

# Health Help International

## Safeguarding Policy



Health Help International Safeguarding Policy - April 2018  
Registered Charity no. 1078353

Review date: March 2024  
Next Review: March 2025

# Safeguarding Policy

## The safeguarding of children and vulnerable individuals and groups is taken seriously by Health Help International (HHI)

We (HHI) acknowledge children's and vulnerable adults' right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or belief. We consider that their welfare is paramount. We follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognise and promote good practice in order to protect those children and vulnerable people we encounter in our charity work.

*For definitions of Abuse See Appendix 1: Abuse*

## HHI Operation

HHI is run entirely by volunteers in the UK. We operate overseas through partners - local people as well as a number of organisations and institutions.

Contact with children or adults at risk in the UK is limited to, for example, presentations given at schools. During monitoring trips overseas, currently Zambia and India, HHI volunteers visit children and adults at risk. Such visits include hospitals, schools, and individual homes. On these visits we:

- ensure nobody travels alone, either while representing HHI, or travelling with approval from HHI, without a current DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.
- any volunteer directly involved in HHI and undertaking such visits has a current DBS check.
- at least one volunteer in a party visiting on behalf of HHI, or with approval from HHI, is DBS checked to ensure the safeguarding policy is strictly adhered to by all members of the party.

We recognise this policy is based on UK requirements and law and holds no jurisdiction overseas. However, HHI volunteers adhere to this policy at all times, including during visits to projects, communities and individuals overseas.

We encourage those we work with overseas to establish a caring and safe environment for children and adults at risk; in which there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse. They are familiar with and expected to adhere to the policy statements.

*See Appendix 2 Safeguarding Policy Statement*

We maintain regular contact (email and telephone) with key contacts overseas to ensure any queries or safeguarding issues are brought to our attention. Annual monitoring visits enable us to review safeguarding policies, practices and address issues that may arise.

## HHI Safeguarding in the UK and Overseas

We implement, maintain and regularly review the procedures outlined in this policy, which are designed to make everyone involved with HHI alert to and prevent abuse. We promote and ensure the protection of children and adults at risk from abuse.

While safeguarding is the responsibility of all HHI UK volunteers and people we work with overseas, the Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator have specific and overarching responsibilities for safeguarding. The Safeguarding Coordinator is the person to whom all concerns or allegations are promptly addressed. In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator is contacted.

We follow a safe process for the selection and appointment of volunteers in the UK to ensure they are suitable to work with children or adults at risk. This process includes receiving two references and, if deemed appropriate, a DBS check.

We are committed to providing support, supervision, resources and training to those who work with children and adults at risk overseas.

All concerns and allegations of abuse are responded to appropriately, including referring to the statutory authorities if necessary.

We co-operate with the statutory authorities in any investigation, follow decisions, and maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We refer concerns about abuse to the relevant authority; in the UK this is the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer or equivalent.

We encourage our partners abroad to:

- organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimise the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults.
- understand and operate within HHI's safeguarding policy statement.
- protect children and vulnerable adults at risk from abuse.

HHI's ultimate sanction in response to abuse overseas is to withdraw funding and raise issues with the appropriate agency in that country.

*See Appendix 2: Safeguarding Policy Statement:*

## Aim and Purpose of this Policy.

The aim of this policy is to provide procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, vulnerable adults, employees and volunteers. This includes clear procedures for taking prompt and appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and adults within our work.

## Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Trustees of HHI and applies to:

- all those who volunteer to work for or oversee HHI activities.
- our overseas contacts, individuals and organisations receiving our funding.

## Duty of Care and Confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all beneficiaries of HHI, whether adults at risk or children. We maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or where there is a statutory duty to disclose the information.

## Preventing Abuse

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator<sup>1</sup> are the first point of contact for information or for managing and recording safeguarding issues. A job description is attached. *See Appendix 3: Safeguarding Coordinator's Job Description*

We promote a safe environment and healthy relationships, whilst minimising opportunities for harm, misunderstanding or false accusation.

We are committed to the safe recruitment and selection of volunteers and ensure that the following procedures are adhered to:

- asking applicants to complete an application form
- ensuring volunteers are aware of their role within HHI
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks wherever legally obliged. These records are kept and dated.
- taking up two references (not from family members)
- interviewing candidates

Safeguarding awareness is provided, and volunteers are given support and supervision in their role. Noncompliance to the Safeguarding Policy may result in suspension, termination of employment or volunteer status.

If we become aware of someone known to have harmed children or adults in the past, we will inform the relevant statutory authorities and put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and adults. Guidance will then be sought from the Charity Commission.

## What are we protecting people from?

The definitions of abuse differ between children and adults at risk. For definitions of abuse relating to children and vulnerable persons *see Appendix 3: Abuse*

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<sup>1</sup> Safeguarding coordinator is Mr Chris Byrne; Deputy safeguarding coordinator is Dr Edmund Plummer

# What we do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses that they are being abused and / or makes an allegation of abuse against someone, it is important that the person being told:

- stays calm and listen carefully
- reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling
- does not investigate or ask leading questions
- explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- does not promise to keep secret what they have been told
- informs the Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as possible (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the Deputy Safeguarding Officer)
- makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and signs and dates this record. This is given to the Safeguarding Coordinator and stored securely.  
*See Appendix 4: Incident Report Template*

## Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm, the Police are contacted without delay. Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm the following actions occur:

- The concern is discussed with the Safeguarding Coordinator and a referral to the statutory authorities is made.
- A confidential record is made of the conversation and the circumstances surrounding it using the Incident Report Template at Appendix 4. This record is kept securely, and a copy passed to statutory authorities as part of the referral process.
- The person about whom the allegation is made is **not** informed by anyone in HHI if it is judged that to do so could place a child or adult at increased risk. If the statutory authorities are involved, they are consulted beforehand.
- The Chair of the Trustees of HHI is informed of any serious concerns.

If someone in HHI is alleged or known to have harmed children or adults we ask for guidance from the Charity Commission.

## Allegation regarding a volunteer in the UK

For any concerns relating to children, the Local Authority Designated Officer or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales is contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken is discussed and agreed. This includes cover communication with the volunteer, suspension, investigation and possible strategy meetings. A decision is taken by the Designated Officer about when to inform the worker and the HHI follows this advice.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care is contacted.

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the DBS if the charity withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children / adults at risk OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired or left the charity for other reasons.

In such cases, a report will also be made to the Charity Commission, as they deem such a referral to be a 'serious incident' and require notification.

## Concerns and Complaints

In the event of a concern or complaint please contact the Safeguarding Officer:

Mr Chris Byrne

Telephone No: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

It is helpful to have complaints in writing, as this avoids any possible misunderstanding about the issue. Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days. However, whether verbal or in writing, all complaints are acted upon.

## Review

The Trustees review this policy annually, amending and updating it as required, and record this fact in the minutes of the next Trustee meeting.

Date of the most recent review: March 2024

Date of the next review: April 2025

Signed:

(on behalf of the Trustees)

## Key Contacts:

The **Safeguarding Coordinator** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed:

Name Mr Chris Byrne

Telephone No [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

### The Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator

Name Dr Edmund Plummer

Telephone No [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

# Appendix 1 Abuse

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human rights, and it arises from misuse of the power and control that someone has over another. Abuse disrespects the individual dignity and integrity of the person abused and usually undermines their sense of self-worth. It may consist of a single act or many repeated acts. Abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

The majority of abusers are known to the victim and may often hold a position of trust or authority. Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual or a group.

Anyone can be at risk, but some groups are more vulnerable to abuse than others.. Children are more at risk of being abused if they have disabilities or learning difficulties Adults are more at risk of being abused if they are isolated and have little contact with friends, family or those around them have learning and communication difficulties, are dependent upon another person.

Abuse can take place in all kinds of different settings, including the home, school or workplace.

Abuse can take many forms.

Physical

Sexual

Emotional

Psychological

Neglect

Financial

material

Domestic abuse

Organisational abuse

Modern slavery

Discriminatory abuse

Abuse linked to faith or belief

It is important to be able to recognise the possible signs of abuse. These include unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, becoming withdrawn, appearing to be anxious, becoming uncharacteristically aggressive, lacking social skills and having few friends, if any, having a poor relationship with a parent, having knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age, going missing and choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

Observing any of the signs or symptoms does not necessarily mean that a person is being abused; there could be perfectly ordinary explanations. However, the observation of multiple signs and symptoms, some overlapping, together with explanations which are inconsistent or do not ring true, should give more cause for concern.

## **Key points to remember:**

All abuse involves the misuse of power

Secrecy is fundamental to abuse continuing, and victims are often trapped before they know what has happened

If a child sees or hears abuse, this is considered to be child abuse.

## Appendix 2 Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement has been agreed by the Trustees of Help Health International

We are committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and to ensuring their well-being.

- We believe all children and adults at risk should know they are valued and safely enjoy the benefits our support provides.
- We respect the personal dignity and rights of children and adults at risk (in accordance with current legislation, for example in the UK - as set out in the Human Rights Act 1989 and in all cases the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and we ensure that our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children under 18 years of age.
- We recognize that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults at risk.
- We recognise that domestic abuse affects both adults and children and accept that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable
- We report any abuse of children or adults at risk that we discover or suspect.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police are contacted as a matter of urgency.
- We recognize that Children's Services or equivalent has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child, and that Adult Services or equivalent do so for adults at risk.
- We acknowledge that within the UK Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) have responsibility for dealing with all allegations and concerns about people working with children.
- We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of all who volunteer or work on behalf of HHI.

We are committed to:

- Establishing an environment which is safe and caring, and where there is an informed vigilance about the dangers of abuse.
- Following the relevant legislation, statutory and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- Ensuring that we keep up to date with local, national and international (India and Zambia) developments relating to safeguarding.
- Building constructive links with the relevant Voluntary and Statutory Authorities, for example the Charity Commission.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that as a charity, everyone works within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policies.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy in their work and in any action, they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk.
- Following safe recruitment principles in the appointment and selection of all those who volunteer to work with children and adults at risk.
- Supporting, supervising, resourcing and training all those who undertake work with children and adults at risk.
- Ensuring that the children and adults we have contact with know that they are valued and feel empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- Reporting any abuse of children or adults at risk that we discover or suspect.
- Supporting all those within the HHI operation who are affected by abuse.



- People or organisations who deliver activities within our charitable scope are made aware that our ultimate sanction, should welfare and safeguarding be ignored, is to reduce or withdraw funding and any other support we offer.

Name: Mr Chris Byrne  
(on behalf of the Trustees of HHI)

Signed:

Date:

Date of next review

## **Appendix 3 Safeguarding Coordinator's Job Description**

### **Context**

We believe that children and adults at risk deserve the best possible care that we can provide and in all our work we provide a safe place for everyone involved. We recognise and give thanks for the time and devotion given by anyone carrying out this role.

### **Purpose of the role:**

- To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedure for HHI.
- To monitor safeguarding arrangements with our agencies in India and Zambia
- To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues.
- To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice for the charity.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedure within the charity**

- To familiarise themselves with HHI policies and procedures, existing good practice guidelines in safeguarding and keep abreast of any changes and developments.
- To ensure that HHI policies and procedures are reviewed annually, kept up to date, and are fit for purpose.
- To make others in the charity aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures.
- To ensure safe recruitment practices are operated in the recruitment of all volunteers including, but not exclusively, ensuring that the relevant workers have up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks (Scotland).
- To maintain a record of DBS/PVG checks undertaken.

#### **To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues**

- To be the named person that children / adults at risk, other people and outside agencies can talk to regarding any issue to do with safeguarding.
- To be aware of the names and telephone numbers of appropriate contacts within Social Care and the Police in the event of a referral needing to be made.
- To be aware of when to seek advice, and when it is necessary to inform Social Care, the Police or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales of a concern or incident.

- To take appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the charity.
- To cooperate with Social Care or the Police in safeguarding investigations relating to people within the charity.
- To ensure that appropriate records are kept by the charity, and that information in relation to safeguarding issues is handled confidentially and stored securely.
- To inform the Trustees at the time of any referrals made to the statutory authorities, or of any information received from the statutory authorities.
- To report summary safeguarding information annually to the Trustees to enable them to monitor safeguarding in the charity.

### **To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the charity**

- To promote sensitivity within the charity towards all those affected by the impact of abuse.
- To promote positive safeguarding procedures and practice and ensure procedures are adhered to.
- To arrange and/or promote opportunities for training in safeguarding to volunteers.
- To update their own safeguarding training every three years.
- To seek appropriate support and advice in carrying out this role.
- To arrange for a suitable person to carry out this role when they are on leave, and to publicise who this is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

## Appendix 4 Incident Report Template

Basic Information	
Full name of child, young person or adult concerned	
Address (including postcode)	
Email address	
Telephone number	
Date of birth	
Date and time of incident	
Location of incident	
Other people present. (witnesses)	
Record of incident	
<p>Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible - do not interpret what was said using your own words.</p> <p>Include details such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language.</p> <p>Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or adult said.</p> <p>If you have formed an opinion please state it, <i>making it clear that it is your opinion</i> and give reasons for forming that opinion.</p>	

**Agencies informed about the incident**

Position/Organisation	Name	Email	Telephone number
Safeguarding Coordinator			
Trustees			
Children's Services			
Adult Services			
Police			
<b>NSPCC</b>			
Parent/Carer			
Other (please state role and organisation)			

**Feedback and follow up actions**  
 (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

**Name:**  
 (Person completing this report)

**Position held:**

**Signed:**

**Dated**