

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER - UK CHILD & YOUNG PERSON SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK

POLICY STATEMENT

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by a commitment to practice which protects them from harm.

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK's approach to the protection of children and young people is based on the principles recognised in the Children Act 1989 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

We recognise the welfare of the child/young person is paramount and all children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief and sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse, to be listened to and to have their views taken seriously.

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK will therefore:

- Raise awareness of the need to protect children and young people with whom we work and to reduce risks to them

- Ensure that staff and volunteers in contact with children and young people will have the requisite knowledge to carry out their jobs safely and effectively

- Ensure safe practice when working in partnership with other organisations

- Maintain an organisation that is safe for staff and children and young people and an environment where poor practice is challenged

- Make line managers responsible for ensuring this

- Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken

- Ensure the Executive Director and members of the Senior Management Team are accountable for the effective implementation of this policy

- Ensure that all staff receive a copy of the child protection policy, are trained in its meaning and application and understand their responsibilities

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

To provide protection for the children and young people with whom ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK works and/or comes into contact with

To provide all employees with guidance on how they should behave if they suspect that a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk from some form of abuse

To guide employees on how to respond to and report child protection concerns

TO WHOM THE POLICY APPLIES

This policy applies to all paid employees, seconded staff, volunteers, consultants and agency workers, working on behalf of ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK in any capacity and in any setting.

SUPPORTING STAFF

Staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children with whom they work and/or come into contact with during the course of their work. Children can be at risk of harm from a range of sources. It is the responsibility of staff to promote good practice and minimise and manage potential risks. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that the staff they line-manage are aware of and understand the procedures and have levels of knowledge and skills commensurate to the level and nature of their direct involvement with children and young people.

Therefore:

All staff will work to ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK child protection procedures which are reviewed and updated as necessary

All staff working in settings where children and young people are present (e.g. schools, at fundraising events, or in the workplace when supporting young people on work experience placements) will ensure that they are aware of, and adhere to, local safeguarding procedures in place.

All staff are able to raise concerns about poor and dangerous practice through the ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK child protection procedures and the whistle blowing policy

All staff have training and support as required to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

THE ROLE OF MANAGERS

Responsibilities include:

- Being the first point of contact for reports of concerns
- Reporting all concerns to the Lead Safeguarding Advisor o Providing advice and support to employees reporting disclosures or concerns
- Working with the Lead Safeguarding Adviser to resolve issues.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

It is important that staff work to a high standard of professional conduct and act with integrity at all times, in order to minimise the risk of abuse from within ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK. When incidents of abuse are raised or suspected it is important that staff have the necessary information and support and follow the procedures appropriately.

Staff should make sure they have read the ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK Child Protection Procedures in full. They should highlight and discuss any issues requiring clarification and any training issues with their line manager. Staff should make sure that they have a working knowledge of the different forms of abuse and possible indicators. Further information is set out as an Appendix to this policy. Staff should avoid developing personal relationships with the children and young people they are assigned to work with.

CONSULTANTS

It is the responsibility of the commissioning manager to ensure consultants are familiar with this document and agree to work within this framework. If there are any child protection concerns with the conduct of consultants, these concerns must be raised following the steps outlined in this policy.

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PROJECT WORK

In project proposals and tenders ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK's Child Protection Policy should be mentioned and attached where appropriate.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED BY ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK

Young people undertaking work experience placements at ACTION AGAINST HUNGER and their school placement officer should be made aware of ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK's child protection policy and procedures. A risk assessment should be completed in advance of any work experience placement. A template is available from the HR department for this purpose. Those with specific communication needs, because of language or disability should have access to information in appropriate forms to ensure their understanding. Staff working or coming into contact with young people should ensure they know what the appropriate procedures are for their particular circumstances. For example, they should know who to contact out of normal working hours if they are working at a fundraising event, what steps need to be taken and to ensure that they have details for main contacts.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING DISCLOSURES AND ALLEGATIONS

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK staff have no powers to investigate child abuse. Nonetheless ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK, staff and volunteers have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and a responsibility to work closely and co-operatively with other agencies in order to achieve this. Staff may have a role as witnesses or supporters of children involved in child protection processes.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In any work that involves contact with children and young people it is important to be clear about confidentiality. While personal information is subject to a legal duty of confidence, and should not normally be disclosed without the subject's consent, when there are concerns that a child is or may be at risk of significant harm, then the over-riding objective must be to safeguard that child and disclosure of information is imperative. This principle is accepted within the Data

Protection Act. It is absolutely essential to be clear about the limits of confidentiality well before any such matter arises.

Do not promise to keep secrets.

Should it become necessary to pass on information shared by another party this decision should always be discussed with them and where possible their cooperation sought beforehand. Explanations of the reasons; the processes; the likely sequence of events; who to contact for information or for support should also be provided.

When a child or young person makes an allegation of abuse they may hope that the abuse will stop without further enquiries. They may fear the effect this will have on their family and may fear retribution from the abuser. The child or young person is to be helped to understand why the referral must be made and what is likely to happen as a result. It is important to reassure the child but s/he must not be told that their allegation will be treated in a particular way nor that the information will be kept a secret.

Confidential Record-Keeping

All concerns and any discussions about a child or young person's welfare should be recorded in writing whether or not further action is taken. It is important that concerns raised are recorded accurately and in detail. All discussions should end with clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action. Where no further action is the outcome the reason for this should be clearly recorded.

Records must be kept securely in a locked place to which access is restricted. Managers have a particular responsibility in maintaining the confidentiality of these records and must ensure that the records, or any information they contain, are made available only to relevant parties. The transfer of information - verbally, through the mail, electronically, etc - should be done in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

LEAD SAFEGUARDING ADVISER

The Lead Safeguarding Advisor at ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK is

Maria Eaton, Director of Human Resources
Tel: 020 8293 6195
Mobile: 07985 114941
Email: m.eaton@actionagainsthunger.org.uk

The responsibilities of the Lead Safeguarding Advisor (LSA) include:

- Developing ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK's approach to Safeguarding, reviewing the policy and procedures on a regular basis.
- Providing advice and support to ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK staff, volunteers, consultants, senior management and the Board of Trustees.
- Management of referrals/cases reported and working with Senior Management to ensure resolution.
- Auditing the operation of the policy and procedures.

NOTE: WHEN A MEMBER OF STAFF PLANS AN ACTIVITY WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE OFF SITE AND OUT OF HOURS THEY MUST ENSURE THAT THEY TAKE WITH THEM THE CONTACT NUMBERS OF THE LEAD SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR AND THEIR MANAGER

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE DISCLOSES AN ABUSIVE ACT OR EXPERIENCE

If a child or young person confides to a member of staff that they are being, or have been, abused, the staff member should:

- React calmly. Panic may frighten or silence the person
- Tell the person they were right to tell
- Make it clear to the person they are not to blame
- Take what is said seriously. Be clear that they cannot keep secrets and that they have to pass on information if they think the person has been or is being harmed in some way.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said
- Only ask questions if they need to clarify what they are being told—they should not ask about explicit details – it is up to Social Services/the Police to investigate fully
- Do not ask leading questions
- Make a full record of what is being said, heard and seen as soon as possible
Do not delay in passing the information onto the Lead Safeguarding Adviser.

PROCESS AND RECORDING AND REFERRAL

Both recognising and responding to abuse can be a complex matter. The legal framework differs depending on the age of the child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Where your concerns relate to someone below their 18th Birthday, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to your manager and the Lead Safeguarding Adviser in the same working day. If the Lead Advisor is not available they should report the matter to the Executive Director.

The member of staff should record the allegation/ incident/suspicion.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR INAPPROPRIATE OR DANGEROUS BEHAVIOUR BY A MEMBER OF STAFF

Regardless of the age of the young person, if an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct is made against a member of staff, or person in a position of trust, then this must be reported to the Lead Safeguarding Adviser immediately.

Concerns about staff must be treated with the same rigour as other concerns. If there are concerns that child abuse has taken place the Lead Safeguarding Adviser will pass this information to the relevant Social Services Department, Safeguarding Unit and/or the Police for investigation. The Lead Safeguarding Adviser and senior managers will also need to refer to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and decide whether the member of staff should be suspended pending a full investigation.

If the member of staff is not happy with the response they receive from the Lead Safeguarding Adviser then they should refer to the ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK's Whistle Blowing Policy.

There may be instances when a staff member's performance or conduct when working with children will lead to ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK's disciplinary procedures being invoked. The ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK Disciplinary Policy will then be invoked. This is available in the staff handbook.

The nature of the concern about the staff member's conduct and or performance will determine how and what disciplinary action is taken.

On occasion, a child or young person may abuse another child. Child protection procedures should be followed in respect of both children in those situations.

Recording

Even if you have discussed your concerns with your manager/lead safeguarding adviser it is important that all concerns are properly recorded in writing and passed to the Lead Safeguarding Advisor as soon as possible.

It is important not to write speculative comments but to stick to the facts. A staff member's opinion may be crucial but it should be recorded as an opinion and any evidence stated to support these opinions. Records pertaining to issues

of child protection may be accessible to third parties such as Children's Services, Police, the Courts and Solicitors.

Referrals

The Lead Safeguarding Adviser has responsibility for deciding whether to refer the matter onto the relevant Children's Services Department and/or the Police. Referrals should preferably be made within the same working day and certainly within 24 hours.

There may be instances where urgent medical attention is needed. In these circumstances, staff should always try to consult with someone else, but it may be necessary to make immediate contact with the Police and/or Children's Services or emergency health services.

It is not the responsibility of ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. It is the responsibility of staff at ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK to act if there is cause for concern, in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any action necessary to protect a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

If you have concerns about possible abuse of someone over 18 then you should talk about these with the Lead Safeguarding Adviser and decide any appropriate action.

What happens to reports?

If the Lead Adviser decides to report the concern to the Safeguarding Children Board they will do so by telephone within 24 hours. They will follow up the phone call by putting the concern in writing within 3 days of making the telephone call.

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS WHEN WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

OVERRIDING PRINCIPLES

It is important that all staff and consultants recognize the importance of working cooperatively with other agencies in managing situations where children may be at risk.

If ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK is working in partnership with another organisation, in whatever capacity, it must be determined before hand which organisation and member of staff will be responsible for leading on child protection issues.

MEDIA AND PUBLICATIONS

Permission from children and young people must be given before anything is published concerning them. Similar permission should be sought if Photographs or Video is taken of them.

If the pictures are to be used in any sort of publication or put out in the public domain permission from the parents or carers needs to be sought. This is because there may be child protection issues e.g. from estranged parents, abusers etc.

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK consent forms ask for permission to take photographs and video. However, it is courteous to check with the child or young person again if you do intend to make public photographs or video footage.

EMAIL AND THE INTERNET

Staff authorised to use the Internet must not download pornographic or other unsuitable material on to ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK machines, or distribute such material to others.

All staff are expected to adhere to the ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK Email and Internet Policy. Disciplinary action will be taken against staff who breach this policy.

APPENDIX 1

TYPES OF ABUSE

NEGLECT

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs both physical and or emotional/psychological. It may involve failure to provide clothes, shelter and food or failure to protect the child from physical harm or danger. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, the child's basic emotional needs.

PHYSICAL

Causing physical harm to the child or young person such as: hitting, shaking, pushing, burning, poisoning, and drowning. Harm can also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates symptoms of ill health or causes actual ill health in a child or young person in their care.

o Sexual

Involving, forcing or enticing a child or young person to engage in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. These activities may involve physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in creating or looking at pornographic material.

• Emotional

Ill treatment of a child to cause severe and persistent adverse effects in their emotional development. It may involve telling a child they are worthless, unloved, unvalued. It may involve making unacceptable demands on the child in relation to their age and capabilities, or causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence and ignorance. The abuse may be perpetrated by a wide range

of people including family members and relatives, people in positions of power and authority, volunteers, neighbours, friends and associates, as well as strangers.

ABUSE OF TRUST

There is particular concern when someone perpetrates abuse in power or authority or who uses his or her position to the detriment of the Health, Safety, welfare and general well being of a vulnerable person. Employees should always be alert to situations where they may be witnessing "ABUSE OF TRUST". This must also be brought to the attention of the Lead Safeguarding Advisor.

When any of the above forms of abuse OCCUr, emotional abuse will have occurred as well.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

Employees are not expected to be Child Protection experts. However, there are a number of circumstances under which staff might have concerns that a child, young person has been or is being abused:

- They may tell about abuse they have experienced.
- A third party – a parent, relative, carer, another young person, other professionals, neighbour – may share concerns.
- Staff may also become concerned through observing:
- A bruise or injury, which is unusual for example on a part of the body which is not normally prone to such injuries for example on the cheeks. o Injuries which require but have not received medical attention.
- Cigarette burns or bite marks.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour either over time or suddenly for example becoming aggressive, quiet or withdrawn.
- ' Running away from home.
- Non-attendance at school, projects or activities.
- Reluctance to get changed or for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- The young person appears not to trust certain adults for example parent, carer, staff member with whom you would usually expect them to have or once had a close relationship.
- The young person being discouraged or unable to make friends or from socialising with others.
- The young person becoming unusually dirty or unkempt.

- Changes to eating patterns.
- The young person developing a disturbed sleeping pattern.
- 'The young person self harms or attempts to self-harm.
- Age inappropriate sexual knowledge.
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour.

The above list is not exhaustive

Many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or crisis in the family the staff's knowledge of a young person over a period of time may help them to understand whether there is cause for concern.

BARRIERS TO REPORTING ABUSE

Experience in the child protection field over the years has shown that there are many barriers that individuals often have to overcome before raising a concern.

Some people have concerns about sharing confidential information. It would normally be considered good practice not to refer a child or young person to another agency without their knowledge and consent. However this principle of confidentiality can be overridden when there are child protection concerns.

There are many common myths about the child protection system.

One of the most common is that reporting child abuse means that a child or young person will be removed from his/her parents. This is rarely true and, even when it is, most children are returned to parental care.

RACE, ETHNICITY AND CULTURE

Abuse can take place in any culture and all children have a right to grow up safe from harm. Staff need to be aware of and sensitive to differing family lifestyles and childrearing practices. Staff need to guard against myths and stereotypes, both positive and negative. At the same time fear of being accused of racism should not prevent necessary action being taken.

GENDER

While a majority of child sexual abuse is carried out by men, it needs to be recognised females do commit sexual offences against children.

DISABLED CHILDREN

Disabled children and young people are particularly vulnerable to abuse in any form. Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children. Staff must maintain high standards of practice, remain vigilant to the possibility of a child being abused and minimise situations of risk. All staff working with disabled children must ensure that the children know how to raise concerns, and have access to interpreters/specialist workers and other aids to communication. Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with the procedures. The same thresholds for action apply. Where concerns are raised about a child who has communication difficulties, appropriate support, interpreting services and communication aids must be secured.