



Healthy Abingdon

Safeguarding Policy

Statement of intent

All people including children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from harm in all elements of their lives including when engaged in voluntary activities. Healthy Abingdon is committed to working with all parts of the community - and children, young people and vulnerable adults may be attendees or involved with its projects and events. Trustees and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is always paramount when involved in activities or attending events run or supported by Healthy Abingdon.

A child is defined as under 18 years of age by the Children Act 1989.

A vulnerable adult is defined (by the Law Commission) as a person over 18 years, who is or maybe in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to take care of or protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The aim of this policy is to

- Provide children and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst engaged with Healthy Abingdon activities.
- Enable all volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child or vulnerable adult protection issues.

Appendix A provides a code of guidance for volunteers.

Healthy Abingdon will always strive towards best practice. We will adopt and adapt our code of guidance in line with recommendations and best practice adopted by our local authority and other statutory partners.

All Trustees and volunteers have a responsibility to report any concerns to the Healthy Abingdon board of trustees. Such concerns will be responded to swiftly and appropriately.

A copy of this policy is made available and request to all individuals working with, for or on behalf of Healthy Abingdon.

Healthy Abingdon will revisit and review all concerns and their handling annually as part of the process of reviewing this policy and to ensure organisational learning.

Recruitment and selection of volunteers

Healthy Abingdon recognises that anyone may have the potential to cause harm in some way and it is therefore important and appropriate that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with Children or vulnerable adults.

Our Volunteer Agreement form and Volunteers Recruitment Procedure sets out how we work with volunteers. From a safeguarding perspective, we will ensure that volunteers are

- Not put in situations where there is potential for harm or exploitation of children or vulnerable adults.
- Not subject to physical or emotional abuse from trustees, other volunteers or those they come into contact with in the course of their volunteering duties.
- Not asked to undertake voluntary tasks which are beyond their capability and would therefore cause stress and may endanger others.

Records

All records will be kept locked and secure. Access is limited to the Chair. Individual volunteers have the right to see their own records.

Responding to suspicions or allegations

If a volunteer has any concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour, they have a responsibility to report it. They do not have to decide whether or not abuse or inappropriate behaviour has actually taken place.

Remember an individual may be at risk of further harm if suspicions or allegations go unreported.

The steps to be taken are:

1. Concerns reported to the Chair (on healthyabindon@aol.com).
2. Record made of what has been said or seen. Include the location, time and date. (See Appendix B)
3. The responsible Chair will refer the allegation to appropriate services
4. The parents or carers of the person affected will be contacted as soon as possible. If the matter concerns the chair, you should report the issue to a responsible trustee on safeguarding@healthyabingdon.org.uk. The same steps will be taken by the responsible trustee.

In an emergency and if it is suspected someone is in immediate danger, 999 should always be called.

Concerns about conduct of a volunteer

Where the concern relates to a volunteer it should be reported to the Chair, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the person in question, and anyone else who may be at risk.

Healthy Abingdon will fully support and protect any volunteer who, in good faith, reports their concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or vulnerable adult.

Major concerns about the conduct of the Charity

Where the concern relate to the conduct of the trustees as a whole, it should be reported to the appropriate social services safeguarding team – this would normally be Oxfordshire County Council Safeguarding team – details available at <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/contact-safeguarding-service> for adult concerns and <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/local-authority-designated-officers> for concerns relating to children

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled securely and sensitively and will only be disclosed following advice of statutory Services or the police. Depending on the circumstances, information may need to be disclosed and shared with the following people:

- Other trustees'
- The parents or carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
- The person making the allegation,
- Statutory Services and the Police,
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)..

Healthy Abingdon records of the concerns will be kept secure in accordance with data protection policy.

Guidelines for use of photographic or other imaging equipment

The taking of photographs, film or other images of children or vulnerable adults is not appropriate without consent from parents or nominated guardians or carers. Staff must ensure that such consent is in place before making any such image of a client.

When such images are properly obtained then they must be used only for the purpose consented to. Special care must be taken, when using any image in general publicity or in publications such as annual reports, press promotions or on websites. If there is doubt about the appropriate use of an image, staff must not be tempted to use it.

Policy last reviewed September 2023.

APPENDIX A

Code of practice for volunteers on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

Introduction

There is a risk that some individuals will actively seek voluntary work with young people or vulnerable adults in order to harm them.

All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to the chair, trustees or relevant authorities following the guidelines in this document.

Good Practice Guidelines

All volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within our activities.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all children and vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each person first, e.g. before partners or ourselves.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with clients
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults. • Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

APPENDIX B

How to record concerns.

Information passed to Statutory Services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following:

- The name of the child or vulnerable adult.
- Age of individual and date of birth
- Home address and telephone number
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else?
- What is the nature of the allegation, Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information? Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Are behavioural signs or indirect signs evident?
- Witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's or vulnerable adults account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents/carer been contacted? If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If it is not the child or vulnerable adult making the report has the individual concerned been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If yes, record details of the allegation made, including the identity of the alleged abuser, the person making the allegation and the time and date.