



# Safeguarding Vulnerable Young Adults and Children

## Introduction

Although HARCSAC works primarily with adults, we recognise that we may occasionally come into direct, indirect or incidental contact with children - for example, through service users' families, outreach activities, shared facilities or public events.

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and ensuring that our charity acts responsibly to protect them from harm.

## Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Affirm our commitment to child safeguarding.
- Guide staff, volunteers, and trustees in recognising and responding to concerns.
- Clarify how we manage risk, even in settings where we do not directly serve children.

## Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- All trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors, and representatives of HARCSAC.
- All activities that may involve direct contact with children such as:
  - Child callers to the helpline
  - Shared facilities within a building
- All activities that may involve indirect contact with children, such as:
  - Working with adult clients.
  - Home visits where children are present.
  - Community or fundraising events.
  - Communications or media involving family stories.

## Our Commitment to Safeguarding

We will:

- Promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Ensure our team is aware of how to identify and report child protection concerns.
- Respect children's rights to safety, dignity, and privacy.
- Take all concerns seriously and respond appropriately.

## Definitions

Child/young person: Anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding: The action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Abuse: Is significant harm being done or threatened to a child which is defined as Physical, Sexual, Emotional Abuse, Neglect, Honour based, Forced Marriage, Trafficking, Prostitution, Female Genital Mutilation, Grooming and exploitation, On-line safety.

The above list is not exhaustive.

## Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



One Trustee will act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for ensuring that the charity's work is conducted in accordance with this policy and other good practice. In the absence of the DSL safeguarding concerns should be directed to Chris Sutton on the same contact details as below.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Name: Heather McKenzie  
Email: [admin@hertsrapecrisis.org.uk](mailto:admin@hertsrapecrisis.org.uk)  
Phone: 01707 276539

*Internal contacts via WhatsApp*

### **If there is an immediate risk, contact:**

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000  
Police: 999 (in emergency)

### **Minimising Risk**

HARCSAC will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary DBS and other 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.

While working with adults, children may be present in shared spaces or households. We will:

- Avoid unsupervised or unplanned one-on-one contact with children.
- Be alert to signs of abuse or neglect during visits or interactions.
- Never photograph or share stories of children without explicit parental consent.

### **Reporting Concerns**

Any concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately, even if it arises indirectly.

Reports should, where known include:

- 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

### **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 – no further action is required.

If the abuse is believed to be ongoing and/or there is a possibility that a child may be at risk this must be explored with the client who must be encouraged to consent to sharing the information with an appropriate authority.

### **When a client knows that a child is being abused:**

Known current abuse must be explored with the client. The client must be encouraged to consent to sharing the information with the appropriate authorities.

In either of these cases the client must be reminded of HARCSAC's responsibilities and obligations under child protection law and the concern must be notified to the DSL immediately who will consider the most appropriate action to be taken whilst considering the best interests and safety of both the child and the client.

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

- The client will be informed of the decision.
- DSL will be instructed to disclose incident to Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children and Young People's Team

### **Child contacts to the Helpline:**

Although HARCSAC cannot give ongoing support to children/young people we will try to help them to become safe. (See Child contacts to the helpline policy)

Any issue of a disclosed or suspected child at risk must be notified to the DSL immediately.

### **Abuse by a HARCSAC representative:**

If anyone representing the service is suspected of abusing another person or a complaint is received, the DSL will take the appropriate actions to safeguard the victim(s), the person(s) accused, and the service.

Appropriate action may involve suspension of the accused from their role with the charity during an investigation. Investigation and action will be taken in accordance with the complaints and/or disciplinary procedure.

### **Note keeping and disposal**

Any meeting held because of a suspicion or disclosure of abuse will be recorded. Dates, times, names of persons present, descriptions of the suspicion or disclosure and actions taken will be noted and kept securely. 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.

### **Training and Awareness**

- All staff, volunteers, and trustees receive a safeguarding briefing during induction.
- The DSL receives formal safeguarding training and refreshes this every 2–3 years.
- Safeguarding will be discussed regularly at team meetings, supervision and Trustee Meetings.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- There are changes in legislation
- A safeguarding incident occurs
- Our activities with children increase

HARCSAC