|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Date agreed/reviewed: 2020**  **Date due for review: 2024** |
| **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**  **Including Young People and Vulnerable Adults** | |

**The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Hertsmere Borough Council create a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults and to set out good practice guidelines for all council staff to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.**

A child or young person is defined as someone under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). A vulnerable adult is anyone who is 18 years of age or over who cannot protect themselves from abuse because of age, illness, disability or a mental health problem. Where a Child or young person is mentioned in this document it should be understood that the same guidelines, examples of good practice and reporting procedures should be applied for vulnerable adults.

### Hertsmere Council will ensure that:

* The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount.
* All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
* All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

## Hertsmere Borough Council Safeguarding Policy Statement

*“**Broxbourne Borough CouncilHertsmere Borough Council has a duty of care to safeguard all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in all activities and events from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.*

*Hertsmere Borough Council will ensure the safety and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in any activity run by the Council*

*and events through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Hertsmere Borough Council and set out within this document.”*

## Policy aims

The aim of the Hertsmere Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice:-

* Providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Hertsmere Borough Council staff.
* Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

## Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Hertsmere Borough Council recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Human Resources administer the process for the recruitment and training of all staff. HR will carry out pre-employment checks, and provide mandatory training on safeguarding and ensure that it is covered in the Corporate Induction. Managers are responsible for ensuring that all of their staff complete the required training and that volunteers who will be working with children and vulnerable adults also receive the necessary training.

Managers who are involved in recruitment need to be trained in recruitment procedures and where any post involves a safeguarding element the safer recruitment process should be followed [Safe Staffing Handbook](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/childrens-services/hscb/professionals/hscb-handbook.pdf)

Pre-selection checks include the following:

* All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
* Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau, if this is a requirement of the job role.
* If the job role requires a DBS check the applicant will not start employment with Hertsmere Borough Council until a satisfactory DBS has been received, however if the role is crucial to the Council’s services the employee may commence work under supervision providing the manager has completed the appropriate documentation.
* Two confidential references. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
* Evidence of identity should be provided (eg passport or driving licence with photo).
* All personal information will be stored in a lockable facility accessible to Human Resources staff only.

## Interview and induction

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

* A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
* Their qualifications should be substantiated or verified by Human Resources.
* The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
* Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

## Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

* Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
* Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
* Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
* Work safely and effectively with children.

This will be done at the Corporate Induction and through the e-learning module.

### Hertsmere Borough Council requires:

* Staff employed by Hertsmere Borough Council who have significant contact with young people are required to attend a recognised good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection. This should also outline Hertsmere Borough Councils examples of good practice and inform them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person, for example, who to report to and relevant forms to complete.
* All other staff to have awareness training and complete the online mandatory training.
* Staff to undergo national first aid training (where necessary).

## Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Hertsmere Borough Council, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns. This should be pursued through contact with the appropriate Safeguarding Lead Officer/Calling Children’s Social Care on 0300 123 4043 or the Police on 999.

Hertsmere Borough Council will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

* a criminal investigation
* a child protection investigation
* an internal investigation which may lead to disciplinary action.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

## Action

### Concerns about poor practice:

* If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Safeguarding is to Officer in conjunction with the Head of HR and Customer Services will investigate the matter.
* If the allegation is about poor practice by the Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, the Director of the relevant department and Human Resources who will decide how to deal with the allegation and investigate, in conjunction with the Head of HR and Customer Services, whether or not to pursue disciplinary proceedings.

### Concerns about suspected abuse:

* Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
* Human Resources may refer the allegation to the social services department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
* The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
* If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Safeguarding Lead and the Director.

### Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people

* Hertsmere Borough Councils Safeguarding Lead Officer, Sajida Bijle
* Hertsmere Borough Councils Safeguarding Officer, Judith Fear
* Hertsmere Borough Councils Human Resources Department
* The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
* The person making the allegation
* Social services/police
* The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser, unless it is a member of staff.

**Internal enquiries and suspension**

* The Director of the relevant department, with the Lead Officer and the Head of HR and Customer Services. They will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
* Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, The Director, Lead Officer and Head of HR and Customer Services will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police

### Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

### 

* Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. A useful website is [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)
* Staff members should be directed to the Care First Service, including the alleged perpetrator.