

## Safeguarding Policy

### 1 Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for all staff and volunteers within Hope Support Services (Hope) when dealing with safeguarding issues. It should be used in conjunction with Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures when responding to, or preventing and reducing, the risk of abuse to all children who visit and engage with Hope Support Services onsite, offsite, online or who come into contact with staff or volunteers.

### 2 Definitions

1. **Children** – as in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 respectively, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday. 'Children' there means 'children and young people' throughout.
2. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** – is defined for the purposes of this policy 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 and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chance and to enter adulthood successfully.

### 3 Scope

1. Safeguarding and protecting children and young people is everyone's responsibility.
2. This policy and its associated procedure are mandatory for all staff including temporary, agency, freelance and contractors (hereafter referred to as 'staff'), trustees and volunteers, as they must be aware of their individual and collection roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect.
3. The policy and procedures are implemented within the framework of relevant national legislation and guidelines which includes: **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, The Children Act 1989** and the **Human Rights Act 1998**. They should be read in conjunction with Hope Support Services' whistleblowing policy. Hope Support Services' Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedures & Hope Support Services' Safer Recruitment Policy.

### 4 Link to cause and principles

1. Our aim is to be there for every child and young person that needs us. We want their experience of engaging with Hope to be meaningful and safe. This can only be attained if children and young people are safeguarded and protected.
2. Primary responsibility for the child/young person's safety and welfare is with the supervising adult member of staff.
3. Hope ensures that all children and young people are safe and protected while visiting its offices or participating in its work off-site or engaging with us digitally.

4. The Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures that accompany this policy states our responsibilities, obligations and standards.

## **5 Outcomes**

1. As a result of the policy and associated procedure being followed, children will be better protected from the impact of abuse and neglect.
2. The DSL, staff, volunteers and trustees will take the necessary steps to safeguard and protect children including, contacting the police or other statutory agencies or/and discussing concerns with parent/carers.

## **6 Key Principles Recognised by Hope**

1. The welfare of the child/young person is paramount; this is enshrined in the Children Act 1989 and should be evident in all responses to any concerns of abuse and neglect.
2. All children and young people, including disabled children, have an equal right to protection from all types of harm and abuse; all staff and volunteers should advocate where necessary to ensure this principle is applied by all.
3. Working in an effective partnership with statutory agencies (and where possible parents/carers, children, young people) should be instigated whenever there are concerns about abuse and neglect for a child.
4. All staff and volunteers have a shared and individual responsibility to take immediate steps to protect and safeguard children in line with this policy and associated procedure.
5. Primary responsibility for children/young people lies with their supervising adult when engaging with us onsite, offsite during an event or outreach activity and online.

## **7 The Policy Statement**

1. This policy and associated procedure is presented on induction and applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees and representatives of Hope including agency staff and temporary staff, freelance facilitators and contractors. It must be read in full and signed before undertaking any work for Hope.
2. Hope is committed to the prevention of and protection from abuse and neglect of all children and young people who come into contact with the organisation through it's staff, volunteers or representatives in whatever capacity that contact occurs.
3. Hope is committed to taking all necessary steps to stop abuse happening, regardless as to whether that abuse is perpetrated by staff, volunteers, family members of children, members of the public or other children or young people.
4. Hope is committed to its duty of care to the children and young people it has contact with. If there are concerns about staff or volunteers abusing a child or young person, it will initiate any action required to address this without delay. This will include actions required to address abusive behaviours and attitudes. Where a member of staff has been dismissed because of safeguarding concerns they will be referred by Hope to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and relevant professional bodies.

5. All staff, trustees and volunteers should be clear and trained on appropriate behaviour and responses with regards to working with children and young people safely. Failure to comply with safeguarding policies and procedures may be treated as gross misconduct and appropriate action may be taken.
6. Hope will publish online the safeguarding policy and procedure.
7. Hope is committed to ensuring that the right staffing and reporting structure is in place to enable safeguarding concerns to be dealt with effectively and to ensure the correct processes are followed as detailed in the procedure. This includes the escalation of concerns posing a significant risk to senior staff within Hope.
8. Hope has robust safer recruitment processes in place, ensuring that unsuitable staff, volunteers, trustees or representatives do not gain access to children or young people. All staff, volunteers and trustees are subject to the relevant DBS checks prior to taking up post, this is in addition to references.

## **8 Roles to support safeguarding**

1. **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** has the lead responsibility for all safeguarding and protection matters at Hope where appropriate will make referrals to external bodies such as police.
  - a. The DSL champions safeguarding, raises awareness and ensures safeguarding training is delivered.
  - b. They work with the relevant staff to make recommendations, update policies and procedures every two years, communicate changes and keep information up to date.
  - c. The DSLs meet monthly and the DSL meets with the Trustee and Chair at least 3-4 times a year.
2. Contact details for DSLs are as follows:
  - a. DSL, Lorna Russell, 07776663868
  - b. Deputy DSL, Kate Croudace, 07776663853
  - c. Safeguarding Trustee, Helen Bolt, [helen.bolt@hopesupport.org.uk](mailto:helen.bolt@hopesupport.org.uk)

## **9 Risk assessment**

1. Hope Support Services is committed to ensuring all staff and volunteers, including those with designated responsibilities, have received appropriate levels of up-to-date safeguarding training. This will be a minimum of every two years for the DSL.
2. This policy is reviewed annually, the DSL, safeguarding trustee and CEO meet regularly to discuss Safeguarding and it is a standing item on the board of trustees agenda.
3. The Board of trustees are responsible for reviewing the policy and procedures every year.
4. Hope will ensure staff and volunteers are carefully recruited and necessary checks are made in line with the Recruitment and Vetting policies.

5. Hope is committed to working with the police and Children's Services and their Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the borough in which the young people are located especially if there are concerns about, or perceived risks, in respect of staff, trustees, contractors or volunteers.
6. If this policy and associated procedure is ignored or disregarded, the possible outcomes are:
  - a. For children and young people – places at further risk of abuse/harm and neglect.
  - b. For staff and volunteers – potentially subjected to inquiry, investigation internally or externally for failing to take appropriate steps, which may then lead to a disciplinary process.
  - c. For the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Chief Executive and Board of Trustees – possible inquiry and report from the Charities Commission and regulators or recommendation from local authorities to regulators.
  - d. For Hope Support Services – possible risk of public scrutiny and ultimately risk of prosecution.
  - e. All of the above can lead to negative media attention and damage to Hope Support Services' reputation.
  - f. The public may lose confidence in Hope as an organisation resulting in reputational damage, fewer referrals and therefore failure to deliver out charitable and corporate objectives.

## **10 Legal and regulatory requirements**

1. For Hope to meet its responsibilities the following legislation and associated guidance are of significance:
  - a. The Children Act 1989
  - b. The Children Act 2004
  - c. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Date of last review: 11th April 2025

Date of next review: 11th April 2026

Date of last update: 30th July 2025 - update contact details