

Child and Vulnerable Persons Safeguarding and Protection Policy

Home-Start Worldwide Network

Introductory Comments

The purpose of the Child and Vulnerable Persons Safeguarding and Protection Policy is to make it clear that as an organisation we are committed to protecting children and vulnerable persons from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and that if concerns are raised about the safety of a child and/or vulnerable person, action will be taken.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights treaties give all the right to protection from all forms of physical, emotional, social or mental injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation.

Members of the Home Start Worldwide Network¹ have a common commitment to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and to the protection of children/vulnerable adults. HSW recognises that abuse, neglect and exploitation happens in all countries and societies worldwide. HSW also acknowledges that abuse is often perpetrated by those in positions of trust and can include professionals, volunteers and others with access to children and vulnerable adults through programmes such as Home Start.

Home Start Worldwide and its affiliates seek to ensure that children, parents, caregivers and vulnerable persons are given the best opportunities to live a life of safety and well-being, with protection from any form of harm. Abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence are acts of profound disrespect to child and human rights. In principle and practice, it is the responsibility of States and Governments, leaders and communities, families and caregivers, individuals, non-government and civil society organisations, to ensure that priority is given to safety, welfare and well being, in all settings and circumstances.

Home Start Worldwide advocates and requires that all parties that interact with HSW will act with honesty and integrity and commit to preserve and protect children and vulnerable persons' safety at all times. Violence in any form towards children or adults, direct or indirect, will not be tolerated. This includes verbal and written communication, cyber-space postings, physical actions or other abusive actions, including the disparaging treatment of children, adults, their culture, or family relationships.

The policy seeks to be universally applicable across the Network and bases its values on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Human Rights Treaties that all Home-Start countries have ratified.

The Policy includes the requirement to develop a locally appropriate Code of Conduct and includes the MINIMUM required content for such Codes of Conduct. The objective of a Code of Conduct is to protect children, vulnerable persons and those working with

¹ The Home-Start Worldwide Network includes Home-Start national associations that are members of the Home-Start network and their schemes as well as the Home-Start Worldwide as a charity

or in contact with them. It should be based on good practice and common sense. It is recognised that a number of Home-Start Worldwide Network members may already have adequate Codes of Conduct in place.

Once adopted, responsibility for implementation of the policy will be with the Members of the Network. It is anticipated that in addition to work on Codes of Conduct, some will need to develop internal procedures to ensure everyone knows what to do and who to go to within their organisation if there are concerns about the safety of a child or vulnerable person.

Home-Start Worldwide will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

For those who work in partnership or under the “umbrella” of another organisation with its own Child/Vulnerable Persons Safeguarding and Protection Policy, it is anticipated that the principles will apply to them and they will endorse this policy.

This document sets out our common values and the principles guiding our Child/Vulnerable Persons Safeguarding and Protection Policy together with agreed steps to be taken in meeting our commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable persons.

Scope

This Policy applies to Home-Start Worldwide and all members of its Network

The Policy is applicable to:

- All staff and volunteers whether working for Home-Start Worldwide, a Home-Start national association or a Home-Start local scheme.
- All Trustees/Board members, private individuals and celebrities undertaking visits to Home-Start schemes whereby they will have access to children and/or vulnerable persons.
- Staff and representatives of organizations who work in partnership with Home-Start or provide services to Home-Start as a result of which they come into contact with children and/or vulnerable persons.

It is the responsibility of the Network members to implement this policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years and Country Home Start Schemes are invited to participate in the process of review.

OUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Definitions

'Child' refers to a person under the age of 18.

'Abuse or maltreatment' Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.² Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment.

'Vulnerable adult' is defined as "any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, or unable to protect themselves due to age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation".³

'Working with Children and Vulnerable Persons' is defined as engagement in an activity, within the HS Network that involves direct contact with, or facilitates access to, children and vulnerable persons.

Our Values

- Abuse is never acceptable.
- All have equal rights to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- We have a commitment to protecting children and vulnerable persons throughout the Home- Start Worldwide Network.
- All members of the Home-Start Worldwide Network have a responsibility to meet agreed standards of protection of children and vulnerable persons in their work.
- Our policies and Code of Conduct should be interpreted within the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other Human Rights Treaties.
- We are guided throughout the Child Protection process by the principle of the "best interests of the child".
- We work in partnership with parents/carers, volunteers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable persons.

² World Report on Violence and Health (WHO 2002)

³ Oxfam GB Safeguarding Adults Policy May 2018

Our Standards: What we will do

Awareness: All members of the Home-Start Worldwide Network will ensure that all staff, volunteers and trustees are aware of the problem of abuse and the risks to children and vulnerable persons.

Prevention: We will ensure through local training, supervision and support that risks to children and vulnerable adults are minimized.

Reporting: All staff, volunteers, trustees, consultants and others must be clear about the steps to be taken where concerns are raised over the safety of children and vulnerable persons. Detailed procedures must be available at the national and scheme level.

Responding: We will ensure that action is taken to protect children and vulnerable persons and support them and their families where concerns arise because of possible abuse.

In order to meet the above standards, all Members of the Home-Start Worldwide Network will:

1. Develop and adopt a Code of Conduct which will as a minimum, includes the following:
 - Children and adults must always be treated with respect regardless of their (or that of their family member's) gender, ethnic or social origin, language, religious or other beliefs, disability or other status.
 - The language and behaviour towards children and adults must at all times be appropriate and in no way harassing, abusive, sexually provocative or demeaning.
 - Physical punishment or discipline or use of inappropriate physical force or humiliating discipline of any kind must not be used.
 - Sexual activity (including grooming⁴) with children, the families with whom we work and within the workplace, regardless of the age of consent locally is prohibited.
 - Inappropriate use of computers, mobile phones, video/digital cameras or other electronic devices, including to access, view, create, download or distribute online abuse images of children and any form of adult pornography or depictions of humiliating physical, verbal, emotional, financial or psychological violence is prohibited.

⁴ Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. (NSPCC)

- The use of children for domestic or other work that is inappropriate to the child's age or development; where it interferes with the time available for education and/or recreational activities or where it places him/her at significant risk of injury, exploitation or abuse is prohibited.
 - When photographing or filming children and/or vulnerable adults, parents and guardians must give consent, and children and vulnerable adults, where age appropriate and with the capacity to fully appreciate the possible consequences of photographing or filming, must give consent or assent. Consent and assent should be in writing, pictures should be respectful, all participants should be appropriately dressed and no sexually charged or seductive poses should be displayed. The use of the material should not expose children or vulnerable adults to any risk
 - Children and vulnerable adults, who take part in an activity without being a direct beneficiary – for example, when taking part in a fund raising event or campaign, are covered by the HS Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
2. Take all concerns raised about protection seriously.
 3. Support staff, volunteers, trustees, parents, children and others who raise concerns.
 4. Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable persons who are the subjects of concerns, including making referrals to other agencies in line with any local procedures and co-operate with any process of investigation.
 5. Appoint an officer (at the level of schemes, national associations and HSW) who will receive reports of any concerns, suspicions, incidents or allegations of actual or potential abuse or any breaches of this policy, and take action in accordance with any local procedures.

ENSURING OUR COMMITMENTS ARE MET

1. All members of the Home-Start Worldwide Network will endorse this protection policy.
2. All staff, volunteers and trustees will have access to this Policy and Code of Conduct and to all local protection policies and procedures.
3. Recruitment procedures for staff, volunteers and trustees will include checks on suitability for working with children and vulnerable persons. Where it is practical this will include "police checks".
4. Induction for all staff, volunteers and trustees will include a briefing on the protection of children and vulnerable persons.

5. HSW members will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities they work with.
6. Any staff reporting concerns or complaints formally may request that their identity may remain confidential if they fear intimidation or reprisal.
7. HSW will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.
8. Training resources will be promoted within the Home-Start Worldwide network to meet our commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable persons
9. Home-Start Worldwide will be available to provide advice to the network when required. A trustee will take on a lead role.
10. All those covered by this policy must be made aware that breaching it or the local Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action and/or discontinuation of their connection with the organization.

By signing this Safeguarding Policy, I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to abide by HSW Child and Vulnerable Persons Safeguarding Policy at all times.

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Organization:

Designation: