

HOTWELLS & CLIFTONWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Hotwells & Cliftonwood Community Association (HCCA) recognises that protecting children is everybody's business.

Hotwells & Cliftonwood Community Association has a duty through our members, management, staff and volunteers to protect from abuse children and young people who they come into contact with.

1. The 1989 Children Act identifies four categories of abuse:

Physical Abuse
Sexual Abuse
Emotional Abuse
Neglect

Physical Abuse

Actual or likely physical injury to a child or young person under age 18, or failure to prevent physical injury.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or young person. The child may be dependent or developmentally immature.

Emotional Abuse

Severe or persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection likely to cause adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment.

Neglect

The persistent, or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

2. Historical Abuse

There may be occasions when an adult will disclose abuse (either sexual or physical) which occurred in the past, during their childhood. This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure or suspicion of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

3. Awareness

As a member, trustee, paid staff or volunteer, you are not responsible for diagnosing abuse. However, you have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child or young person. Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse, there may be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what you know about the child and the circumstances.

4. What to do

Whether you are someone in a child “care” role, the organiser or recognised helper in an activity involving children or a member of the community, when abuse is disclosed or observed, you should take the following action:

- 4.1 Inform, when relevant, whoever has disclosed the information that the information cannot be kept confidential and will have to be passed on to the appropriate agencies.
- 4.2 Inform, either, the nominated Child Protection Trustee, where one is appointed, or the Chair of Trustees about the disclosure as soon as you possibly can. This person will treat it as a top priority and seek advice urgently. You should consider keeping an accurate and contemporary record for future use.
- 4.3 The relevant Trustee will report and discuss the information with Social Services First Response Team (0117 9036444) or with the Police Child Protection Team (101).
- 4.4 The relevant Trustee is to ensure that the ‘discloser’ is kept informed about what will happen next, so they can be reassured about what to expect.

5. Support to Staff and Volunteers

The nominated Child Protection Trustee and/or Chair of Trustees will aim to provide appropriate support to the ‘discloser/s’. If Social Services or the Police need further information or involvement from the discloser, the nominated Child Protection Trustee/Chair will talk with them and you about how this will happen.

Staff/volunteers may also be subject to allegations of abusing children. While support will be offered, HCCA will ensure that Social Services or the Police are given assistance in pursuing any investigation. For any staff member, suspension and/or the disciplinary procedure may be implemented. Safeguarding all who may be concerned will be paramount.

All staff/trustees/volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults and those involved with implementing the Child Protection Policy will be given relevant training in issues around the Child Protection Policy.

6. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial to all our relationships – but the welfare of the child is paramount. The law does not allow anyone to keep concerns relating to child abuse to themselves.

Confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of the information will prejudice the welfare of the child.

7. Recruitment of Staff & Volunteers

It is recognised that paedophiles can be attracted to organisations which provide services to children.

The HCCA will instruct any new employee/volunteer, recruited or engaged with the express intention of working with children, that they will need to apply to the police for a criminal record check before commencement of employment/volunteering. Employment/volunteering will only commence on the receipt of an acceptable criminal record check by the police. Further checks may be implemented at appropriate intervals according to current advice/legislation.

Two references will be sought for new staff and volunteers who will work with/have access to children. A medical reference may also be sought.

A rigorous and probing approach to the application, interviews and selection process for positions with HCCA will be adhered to. Proof of identity may be sought.

8. Other Measures

The HCCA will ensure that prior to any plans to work specifically with children, this policy is reviewed, that the up to date policy is given to all involved and that advice is sought from relevant bodies re training and recruitment safeguards.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND WELL BEING IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO THE HOTWELLS & CLIFTONWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION.