



3.8 HARC Safeguarding Policy

(December 2024)

Background

HARC will engage with a broad spectrum of vulnerable people in its work. This policy document sets out HARC's approach to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. It includes HARC's policy statement, key definitions and responsibilities along with other information about the procedures and measures HARC takes to safeguard its clients and staff

HARC has a suite of other policies and procedures in place including about data protection, recruitment, DBS checking and training together with two detailed procedural documents specifically about safeguarding children and young people/adults at risk.

Policy Statement

Everyone involved with HARC has the right to be kept safe from harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect. HARC is committed to providing a safe environment in everything it does and at all times for its clients, staff and volunteers or anyone it comes into contact with. HARC expects everyone within the organisation and those it is associated with to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.

HARC acts to

- Ensure protecting people from harm is central to its culture
- Set out safeguarding responsibilities and expectations
- Act quickly and appropriately to address actual or potential safeguarding issues with clear systems to report concerns
- Have appropriate supporting policies, procedures and processes to underpin its commitment to safeguarding and regularly reviewing them
- Provide advice and guidance to everyone within the organisation from the Board of Directors to paid and unpaid staff.

The remainder of this document is about the controls and measures HARC has taken to support and implement its Safeguarding Policy Statement, including references to some other relevant key HARC policies and procedures.

Key definitions

For the purposes of HARC's safeguarding policies and procedures the following definitions apply:

- Child / children – a person under the age of 18

- Young person – someone between the age of 18 and 24
- Vulnerable adult / adult at risk – someone aged over 24 where
 - (A) the Care Act's safeguarding duties apply, these are:
 - has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs),
 - is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect,
 - as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect. Or
 - (B) is subject to / at risk from
 - homelessness
 - sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation
 - discrimination on any of the grounds in the Equality Act 2010
 - domestic abuse
 - self-neglect
 - physical or emotional abuse
 - financial abuse
 - extremism and radicalisation
 - forced marriage
 - modern slavery and human trafficking
 - female genital mutilation. Or
 - (C) HARC considers there is a safeguarding risk/concern for any other reason than those set out in (A) or (B) above
- Safeguarding – protecting from harm, abuse, neglect or damage with appropriate measures.
- Safer Recruitment – practices to ensure staff recruited to work for HARC are fit to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) – A government service that helps employers make safer recruitment decisions
- Staff – whether paid or unpaid, no matter where they work (see below for Board).
- The Board – HARC's Board of Directors.
- Board Safeguarding Lead – a specific role within HARC's Board.

Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is collectively responsible for HARC's governance and overall management including safeguarding. The Board of Directors delegates much of HARC's day-to-day management to the Chief Executive Officer

The following sets out roles and responsibilities within HARC regarding safeguarding:

- The Board - has oversight for safeguarding within HARC including ensuring there are appropriate policies and procedures in place, which are followed by everyone. Policies are reviewed in line with HARC policy review processes, The Board appoints a Board Safeguarding Lead and also holds the Chief Executive Officer to account in relation to day-to-day operational safeguarding matters.

- Board Safeguarding Lead - is responsible for advising Board members about safeguarding and making recommendations for improvement or change, working closely and liaising with the Chief Executive Officer on all matters related to day-to-day safeguarding operations within HARC. The Lead has a standing agenda item about safeguarding at Board meetings.
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – is responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of HARC’s safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead – is the Advice Manager. Person to whom all safeguarding concerns are initially raised.
- Deputy Safeguarding Leads – CEO, Development Manager and SQM Supervisor. Persons to whom all safeguarding concerns are initially raised in the absence of the designated safeguarding lead.
- All Staff – must follow HARC’s safeguarding policies and procedures. They are often the first person to identify actual or potential safeguarding risks / incidents due to their direct involvement with clients. They usually raise their safeguarding concerns with the designated safeguarding lead.

Training and induction

All new entrants are required to undertake safeguarding training during their induction period and before they become involved with clients and casework.

As a minimum all new Board members and staff will undertake the following training:

- Safeguarding Adults (external training, currently via East Sussex County Council’s learning portal)
- Safeguarding Children and Young People (external training, currently via East Sussex County Council’s learning portal)
- Understanding HARC's process and procedure (delivered in house as part of induction and ongoing staff development)

Following their initial training, all Board members and staff must undertake follow-up safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, roles with specific responsibilities (Board Safeguarding Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Leads) will undertake more in-depth training.

A schedule of safeguarding training is maintained by the Development Manager. The Development Manager holds responsibility for ensuring training is available and undertaken by staff according to the schedule, and that training accreditation is properly recorded.

Safeguarding and Staff

HARC recognises that although perpetrators are more than likely to be people outside its organisation, HARC staff could be (knowingly or unknowingly) perpetrators of acts which in themselves create or are seen as safeguarding concerns.

HARC has embedded approaches in its policies, procedures and working practices to minimise and mitigate safeguarding risk at all times from recruitment through to when a person leaves HARC.

Recruitment and Selection

HARC's recruitment policy and procedures in relation to paid staff include a set of practices to help make sure it recruits the right person for the job and that people are suitable to work with children, young adults and people at risk (vulnerable adults).

HARC follows "Safer Recruitment" principles by

- using application forms
- interviewing candidates
- responding to concerns from candidates
- recognising and dealing with concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- having equal opportunities and diversity policies and procedures in place
- identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults where it is fair & lawful to do so
- following appointment conduct Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks (Enhanced DBS with lists).

Responding, Reporting and Recording Concerns / Incidents

HARC and its staff will take all incidents of actual or potential harm and abuse seriously.

HARC has specific procedures about responding, reporting and recording safeguarding concerns or incidents.

These are:

- 3.8A Protecting (Safeguarding) Children Procedure
- 3.8B Protecting (Safeguarding) Young People and Adults at Risk Procedure

The procedures include information about identifying risks, how to report incidents, the timing of reports, recording and logging information, contact details, confidentiality and review. The procedures must be followed and referred to whenever an incident happens or is suspected.

Best Practice

To ensure safeguarding best practise HARC will, as far as possible, follow policies, procedures and guidance provided by:

- East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Safeguarding Adult Board
- East Sussex County Council Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Other organisations such as neighbouring councils, NSPCC and Gov.UK

Review

This safeguarding policy document will be reviewed annually by HARC's Board, together with any underpinning and supporting procedures. It may also be reviewed whenever change is needed, for example due to legislation or good practice.