

Our Chartist Heritage

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Introduction

Our Chartist Heritage (OCH) believes that it is never acceptable for any child or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind. Our Chartist Heritage recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults, by a commitment to practices which protect them. This policy applies to all staff, including the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Our Chartist Heritage.

Definitions

A **child** is defined as any person under the age of 18 years.

The definition of **vulnerable adults** includes any person over the age of 18 who:

- need Community Care Services because of mental or other disability, age, illness; or
- are unable to take care of themselves; or
- are unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse

A basic definition of abuse is that it is abuse of power by a person who is developmentally and/or otherwise stronger than another, resulting in some distress, harm or neglect of necessary attention for the victim.

Child abuse

This is a general term for all the ways in which a child's development and health are damaged by the actions or inactions of others, usually adults. Children may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Although different terms are used to describe particular types of abuse, these often overlap and many children suffer effects of a range of destructive forms of behaviour. It is generally accepted that there are four main types of abuse. Definitions are listed below, along with signs and symptoms which *may* indicate abuse. However it is important not to jump to conclusions as there may be other explanations:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child or vulnerable adult in their care. Physical abuse, as well as being the result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Signs of physical abuse *may* include: Unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on that person's emotional development. It may involve making a child or vulnerable adult feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children or vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment to a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse *may include:* Reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden underachievement, attention-seeking, running away from home, stealing, lying.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts (rape) or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as enticing children or vulnerable adults to look at pornographic images, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls and vulnerable men and women can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people or vulnerable adults. This includes people from all different walks of life.

Signs of sexual abuse *may include:* Pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings, being sexually provocative with adults, disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting, secretive relationships with adults and children, stomach pains with no apparent cause.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's or vulnerable adults health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect the child or vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

Signs of neglect *may include:* Looking ill-cared for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive, lingering injuries or health problems.

Bullying

Bullying is not always easy to define, it can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three types are **physical** (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), **verbal** (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and **emotional** (e.g. isolating an individual from activities).

Bullying *will include:*

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards a victim

- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim.

Bullying *may* include:

- Other forms of violence
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive or offensive comments of a sexual nature.

Emotional and verbal bullying are more common than physical violence, it can also be more difficult to cope with or prove. Bullying can result in the victim becoming vulnerable and isolated. These particular children or vulnerable adults could then become an easy target for other abusers. Concerns about bullying should be dealt with in the same way as concerns about other forms of child abuse.

Safeguarding Officer

OCH has appointed a Safeguarding Officer

Name: Melinda Drowley

Date appointed: 25 April 2023

Underpinning principles

OCH recognises that:

- the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount
- all children or vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with other agencies eg. parents/carers is essential in promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

Purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and vulnerable adults who receive OCH services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing abuse, or be at risk of abuse, and what to do if a disclosure of abuse is made to them.

Commitment

OCH will seek to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting safeguarding guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately

- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Making appropriate disclosures to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Procedures

If a DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE is made to you by a child or adult YOU MUST REPORT THE MATTER IN WRITING to the designated Safeguarding Officer of OCH.

RECEIVE

- Listen to the child/vulnerable adult
- If you are shocked by what they are saying, try not to show it
- Take what they say seriously
- Accept what the child/vulnerable adult says
- DO NOT ask for (other) information
- DO NOT promise confidentiality - you have a **DUTY TO REFER** this matter on

REASSURE

- Stay calm and reassure the victim that they have done the right thing in talking to you
- Be honest - do not make promises you can't keep
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the victim to tell you what happened

REACT

- Do not ask leading questions
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk
- Explain and if possible seek agreement that you will have to discuss the situation with someone else and will do so on a 'need to know' basis.

RECORD

- Make some brief notes at the time and write them up more fully as soon as possible – use the Record of Disclosure Template (see Appendix 1).
- Take care to record timing, setting and personnel as well as what was said
- Be objective in your recording – include statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions

ACT NOW

YOU MUST REPORT THE MATTER to the designated Safeguarding Officer who in turn should report the matter to Social Service Safeguarding Team 01633 656656 or to the Police as appropriate. If the Safeguarding Officer cannot be contacted or it is inappropriate to do so because of the nature of the complaint, the matter must be reported to the Vice Chair of Trustees. On no account must the matter be discussed by the full Board of Trustees. The Vice Chair will set up a Disciplinary Panel of 3 trustees to decide whether the person accused of abuse has breached this Safeguarding Policy. If an employee or volunteer is found to have been guilty of

abuse, or resigns from employment before the disciplinary hearing, the name of that person must by law be disclosed to DBS.

Regulated Activity

OCH policy is NOT TO PERMIT any of its staff, volunteers, temporary personnel or helpers to undertake any REGULATED ACTIVITY as defined by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. When an OCH employee or volunteer works in schools with children, the teacher must be present and in charge of the class.

Recruitment and Employment policy

No person will be employed by Our Chartist Heritage until such time as:

- A DBS Check has been completed satisfactorily.
- Completion of an application form and checking the person's identity by their birth certificate and/or passport (a document including a photograph if possible.)
- Taking up two references, one of which must be provided by somebody who has experience of their work
- An interview by at least two trustees
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment or inconsistencies
- A supervised probationary period for new recruits and a comprehensive induction period that includes our child and vulnerable adult protection policy and procedures.

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

OCH staff and volunteers should organise all their activities to reduce to a minimum those situations within which it may be possible for children or vulnerable adults to be abused. Staff and volunteers are required to abide by this Code of Practice to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Good Practice

- DO treat all children and vulnerable adults with the respect they deserve
- DO make sure any suspicions or allegations are reported to the Safeguarding Officer and are recorded
- DO NOT get personally involved – leave it to the professionals.

Physical Contact

Adults should ensure that the touch and physical contact they use is not exploitative and is not open to misunderstanding. Children and vulnerable adults should be encouraged to say what they find acceptable and unacceptable in the way they are approached by adults or their colleagues in the group.

DO NOT:

- Subject children or vulnerable adults to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure
- Engage in rough physical games or horse play
- Touch a young person in an intrusive or sexual manner
- Make sexually suggestive comments, even in jest

- Do things of a personal nature that children or vulnerable adults can do for themselves
- Restrain a child or vulnerable adult using physical force

Working alone with individual children and vulnerable adults

- You should plan never to be alone in a building, car or a closed room with a child/vulnerable adult.
- In exceptional circumstances where an adult may be alone with a child/vulnerable adult for a short period, the adult should ensure that other staff or volunteers are aware of the situation and that they support this action and that it takes place in clear view of the rest of the group eg a designated office or room with a clear glass window. The door must always be left open.

Running Activities

- any group of children **MUST** be supervised by their teacher (or other responsible adult) and never solely by a OCH employee/volunteer
- It is important for OCH employees and volunteers to know whom the teacher/group leader is during all activities.

Privacy & Photographs

- Consent must be sought to take and/or publish photographs

Review

OCH reviews its policies and guidance on good practice annually at its AGM.

Policy reviewed and approved 25 April 2023

APPENDIX 1 Record of Disclosure Template

Name and of person making the disclosure

Contact Details:

Name of the victim of abuse

Contact details:

Name of parent/carer

Contact Details:

What is said to have happened or what was seen?

When and where did it occur?

Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?

What was said by those involved – questions, answers etc?

Where there any obvious observable signs of abuse eg bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour?

Was the victim able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it?

Who has been told about it and when?

Do the parents/carers know?