

LAWRENCE HOUSE SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Safeguarding Children Procedures and guidance

Action to be taken if a safeguarding children issue arises or is suspected

ALL INFORMATION MUST REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL and the Confidentiality Policy adhered to.

If there is some suspicion, concern, or need for advice or information, contact the Project Manager or a member of the Management Committee. The decision to refer or not will remain with the individual staff member.

If there are obvious signs of abuse the case must be REFERRED IMMEDIATELY by telephone. DO NOT DELAY. The receiving authority should offer immediate guidance.

Telephone:

Social Services Area Office

Leicestershire 0116 305 0005

Hinckley 01455 636964

Emergency Team - out of hours 0116 2551606

Ask to speak to the duty Social Worker. Explain to the Social Worker that there is a need to report a case for Safeguarding Children.

This should be followed up in writing within 24 hours (electronic referral form <http://www.lrlscb.org/index/worriedaboutachild.htm>)

However, if the person with whom you have consulted has grave concerns and understands that you may not intend to refer on, they may act on the information that has been supplied.

A report of the incident should be made on Hinckley Homeless Group's Safeguarding Children Incident report form.

This form should be passed to the Project Manager. REMEMBER CONFIDENTIALITY.

Below is a list of notes to help with completing the incident report form:

- Record what happened. Date / time / venue, who was present, signature / print name, what was said / your reply.
- A description of the activity which has led to the presenting cause for concern.

- Circumstances - e.g. bruising, inappropriate sexual behaviour, poor standards of cleanliness: signs which may suggest deliberate injury, neglect and failure to thrive, emotional or sexual abuse.
- Details of any marks – draw diagrams.
- DO NOT QUESTION / INVESTIGATE.
- Details of worker's/ witness' observations of young person's behaviour.
- Referral by a third party?

The following notes will help when responding to the young person

DO

- Observe and listen.
- Believe what you are being told and acknowledge this.
- Explain who you have to tell and why.
- Recognise how difficult this situation may be for the young person and say so.
- Remember the abuser is responsible.
- Any body language or reaction from you that displays distaste may need to be explained to the young person.
- Involve a witness if possible.

DO NOT

- Do not stop a child / young person talking
- Do not agree to keep secrets.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not interrogate the young person with lots of questions – obtain the facts, which should be observable and not include speculation, interpretations or recommendations.
- Do not doubt what is being said – it has probably taken a great deal of courage to speak out.
- Do not make the young person feel like they may be responsible / to blame with inappropriate verbal and non-verbal responses.
- Do not panic – listen to the young person, then contact the designated person.
- Do not make an individual decision not to refer.
- Do not challenge the perpetrator.

Good practice when working with young people

DO

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Provide an example you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that the ration of qualified / experienced adult workers to young people is appropriate to the activity.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- Have appropriate sleeping accommodation for separate genders, adults and young people.
- Provide opportunities for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they find unacceptable.

- Remember somebody else might interpret your actions, no matter how well intended.
- Recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of contact with young people.

DO NOT

- Do not permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. homophobia, racism or bullying).
- Do not engage in any inappropriate physical or verbal contact.
- Do not make derogatory or suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Do not jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Do not exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues.
- Do not allow yourself to be drawn into any inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as crushes.
- Do not show favouritism to any individual.
- Do not rely on just your good name to protect you.
- Do not believe that “it could never happen to me.”
- Do not take a chance.

ALWAYS REMEMBER

The child / young person’s welfare is paramount.

The concern must not be ignored.

If in doubt, seek advice. You should always talk to someone to help you decide what to do.

Always record – the decision to share information or not should be recorded.

Always follow LSCB Procedures and Practice Guidance – www.lrlscb.org and www.proceduresonline.com/lr/scb.

Even if the person requests confidentiality you must make clear to them that you cannot keep the matter confidential if you feel someone is at risk – YOU have a duty to report it.

Worker awareness and training

People have a responsibility to be vigilant and sensitive and to prioritise the protection of young people.

All staff and volunteers working with Hinckley Homeless Group must be aware of this policy and the procedures that ensure safeguarding children.

Initially, this will be undertaken during induction training.

People are to:

- Maintain their awareness of safeguarding children issues.

- Identify their personal training needs as part of their continuing professional development.
- Be familiar with relevant guidance texts such as the “Safe from harm” (code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations in England and Wales (1993) and the home office).
- Appropriate concerns and challenges are to be made in accordance with Hinckley Homeless Group’s stated procedures.
- In the event of a referred safeguarding children issue arising, staff must follow the stated procedures.

Hinckley Homeless Group will support people in all safeguarding children issues with information, guidance, supervision, line management, training (or the support of relevant training opportunities) and via the Project Manager.

Recruitment of persons to Hinckley Homeless Group

People will be recruited under the guidance of the Equality and Diversity Policy and best recruitment practices.

In order to ensure the health, welfare and safety of vulnerable adults and young people, employees and volunteers must be suitable and competent to do the job.

Competence may be a pre-requisite for the position and evidence of relevant experience, training and / or qualifications will be required. If not a pre-requisite, competence may be gained by relevant training.

Suitability checks will be made on applicants who apply to work with, and who will have regular access to, vulnerable adults and young people through Hinckley Homeless Group’s activities.

The checks for suitability will follow good recruitment practice and entail the completion of an application form, matching the applicant to the job and person specification and a declaration from the applicant regarding any criminal record. Upon the offer of employment we will take up two references, receive the required number of approved forms of identification and complete an enhanced disclosure check from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

At the start of placement with Hinckley Homeless Group a probationary period will be identified.

What is child abuse?

There are many ways in which children can be abused. Children can be abused by adults who are complete strangers, adults known to them, or adults within the child’s own family. Sometimes abuse is carried out on children by other children.

The main forms of child abuse are:

Neglect: The ***persistent*** failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the impairment of the child’s health or development.

Physical: Any significant physical harm caused to the child, or failure to prevent it.

Sexual: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, this may or may not involve violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling. Showing children pornographic magazines or videos / DVD's is also a form of sexual abuse.

Emotional: This is ***persistent*** emotional maltreatment or rejection of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment, but emotional abuse can take place in isolation.

Signs of abuse

Below are a number of signs of abuse. However, they are only indications that abuse might have taken place. Most symptoms can have many reasonable explanations to account for them. However, if you do suspect abuse, you must act.

NEGLECT

Physical Indicators

Loss of weight
Unattended medical needs
Persistent hunger
Self inflicted wounds
Inappropriate clothing

Behavioural Indicators

Tired or listless
Constantly asks for food
Frequently absent or late
Running away
Child seems happy with you, but not with parent

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

Unexplained bruises
(in various stages of healing)
Welts, human bite marks
Unexplained burns
Unexplained fractures
Lacerations or abrasions

Behavioural Indicators

Changes in behaviour
Aggressive
Severe tantrums
A "don't care" attitude
Complaining of soreness
Fear of returning home
Fear of one particular adult

SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

Have soreness or bleeding
in throat, anal or genital region
Frequent urine infections
Stomach pains for no medical
reason

Behavioural Indicators

Continual Masturbation
Aggressive and inappropriate sex
play
Withdrawal
Isolated
Mistrustful of adults

Hysterical when nappy changed or clothes removed
Poor eating, nightmares

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

Failure to thrive
Erratic weight and growth patterns
Frozen awareness
Psychosomatic illness
Developmental delay

Behavioural Indicators

Lagging Development
Over reaction to mistakes
Sudden speech disorders
Extremes of passivity and aggression
Few friends
Appears depressed
Seems out of control

The NSPCC provides a free 24 hour child protection help line, staffed by experienced Social Work counsellors, which provides confidential counselling, information and advice. The telephone number is 0808 800 5000. If using this service, please state at the onset that you are an adult seeking advice and information so that your call can be directed to an appropriate person.

Hinckley Homeless Group is committed to working with Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board and complying with their procedures. It is not Hinckley Homeless Group's responsibility to investigate suspected or reported abuse: the appropriate agency (Social Services) will take any necessary action.