

## 1. Definitions

**Healthwatch** refers to Healthwatch Brighton and Hove.

**Employees:** refers to all Healthwatch employees.

**CEO:** refers to the Healthwatch Chief Executive Officer.

**The Board:** refers to the Healthwatch Board of directors.

**Volunteers:** refers to all Healthwatch volunteers, including Directors.

**Safeguarding:** refers to protecting someone's right to live in safety, and free from abuse and neglect.

**Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL):** refers to the Healthwatch employee (the CEO, or their nominated deputy) and the Healthwatch volunteer with responsibility for safeguarding.

## 2. Scope

This policy covers all employees and volunteers whose work involves direct contact with adults and which all employees and volunteers are expected to follow. It differs from adult's safeguarding as the legislation is different.

The Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The Board has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Chief Executive Officer and volunteer Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for safeguarding (the Designated Safeguarding Leads, DSLs). Suggestions for changes to this policy should be reported to them.

## 3. Summary

- 3.1. Healthwatch takes the safety of children and young people seriously, and expects its employees and volunteers to do so too.
- 3.2. The majority of work undertaken by Healthwatch is targeted at adults, aged 18 and over. Where we enter settings and come into direct contact with people, these are in the main, adults. Healthwatch recognises that during our work we may come into indirect contact with children and young people. We also gather the views of children and young people through the Young Healthwatch strand to our work.
- 3.3. Everyone at Healthwatch who works, volunteers, or comes into contact with children in the course of their role, has a responsibility to share any concerns they may have about a child's wellbeing, so they are recognised and responded to appropriately. Although something may appear to be an isolated incident, it may be part of a wider pattern of abusive behaviour.

- 3.4. If employees or volunteers are concerned about the welfare of a child for any reason, they have a duty of care to report this to the DSLs, or any other employees in their absence - who will decide whether to refer to children's services.
- 3.5. The pan Sussex Child Protection procedures should always be followed which can be accessed here <https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk>
- 3.6. Front Door for Families is the Brighton and Hove safeguarding hub for children and young people who receive referrals and are responsible for investigating (see Resources section at the end of the document for details).

## 4. Child Protection legal criteria

- 4.1. The child protection system in England is grounded in the [Children Act 1989](#), amended in 2004.
- 4.2. The [key guidance for child protection is Working together to safeguard children](#) (Department for Education, 2018), which states:
  - Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe.
  - Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in sharing information and identifying concerns.
- 4.3. It links to other policies such as procedures for taking photographs and videos, internet use, and recruitment of employees and volunteers.
- 4.4. The key legal principle is that the *"welfare of the child is paramount"* which means that taking action to safeguard and protect the best interests of the child or young person is more important than anything else.

## 5. Children at Risk and Safeguarding concerns

- 5.1. Examples of child protection concerns:
  - A child, or young person may tell you about something that has upset or harmed them, or that has happened to another child or young person.
  - An adult might report that a child or young person has told them something concerning, or that they are worried a child or young person has experienced harm.
  - A child or young person might show signs of injury or neglect, for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation, or you might witness physical abuse.
  - A child's or young person's behaviour or situation may suggest they are being abused, mistreated or exploited.
  - You may witness worrying behaviour from one child, or young person to another.

- A child or young person is troubled by content or contacts they have accessed online
- The behaviour, or attitude of adults involved in your organisation may worry you, or make you feel uncomfortable in some way.
- Someone alleges that a worker, or volunteer has harmed a child or young person, or behaved inappropriately towards them.

## 6. Raising safeguarding concerns – volunteers

### 6.1. General Points

- If you are concerned about the welfare of a child for any reason you have a duty of care to report this to Healthwatch, who will decide whether to refer to children's services.
  - By sharing information, it can help to build a picture to support the child and their family.
- 6.2. If, in the course of your work for Healthwatch, you suspect or discover abuse, exploitation or neglect of a child or young person, you must report this using the procedure below.
- 6.3. This is the case even if a child or young person has asked you not to tell anyone what is going on.
- 6.4. You must take notes of what was said or seen as soon as possible as outlined in para 8.2 below.
- 6.5. You must always report to employees at Healthwatch as soon as possible.
- 6.6. Healthwatch employees will decide what action to take and refer concerns to the Front Door for Families.

### Situations of Immediate risk of significant harm or danger:

- 6.7. If the child appears to be in immediate danger, or it appears that a crime has been committed, phone the police on 999.
- 6.8. To safeguard the child/young person as well as yourself and others, it may be necessary to take reasonable steps to reduce immediate risk until emergency services arrive, for example moving from a dangerous location to somewhere more public nearby and informing the 999 operator if you take such action.
- 6.9. You should then immediately contact the DSLs, or any Healthwatch employee, and report all the relevant details. The DSLs (or their deputy/employees) will then contact the Front Door for Families. If no member of the Healthwatch team is available,

contact Front Door for Families direct yourself (see Resources section at the end of the document for details) then send the details to Healthwatch as soon as possible so it can be recorded on the log.

## **Non-emergencies:**

- 6.10. If there appears to be no immediate danger, and no crime committed, but you think there is a safeguarding issue, contact the Healthwatch team as soon as possible and report all relevant details.
- 6.11. The DSLs, or their deputy, will be informed and review the information and decide on referring to the Front Door for Families (Brighton and Hove City Council Multi Agency Safeguarding hub).

## **7. Safeguarding Procedure for employees**

### **General procedure**

- 7.1. In the absence of the DSLs the Head of Research will deputise as the DSL. In their absence, any employee must take the requisite action and then inform the DSLs at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.2. When a child or young person discloses that they have experienced abuse, exploitation or are at risk of significant harm the employee should support the volunteer, check if the child/young person needs support and who could provide this, and that it has been explained to them what might happen next.
- 7.3. Employees must follow Sussex child protection procedures which means sharing the information with the DSLs (or deputy) and Front Door for Families. This is the case even if a child or young person has asked not to tell anyone what is going on.
- 7.4. Information should only be shared with people who need to know, for example child protection professionals. This respects a child's and their family's right to privacy while simultaneously protecting the child.
- 7.5. Employees must record all incidents and actions taken in the Healthwatch safeguarding log as soon as possible.

### **Emergencies and Immediate risk of significant harm:**

- 7.6. In an emergency contact the DSLs or a deputy. If they are not immediately available, contact the Front Door for Families (Brighton and Hove Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub for further advice (see Resources section at the end of the document for details).
- 7.7. In a life-threatening situation establish the location and circumstances, try to ensure the volunteer and person are in a safe place if possible and contact the police on 999 if the volunteer has not already done so.

- 7.8. Ensure the DSLs or a deputy is informed as soon as practicable.
- 7.9. Tell the volunteer to keep in touch and offer follow-up support to them once the emergency has been dealt with.

**For non-emergencies:**

- 7.10. Where there appears to be no immediate danger, and no crime committed, employees should contact the DSLs or their deputy, the Head of Research, at the earliest opportunity and report all relevant details.
- 7.11. In circumstances of significant risk, it may be necessary to share information with Front Door for Families and consider issues of consent, for example whether to breach confidentiality. This must always be discussed with the DSLs or a deputy who will seek further advice.
- 7.12. The volunteer should be contacted to check if they need follow up support and that they have reported all relevant details

## **8. General guidelines for all employees and volunteers**

### **Recording**

- 8.1. Recording should always be factual, and any opinions be clearly stated as such.
- 8.2. Employees and volunteers should always make a record of any safeguarding concern and what was done about it. Therefore:
  - always make a written record immediately (or as soon as possible) of:
    - what was said or seen and by whom,
    - when it was said or seen,
      - where it was said or seen and who was present.
  - Do not try to interpret what was said, as it should be a factual record only of information disclosed.
  - Do not amend the notes in any way. If needed make a new separate note instead.

## **9. General Do's and Don'ts about disclosure of abuse/neglect**

- 9.1. **Do:**
  - Stay calm and try not to show shock or disbelief.
  - Listen carefully.

- Be sympathetic.
- Tell the child/young person that.
  - they did right to tell you,
  - you are taking the information seriously,
  - it was not his/her fault,
  - say that you must share this information with Healthwatch employees but that this is important so they can be protected,
  - reassure them that they will be supported.
- Report it to the DSLs, or a deputy at the earliest opportunity.
- Write down what was said by the person disclosing, noting dates and time, as above.
- Sign and date your report including the time disclosure was made and the time notes were written.

## 9.2. Don't:

- Stop someone who is freely recalling events; allow them to share whatever is important to them.
- Press the child/young person for more details.
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Make promises you can't keep (e.g. this will never happen again).
- Contact the abuser.
- Be judgmental (e.g. "Why didn't you run away?").
- Break the confidentiality agreed with the child/young person (e.g. telling other people what has happened unless it has been agreed with the DSLs that others need to know).

## 10. Training

- 10.1. Any employees, Director or volunteer whose work involves potential contact with children will be required to attend a Basic Awareness safeguarding training course as soon as possible after the commencement of their duties, and an update course every three years following that.
- 10.2. Employees and Directors may need to also attend other safeguarding courses and events in line with their roles and responsibilities.
- 10.3. A record of attendance at this training will be held in the personnel or volunteer record of the person concerned.

- 10.4. Awareness and understanding of this policy will form part of the induction process for all new members of employees and volunteers.
- 10.5. Safeguarding will be an element of role-specific induction training for all Enter and View Authorised Representatives, Helpline volunteers and employees who are expected to meet people while performing their role.
- 10.6. Training will be kept under review to ensure it complies with the latest legislation and best practice guidance.

## 11. Safe Recruitment

- 11.1. DBS checks will be undertaken for all employees and volunteers when and if essential and appropriate to their role.

## 12. Resources - Important Safeguarding Contacts

- 12.1. **Healthwatch** Safeguarding Team can be contacted at:
  - [safeguarding@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk).
  - **07458 690 040**
- 12.2. **Brighton and Hove Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub**, called **Front Door for Families**, can be contacted at:
  - Referrals can be made directly via their online form: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/families-children-and-learning/refer-child-or-family-front-door-families>.
  - Urgent referrals can be made to **01273 290 400** during weekday office hours.
  - Outside of working hours contact the Emergency Duty Service on **01273 335 905/6**.
  - If in doubt or for advice, contact the MASH at Front Door for Families by email: [FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or by phone as above.
- 12.3. **NSPCC Helpline** - available to anyone who has a concern about a child:
  - [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
  - **0808 800 5000**
- 12.4. **Childline** - if a child needs confidential advice and support, direct them to:
  - <http://childline.org.uk>
  - **0800 1111**

## 13. Whistleblowing / complaints

- 13.1. Any concerns or allegations against people working in an organisation should be reported. These allegations may relate to:
- Behaviour that has harmed or may harm a child.
  - The possibility that an offence has been committed against or related to a child.
  - Behaviour that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- 13.2. If there is a safeguarding concern or complaint about an employee or volunteer of Healthwatch this should be notified to the DSLs, or their deputy who will deal with the matter in line with Healthwatch's employment and complaints policies and refer to the local authority as necessary.
- 13.3. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed by the DSLs or their deputy within one working day of all allegations regarding staff or volunteers that come to Healthwatch's attention, or that are made directly to the Police. The LADO is responsible for giving advice and guidance to employers and monitoring cases. The LADO for Brighton and Hove is on **01273 295 643** or **07795 335 879**.
- 13.4. All actions taken should be recorded in the Healthwatch safeguarding log, protecting privacy where necessary.

## 14. Review of Policy

- 14.1. This policy will be reviewed regularly by Healthwatch with input from the Safeguarding Advisor.
- 14.2. Reviews may also be triggered in the light of a serious incident.

## 15. Additional Policies & Documents

- 15.1. The Healthwatch policies and documents referred to in this policy are available on request by contacting the Healthwatch Team on 01273 234 040 or email to [policies@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:policies@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk).

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Date Approved by the volunteer Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for safeguarding	7 July 2025
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