

April 2025

Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

Horsham Matters believes that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibilities to safeguard welfare by a commitment of practice, which protects them.

We recognise that everyone has the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse regardless of their age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent and report the physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of any member of our community. The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive Horsham Matters services
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect that someone may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm

This Policy applies to all as staff, board of trustees, volunteers, students and anyone working on behalf of Horsham Matters.

We will seek to safeguard children, young people and adults by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting
- 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 staff and volunteers
- Sharing information with agencies who need to know, involving children, parents and adults appropriately
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through support and training

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

If you have concerns about a child or adult you must speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Amalia Lovett – Interim Managing Director

Email: amalia.lovett@horsham-matters.org.uk

Or in her absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Helen Pitt – Trustee, Safeguarding Lead

Email: safeguarding@horsham-matters.org.uk

1. Referral to Social Care

Referral pathway

If there is an immediate danger to a child, young person or adult you must contact the police, 999.

If there are any signs of suffering or suffered abuse and/or neglect; is likely to suffer abuse of neglect; would likely benefit from support services and are children under the age of 18 or an unborn baby (in the case of a teenage parent)	If there are any signs of suffering or suffered abuse and/or neglect; is likely to suffer abuse of neglect; would likely benefit from support services and adults
Referral to Integrated Front Door (IFD) (tel. 01403 229900 for advice) Link to be used to complete a referral https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/raise-a-concern-about-a-child For out hours including weekends and bank	Referral to Adult Safeguarding Hub tel. 03302227007 – to be used when requiring a same day response otherwise use link below to complete referral https://socialcareportal.westsussex.gov.uk/s4s/FormDetails/FillForm?formId=407

- The Designated Lead will support you in contacting Integrated Front Door or Adults' Safeguarding Hub to make a referral. They will be familiar with the procedure and will be able to advise you. The timing of referrals must reflect the perceived risk and should normally be within one working day of recognition. If, for any reason, you cannot contact the designated or named person in your agency you should go ahead and contact IFD or Adult's Safeguarding Hub, completing the online forms
 - When a referral is made to IFD you must state what the young person, adult and parents/carers will be told, by whom and when.
- Under no circumstances should you speak to or confront the abuser. Do not share suspicions or information with any other person other than your line manager, Children's Social Care and the Police. Information given to IFD Adult's Safeguarding Hub or the Police will be taken seriously, handled sensitively and shared only on a 'need to know' basis.
- In order to ensure safeguarding on the basis of proper evidence, the source of the referral cannot be kept anonymous.
- If you have any concerns about an adult's behaviour towards children, young people and adults (not an employee or volunteer working for the agency):
 - Do not ignore it - the Charity will take any concerns very seriously.
 - You must discuss your concerns with the designated person who will support you in liaising with the statutory agencies should any child protection or adult protection matter arise.
 - Do not confront the adult but seek the advice of a Designated Lead. If they are not available seek advice from the Trustee Safeguarding or from IFD/Adult's Safeguarding Hub.

2. Dealing with allegations against an Employee, Volunteer, Trustee

It is essential to act quickly and effectively if an allegation is made, or if there is suspicion or concern about a professional or volunteer's relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, particularly if they have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to, a child or adult
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If an allegation is made, or a concern arises, about a member of staff or volunteer, ensure that a Designated Lead is informed immediately who will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (0330 222 6450 or via email to LADO@westsussex.gov.uk). The LADO is available to provide advice or support in any allegations process, including advising whether or not immediate suspension of the person concerned should be initiated. Senior Managers must ensure advice is sought at the earliest opportunity. If the LADO is unavailable or the concern is raised out of hours you should contact the MASH or the Out of Hours Service or, in an emergency, the Police. Records should be secured and will be strictly limited to relevant staff and external professionals on a need to know basis. The member of staff or volunteer should be treated fairly and honestly, helped to understand the concerns expressed, the process being followed and any outcomes of the process. Senior managers should seek advice from the LADO and IFD/Police before informing the person who is subject to an allegation.

3. Responding to a disclosure

If someone tells you that they, or someone they know, is being abused:

- Believe what the person is saying and take it seriously.
- Reassure the person who has made the disclosure to you that they have done the right thing.
- Give the person time to talk and do not probe or ask leading questions. Investigation is not your responsibility.
- Do not promise to keep secrets. All allegations of harm or potential harm must be acted upon.
- Explain to the person that you will share this information with a senior member of staff who will ensure the appropriate procedures will be followed.
- E-mails or text messages received detailing details of suspected abuse should be immediately responded to within 24 hours by contacting the young person by phone or face-to-face to obtain further information.
- Record the event in accordance with member agency procedure.
- All allegations, even those that appear less serious, need to be followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation concerned. All allegations will be considered by the Local Authority Designated Officer, who acts for the WSSCB agencies to monitor allegations and ensure that the actions in response to the allegation are in accordance with the West Sussex Safeguarding Board Procedures.

- Advice on the storage of all documentation must be sought from a Designated Lead who must ensure that access is strictly limited to relevant staff and external professionals on a need to know basis.

4. Safe Working Practice

It is essential that all staff, volunteers and trustees are conscious of how they should conduct themselves to minimise the risk of finding themselves as the subject of any child protection processes.

"DO's"

- Read and follow the safeguarding policy and procedures
- Respond to the designated named person any concerns about child and adult welfare/safety
- Respond to the designated named person any concerns about the conduct of other staff/volunteers/contractors
- Record in writing all relevant incidents
- Work in an open and transparent way
- Discuss and reopen any incidents of concern or that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a child or adult
- Report to the designated/named person any incidents that suggest a child may be infatuated with you or taking an above normal interest in you.
- Dress appropriately for your role
- Use a work e-mail contact address should you need to contact clients
- Fully co-operate with any investigation into child/adult protection issues in your organisation.

"DON'T's"

- Take any action that would lead a reasonable person to question your motivation and/or intentions
- Misuse in any way your position of power and influence

- Engage in activities out of the workplace that might compromise your position with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Establish or seek to establish social contact with adult clients and children outside of the workplace or setting
- Accept gifts or give gifts
- Transport children/adult clients in your own vehicle
- Take, publish or share images of children without parents' permission or without the adult's consent
- Access abuse images (sometimes referred to as child pornography) or other inappropriate material
- Abuse your position of trust with children or young people

5. Training

The designated leads for the Charity will attend child protection training which will be updated every 3 years.

All staff and volunteers will receive the Charity's safeguarding training during their induction.

6. Safer Workforce

Advertisement of posts and application packs will make explicit reference to the commitment of the organisation to Safeguarding including:

- Compliance with Data Barring Service (appropriate to role)
- Job Description and Person Specification will explicitly include safeguarding responsibilities
- Selection process will be in accordance with our Safer Recruitment policy

7. Reporting to Board of Trustees

Safeguarding numbers and types of incidents will be reported by the Interim Managing Director to the Board at each Board Meeting.

8. Other Policies

This policy should be ready alongside the following Horsham Matters' policies and procedures:

- Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment
- Complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and Safety
- Lone Working
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders

Signature:

Role:

Full name:

Date: