**Safeguarding Policy & Procedures**

**Definition:**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children & young people is defined as protecting children & young people from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of their health or development, ensuring that they are growing up receiving safe and effective care and acting to enable children to have the best outcomes.

The purpose of this policy is:

* to protect children & young people who receive Home-Start Leeds services
* to provide trustees, staff, volunteers with overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

**Safeguarding Policy Statement**

The policy for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children & young people has been adopted by Home-Start Leeds to signify its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children & young people. This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of Home-Start Leeds.

Home-Start Leeds believes that a child should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all our children & young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children.

Home-Start Leeds maintains an up -to -date awareness of national and local guidance and follows appropriate local safeguarding procedures.

Home-Start Leeds recognises that:

* the welfare of the child is paramount as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
* all children & young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
* some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences their level of dependency ,communication needs or other issues
* working in partnership with children, young people their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children & young people.

Home-Start Leeds will seek to keep children & young people safe by:

* valuing them, listening to and respecting them
* adopting child protection/safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for trustees, staff and volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Home-Start Leeds.
* providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
* recruiting staff and volunteers & trustees safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
* sharing information about child protection/safeguarding and good practice with children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers
* sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children & young people appropriately

Home-Start Leeds is committed to reviewing the Safeguarding Policy & good practice annually.

**Appendix One: Procedures**

**1. Recruitment, selection, induction and training procedures for trustees, staff and volunteers**

Home-Start Leeds takes all possible steps to ensure that children are kept safe through:

* safer recruitment processes for all trustees, staff and volunteers
* planned induction of all trustees, staff and volunteers, to include signed and dated confirmation of their understanding and acceptance of the safeguarding policy and procedures and code of conduct
* clear safeguarding procedures to inform trustees staff and volunteers about the appropriate action to take in the event of concerns about a child
* volunteers’ attendance at the Home-Start Leeds Course of Preparation in full; all volunteers accessing safeguarding refresher training every 2 years, in accordance with HSUK guidance and accessing the continual ongoing learning & development sessions that enhance understanding of safeguarding.
* trustees accessing effective guidance, training and support to ensure that they are able to work within these procedures

**2. Ongoing support and supervision for staff and volunteers**

Home-Start Leeds ensures that all volunteers and staff, including the senior worker, access regular, recorded support and supervision in line with Home-Start guidance, and are clear about their role and responsibilities, through:

* the implementation of the Home-Start standards and methods of practice and safeguarding code of conduct for trustees, staff and volunteers
* Identifying personnel to hold the Strategic Lead and designated safeguarding responsibilities within Home-Start Leeds.
* procedures to structure the management of any allegations of abuse against trustees, staff or volunteers

**3. Information Sharing**

Home-Start Leeds has clear expectations of all trustees, staff and volunteers for sharing information about families, parents, children and young people:

* all families supported are made aware of Home-Start Leeds safeguarding and confidentiality policies
* a factual dated record of contact with the family and of any concerns about a child(ren)/young people in families supported are kept in line with Home-Start’s record keeping and record retention procedures
* Home-Start Leeds recognises the importance of sharing information to protect children and normally the disclosure of the confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with the expressed permission of the parents for the purpose of assisting the family however where it is considered necessary for the welfare and protection of a child, information will be shared with the appropriate authority and families will be kept informed of Home-Start Leeds actions unless to do so would put the child at greater risk of harm

**4. Local Partnerships and Procedures**

Protecting children is a shared responsibility. In order to fulfil its responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of children & young people Home-Start Leeds:

* maintains effective links with organisations working with children and their families within the community
* participates in local partnership arrangements designed to protect children & young people and promote their wellbeing
* takes part in local multi-disciplinary training and integrated working in order to maintain an up to date understanding of local processes and to take up appropriate opportunities for professional development
* is aware of, holds current information on and works within the requirements of the local procedures followed by statutory and voluntary agencies

**5. Managing Allegations**

Government is clear that all children & young people, no matter what situation they are in, should be protected from abuse. If co-ordinators, family worker or volunteers see or hear anything which causes them to have concerns or to suspect that a child/young person is being abused by someone within Home-Start they should follow the procedures

* if the allegation is against a trustee, member of staff or volunteer, the concern should be reported to the appropriate line manager, the scheme’s Strategic Lead, the CEO and the Chair of Trustees immediately and to Home-Start UK
* the scheme’s Strategic Lead, along with the CEO, if not the subject of the concerns, is primarily responsible for taking all reasonable steps necessary to secure the safety of any child/young person who may be at risk, by, for example, removing the person who is the subject of the allegation from any situation involving children/young person. They will be supported by the and by the Local Authority Designated Officer(LADO)as appropriate
* the Chair of Trustees, CEO and Strategic Lead are responsible for liaising with the police and Children’s Social Care about allegations
* it is important to remember the scheme’s protocols for confidentiality and only those with a need to know should be privy to the details of the situation. This is particularly so for allegations of sexual abuse
* paper and electronic records relating to the allegation should be made secure to prevent them being removed or changed
* irrespective of action by Children’s Social Care or the police, trustees must seek Home-Start UK support to follow the appropriate procedure which will normally include without prejudice suspension of the trustee, staff or volunteer pending investigation. Following the investigation, disciplinary procedures may need to be invoked.
* In the case of a member of staff reporting concerns about a colleague, refer to the Whistle blowing Policy which details the appropriate support which should be provided, i.e. the right to advice and support, and to information about legal representation.

**6. Ensuring the Quality of the Home-Start Service**

Home-Start Leeds complies with the Home-Start Quality Assurance standards and undertakes self-assessments in order to check and improve its practice.

Home-Start policies and procedures are informed by national guidance and protocols and are regularly updated.

The following Home-Start documents, policies and procedures are adopted and implemented, and are fundamental to effective practice within Home-Start for carrying out responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children & young people.

All mandatory HSUK policies are adopted and implemented by schemes and are fundamental to effective practice within Home-Start for carrying out responsibilities for safeguarding, protecting and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

**Appendix Two: Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities within the Scheme**

The trustees retain ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children supported by Home-Start Leeds. They should agree:

* the member of staff with responsibility for undertaking the Strategic Lead on Safeguarding. This should be the senior staff member. The trustees must ensure that the Strategic Lead receives adequate support and supervision for their role, in line with Home-Start guidance
* the people within the scheme who carry out the designated role of taking responsibility for safeguarding issues raised by staff or volunteers and for referring on concerns for the safety of children. It is recommended that each co-ordinator responsible for managing staff or volunteers supporting families should be a Designated Safeguarding Person.

The Scheme’s Strategic Lead for Safeguarding:

**Name Nicola Wray, Snr. Co-ordinator**

**Contact details 0113 244 2419**

The role of the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding is to:

(a) Model and promote Home-Start’s commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of their work and conduct

(b) Ensure that the safeguarding policy and procedures and code of conduct are available and understood by all trustees, staff and volunteers, and that these are integrated into practice

(c) Ensure the scheme’s Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children are updated and reviewed annually in line with Home-Start and national and local guidance

(d) Ensure appropriate training provision and dissemination of information for trustees, staff and volunteers on safeguarding issues

(e) Take a lead role for dealing with safeguarding issues and providing information, advice and support to trustees, staff and volunteers

(f) Support the Designated Safeguarding People with their responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe, by:

 maintaining an overview of records of concern and action (ROCA) and referrals to children’s social care

 ensuring records are kept appropriately, in line with policy and practice

(g) Maintain up to date knowledge of national and local safeguarding procedures and liaise appropriately with local agencies with regard to safeguarding issues

(h) Collate safeguarding concerns raised by the scheme to identify patterns and inform the development of practice and liaison with other agencies

(i) Notify and liaise with the CEO, scheme trustees and Home-Start UK and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) around any allegations of harm or inappropriate behaviour made against staff, volunteers and trustees in accordance with guidance.

(j) Immediately inform the Chair of Trustees, CEO and Home-Start UK in the event of the serious harm or death of a child/young person and liaise with other agencies as appropriate

(k) Identify and liaise with Trustee Safeguarding Champion. Designated Safeguarding People

A Designated Safeguarding Person’s role is to:

(a) Model and promote Home-Start’s commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of their work and conduct

(b) Take responsibility for dealing with concerns about the safety of children raised by staff or volunteers who they supervise, following the scheme’s policies and procedures

(c) Maintain a clear, factual, dated record of contact with each supported family, in accordance with Home-Start guidance on record keeping

(d) Inform the scheme’s Strategic Lead for Safeguarding of concerns raised and processes followed; ensuring records of concern and action (ROCA) are discussed, signed off and actioned appropriately

(e) Follow up concerns and safeguarding issues referred to the relevant agencies

(f) Liaise with relevant agencies and the Local Safeguarding Children Board where appropriate about concerns, in accordance with Home-Start’s confidentiality policy

(g) Ensure the safeguarding policy is available to families, including parents/carers and children and young people in Home-Start

(h) Liaise with the scheme’s Strategic Lead for Safeguarding about safeguarding concerns, including where there are allegations against trustees, staff and volunteers; in accordance with Home-Start and local child protection policies and procedures

(i) Immediately inform the scheme Strategic Lead and Home-Start UK in the event of the serious harm or death of a child/young person and liaise with other agencies as appropriate

**Safeguarding Trustee**

**Anita Hawryszczuk, Trustee** - 0113 244 2419

The Trustee Safeguarding Lead is available to the trustees, strategic lead and designated people to:

(d) contribute to Board discussions about scheme capacity in working with more complex families, including those where there are safeguarding concerns

(e) support the Board and strategic lead to monitor and review systems, policy and procedures to ensure good safeguarding practice within the scheme and compliance with the Home-Start Quality Assurance Standards

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

Child abuse is quite rare however, it is important that all staff and volunteers understand the different forms of abuse that some children may experience and the signs and symptoms of such abuse. The LSCB recommend that all staff that work with children and young people access training to help them not only identify but also act upon any form of abuse that they may identify.

There are four types of abuse which can cause long term damage to a child or young person.

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/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, (including cyber- bullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non- penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

NEGLECT: Is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Possible signs of abuse include:

* Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries or the explanation of the cause of the injury is does not seem right.
* The child discloses abuse or describes what appears to be an abusive act.
* Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
* Unexplained change in behaviour such as withdrawal or sudden outbursts of temper.
* Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour.
* Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
* Difficulty in making friends.
* Eating disorders, depression, self-harm or suicide attempts.
* If a child or young person discloses abuse
* If you're in a situation where a child discloses abuse to you, there are a number of steps you can take.
* Listen carefully to the child/young person. Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the child to 'shut down', retract or stop talking
* Let them know they've done the right thing. Reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse secret
* Tell them it's not their fault. Abuse is never the child's fault, and they need to know this
* Say you believe them. A child could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person to believe them and help them
* Don't talk to the alleged abuser. Confronting the alleged abuser about what the child's told you could make the situation a lot worse for the child
* Explain what you'll do next. If age appropriate, explain to the child you'll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help

Don't delay reporting the abuse. The sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better.

Report as soon as possible so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

Remember – talk to someone at Home-Start as soon as possible.

**Version Control**

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| **Safeguarding Policy & Procedure** |
| **Version** | **Date of Issue** | **Description of Changes(s)** | **Originator** |
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| 2.0 | March 2023 | No change |  |
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