the caller.

Any issue of disclosed or suspected children at risk must be notified to the lead Safeguarding Trustee and be taken to the next group supervision.

How to respond where there is a suspicion that a client is abusing a child:

Volunteers must take the issue to the lead Safeguarding Trustee or next group supervision where the best interests of the abused child and the client will be considered.

How to respond when a client knows rather than suspects that a child is being abused:

Regardless of whether this relates to the client's own child or another known child, volunteers should explore this with the client. The client must be encouraged to consent to sharing the information and must be reminded of HARCSAC's responsibilities and the policy on confidentiality.

The volunteer must take the issue firstly to the Safeguarding Trustee and to the next group supervision whichever is the sooner, for the best interest of the child/children to be explored along with the issues of adult's responsibility towards children and the best interests of the client.

If a decision is made to disclose a safeguarding issue to an external agency, the following procedure will be followed:

- client will be informed of decision.



- Safeguarding Trustee will be instructed to disclose incident to Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children and Young People's Team

How to respond when the abuse is by a representative of HARCSAC toward a young person:

If anyone representing the service is suspected of abusing another person or the service receives a complaint to that effect, the Trustees will take the appropriate actions to safeguard the person, the worker, and the service. Appropriate action will involve suspension as a trustee/volunteer/worker for the service. Further investigation and action will be taken in accordance with the complaints and/or disciplinary procedure.

Any representative of HARCSAC who becomes aware of a safeguarding issue will make a note of the disclosure including if known:

- name and contact details of the person making the disclosure
- name and contact details of the person at risk
- nature and date of disclosure
- historical details of disclosure
- any other information that may be disclosed

NOTE KEEPING AND DESTRUCTION

Any meeting held because of a suspicion or disclosure of abuse of children/vulnerable adults will be recorded. Dates, times, names of persons present, descriptions of the suspicion or disclosure and actions taken will all be noted and kept in a secure cabinet. This information will be kept for a maximum of five years unless the matter is taken further in which case it will be handed to the relevant authorities.

CONFIDENTIALITY IN RESPECT OF CHILD ABUSE

Confidentiality can only be breached if a client talks of known ongoing abuse of a named child. The volunteer must encourage the client to disclose, and if they will not, the Trustees must agree a course of action to be taken.

All matters of suspicion must be taken to lead Safeguarding Trustee and group supervision at the next opportunity. All decisions will be taken after informed discussions with the best interests of the young person in mind. In the event the Trustees are unable to make a majority decision on a course of action the Trustees will seek advice of the external supervisor.

All volunteers and staff are required to undergo an Enhanced DBS check every 3 years to ensure their suitability of involvement with HARCSAC.

All volunteers and paid staff must undergo training which outlines the legality and importance of safeguarding children.