

EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Policy Title:

Protection and Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This policy defines the EHRC's belief that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount and sets out the level of care and competency requires by anyone who will come into contact with such people on the Commission's behalf.

Policy Ownership

Responsibility rests with all Commissioners and Staff to follow the policy

Lead Officer

Chief Executive Officer

Policy Links

Links with other Policies: TBC

Key Dates

Implementation Date:

Next Review Date:

Document Reference

number: 20015 10 30 001



CONTENTS

- 1. Statement of intent on safeguarding children and young people 2
- 2. What is Child Abuse? 2
- 3. What to do if a child or adult discloses harm to you 4
- 4. What to do if you think a child or vulnerable adult is being harmed..... 5
- 5. Role of the Child Protection Representatives 7
- 6. Safe Recruitment and Selection 7
- 7. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers 8
- 8. Whistleblowing Procedure – (The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) Allegations against Commissioners, Staff and Volunteers 9
- What should I report under this Procedure 9
- Standard Report Form 11



1. STATEMENT OF INTENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The EHRC is committed to safeguard the wholeness and the wellbeing of every person in our community, of whatever age. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of every member of our community, and particularly the abuse of those most vulnerable among us, including children and young people. The welfare of the child is paramount. All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or belief.

All those who work or volunteer with The EHRC will be made aware of this policy and of what to do if they have any concerns. There is guidance for those responding to concerns so that they are properly dealt with, including sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know and involve children, young people and families appropriately.

It is our policy that no-one shall work with children and young people within The EHRC who:

- Is known to have been involved in offences against children and young people or who there is reason to believe would be a danger to children and young people.

This means that:

- All who work with children & young people under the auspices of The EHRC will be required to be checked through local Police vetting procedures and are expected at all times to conform with good practice in their work; and undertake safeguarding & child protection courses and common assessment framework training.
- Those responsible for the appointment of such workers must take all reasonable steps, including obtaining Disclosures via local island Police vetting or official checks from the country of origin to ensure that persons who have been convicted or have received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against children or young people shall not undertake work with children and young people under the auspices of The EHRC.

If you have any questions about our policies and procedures please contact the CEO

2. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

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

Child abuse is a term which describes all the ways in which a child's development and health are damaged by the actions or in-actions 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. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015). Below the definitions are listed signs and symptoms which *may* indicate abuse, but do not 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 to a child. 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. 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 such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child 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 to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment to a child, though it may occur alone.

SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE MAY INCLUDE:

Reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden under achievement, attention seeking, running away from home, stealing, lying.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involved forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. 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 basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect the child 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 basic emotional needs.

SIGNS OF NEGLECT MAY INCLUDE:

Looking ill-cared for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive, lingering injuries or health problems.

'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' is defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* as:

Protecting Children from maltreatment

Preventing impairment of children's health or development

Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU (CRB) OR LOCAL POLICE VETTING

The EHRC will give employers and voluntary organisations access to information about criminal records and other relevant information about people they intend to appoint in paid or unpaid posts working with children and young people under 18.

3. WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD OR ADULT DISCLOSES HARM TO YOU

RECEIVE



- Listen to the child
- If you are shocked by what they are saying, try not to show it
- Take what they say seriously
- Accept what the child says
- DO NOT ask for (other) information

REASSURE

- Stay Calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you
- Be honest with the child so do not make promises you can't keep
- Do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer the child who is at risk
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the child to tell you what happened

REACT

- React to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate them for details
- 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 Concerns Template attached
- 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

- Discuss the matter with the Child Protection representative immediately – see Section 6 below which sets out the referral flow chart.

4. WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK A CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT IS BEING HARMED.

- Make accurate notes to keep a record of what, when and by whom the concerns refer and make a referral to Teeny Lucy (Chairperson) or Lydia Buchanan (Secretary) so that they can then refer on to Safeguarding / Police directorate.
- The chart below should be used to record your concerns



RECORD OF CONCERNS TEMPLATE

- 1 Name of Child
- 2 Address
- 3 Telephone
- 4 Parent/Carer details
- 5 What is said to have happened or what was seen

- 6 When and where did it occur

- 7 Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?

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

- 9 Where there any obvious signs e.g. bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour?

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

- 11 Who has been told about it and when?

- 12 Do the parents know?

Signature: _____

Date: _____



5. ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVES

The named staff Child Protection Representative for **The EHRC** is: Catherine Turner CEO.

The CEO will take on the responsibility for:

- Ensuring the policy is being put into practice
- Being the first point of contact for child protection issues
- Keeping a record of any concern expressed about child protection issues
- Where necessary, taking further steps, such as referring concerns to other agencies
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the The EHRC committee.
- Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate training, support and supervision on safeguarding children and young people.
- Ensuring that everyone involved with the organisations is aware of the identity of the Child protection representatives.
- Liaise with St Helena Safeguarding Children's Board on adopted policies and procedures

6. SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Determined abusers have often managed to gain access to children and young people. We recognise therefore, that the most effective point at which an organisation can use good management to minimise the possibility of abuse is when new paid staff or volunteers are appointed, although it is important to ensure that vigilance is maintained thereafter.

RECRUITMENT

It is our policy that all staff and volunteers, temporary personnel and helpers who have contact with children and young people will be subject to a careful and rigorous selection and vetting process with the elements listed below. We hope these will be understood by good applicants and will put off ill intentioned people off.

- Completion of an application form and checking the person's identity by their birth certificate or passport, something with a photograph if possible.
- Taking up two references, one of whom has experience of their work or contact with children
- An interview by at least two people
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment or inconsistencies
- Carrying out police checks and checks with local Police or from country of origin.
- Allowing no unsupervised access to children and young people until this has been completed.
- Advice is sought about recruiting someone with a criminal record

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS AND VETTING:

Checks will be carried out via an appropriate local Police Station for police checks - on all people applying to work with children and young people, including volunteers. Criminal Record Bureau is able to provide checks with regard to persons arriving from the UK:



7. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The **EHRC** staff and volunteers should organise all their activities to reduce to a minimum those situations within which it may be possible for children and young people to be abused. Staff and volunteers are required to abide by this Code of Practice to safeguard children and young people.

- DO treat all children and young people with the respect they deserve
- DO make sure any suspicions or allegations are recorded and reported to the Child Protection Representative.
- DO NOT get personally involved – leave it to the professionals. Refer to Safeguarding Directorate at Ebony View.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Adults should ensure that the touch and physical contact they use is not exploitative and is not open to misunderstanding. Children and young people 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 young people 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 young people can do for themselves
- Restrain a child using physical force unless absolutely necessary to prevent the child from harming himself or someone else.

WORKING WITH INDIVIDUAL CYP

- You should avoid being alone in a building, car or a closed room with a child / young person.
- In exceptional circumstances where an adult may be alone with a child for a short period, the adults 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 e.g. designated office or room with a clear glass window. The door must always be left open.

RUNNING ACTIVITIES

- Any group of children should be supervised by at least two responsible and vetted adult on all activities.
- For some groups this will mean parents staying with children they have brought to the group activity until named leaders for that activity have arrived.
- It is important to know who the leaders are on all activities.



OUTSIDE OF WORK

- Children should not be expected to make their way to an activity through poorly lit areas.
- Adults/leaders should know the safe arrangements for children to get home after the activity. This must be recorded in the book when the child signs in at the beginning of the session.
- Adults should be discouraged from meeting individually with children outside organised music activities and should not take a child or young person to their home.
- If some of these situations are unavoidable, get parental permission first. If that is not possible make certain that The EHRC staff or volunteers and the parents or carers know what you intend to do and inform parents/guardians know what has happened as soon as you can.

RESOURCES & EQUIPMENT

- Minimise the prospect of injury by checking all musical and sound equipment and playing surfaces
- Do not employ excessive or inappropriate training methods, use only age appropriate language, media products and activities in working with CYP. Sexually explicit materials are never appropriate.
- Under no circumstances give medication, alcohol, tobacco, alcohol or other drugs to CYP.
- Do not lend or borrow personal money or property to or from CYP
- Do not give or receive personal gifts from CYP

8. WHISTLEBLOWING PROCEDURE – (THE PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT 1998) ALLEGATIONS AGAINST COMMISSIONERS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

THE EHRC - ASSURANCES TO VOLUNTEERS

The EHRC is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, openness and accountability and recognise that you, the employee or volunteer, have an important role to play in achieving this goal.

Employees or volunteers will usually be the first to know when someone inside or connected with an organisation is doing something illegal or improper, but often they feel apprehensive about voicing their concerns. This may be because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or the organisation itself. Or it may be because they do not think that their concerns will be taken seriously, because they are afraid that they will be bullied or dismissed. However, The EHRC does not believe that it is in anyone's interests for employees with knowledge of wrongdoing to remain silent.

The EHRC takes all malpractice very seriously, whether it is committed by Commissioners, staff, volunteers, suppliers or contractors; this document sets out the Procedure by which you can report your concerns to us.

What should I report under this Procedure?

It is impossible to give an exhaustive list of the activities that constitute misconduct or malpractice but, broadly speaking, The EHRC would expect you to report the following: -



- Criminal offences;
- Failure to comply with legal obligations;
- Actions which endanger the health or safety of staff, volunteers or public;
- Actions which are intended to conceal any of the above.

It will not always be clear that a particular action falls within one of these categories and you will need to use your own judgement. However The EHRC would prefer you to report your concerns rather than keep them to yourself. If you make a report in good faith then, even if it is not confirmed by an investigation, your concern will be valued and appreciated.

HOW DO I MAKE A REPORT?

You can make a report orally or in writing. Standard report forms (attached) are available from the office. The EHRC would normally expect you to raise your concerns internally to:

- A Committee member – Chairperson or Secretary

If you are unsure whether to use this Procedure, or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact Safeguarding Directorate, Ebony View, St Helena Island.

EXTERNAL CONTACTS

While we hope that this policy will give you reassurance you need to raise such matters internally, The EHRC recognises that there may be circumstances (for example, where the wrongdoing is extremely serious) where it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an outside body, such as the police or social services.

DO I NEED PROOF OF WRONGDOING TO MAKE MY REPORT?

The EHRC does not expect you to have absolute proof of any misconduct or malpractice that you report. However, you will need to be able to show the reasons for your concern.

WILL THE EHRC PROTECT MY IDENTITY IF I MAKE A REPORT?

The EHRC will do everything possible to keep your identity secret, if you so wish. However, there may be circumstances (for example, if your report becomes the subject of criminal investigation) wherein you may be needed as a witness. Should this be the case we will discuss the matter with you at the earliest opportunity.

HOW WILL MY REPORT BE INVESTIGATED?

Once you have made a report, The EHRC will acknowledge receipt of it within five working days.



STANDARD REPORT FORM

Please complete this form, sign and date at the bottom.

All information is treated in the Strictest Confidence.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

NAME..... **SIGNATURE**.....

DATE.....

Protection and Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy



I have read and understood this policy this policy

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Name _____

Signature: _____

Date _____