

Hope & Homes
for Children

Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

May 2015

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HOPE AND HOMES FOR CHILDREN

Hope and Homes for Children is an international charity working to ensure that all children have the chance to grow up in the love of a family.

Our **vision** is a world in which children no longer suffer institutional care.

Our **mission** is to be the catalyst for the global eradication of institutional care of children.

Our **10 year strategic goal** is that by December 2022 we will have put in place the mechanisms to benefit a quarter of a million children every year who are at risk of or are already confined to institutional care, by ensuring that they can enjoy quality care with their families or quality care within a suitable alternative family-based setting.

Child protection is a primary focus in all our programmes and planning.

SECTION 1: STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Hope and Homes for Children aims to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation in all that we do, in line with Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Introduction

The majority of children with whom Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) works will have experienced some form of abuse. Our aim is to protect them from further abuse by placing them within the care and love of a family so that they can enjoy their childhood without fear, go to school, be part of the community and have the chance to fulfil their potential in life.

Every child does matter

Sadly there are people who target children's charities such as HHC in order to gain access to vulnerable children and others, who may be less calculating, simply to abuse the position of trust in which they find themselves.

HHC recognises these risks and must do everything in its power to protect children from abuse of any form.

It is fundamentally important that abuse is not perpetrated or compounded by the adults HHC puts in contact with children and in whom the children place their trust.

It is crucial, therefore, that everyone connected with HHC understands the problem of child abuse and their own roles and responsibilities in protecting children and preventing abuse. The following Guiding Principle defines this responsibility.

Guiding Principle

The guiding principle is that HHC believes that it is always unacceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind. HHC recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all young people with whom it works by protecting them from abuse. This policy aims to ensure that none of HHC's staff, volunteers and partners engages in behaviour that could allow abuse to occur or actions that could be interpreted by children, their families or other adults as constituting or leading to abuse.

HHC Child Protection Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that HHC takes every possible measure to prevent abuse. The policy lays down procedures to be adopted by everyone working for or with HHC to ensure that individual children or groups of children with whom HHC comes into contact, either directly or indirectly, are safeguarded from abuse.

Everyone involved with HHC needs to know what to do when a child protection incident happens, ensuring a prompt and appropriate response.

The policy and guidance, which has been approved by the Board of Trustees, applies to all HHC staff (including trustees, all UK-based, UK-appointed and nationally appointed staff, whatever their role), as well as volunteers and other representatives of HHC, including partner organisations. Conduct towards children outside of these roles is also covered within the policy. It is also important to work in partnership with parents/caregivers wherever possible to ensure that children's needs are met and that they are protected from abuse.

In order to meet these aims, it is crucial that staff members and others maintain the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct and act with integrity at all times when working with children.

HHC's Commitment to Child Protection

HHC strongly supports the Statement of Commitment to Child Protection as defined by the Keeping Children Safe Coalition, 2006, the general principles of which are listed below:

1. All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
2. All children should be encouraged to fulfil their potential and inequalities should be challenged
3. Everyone has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children
4. Non-Governmental Organisations have a duty of care to children with whom they work and with whom their representatives work
5. If agencies work through partners they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for the children in their partners' programmes

HHC will meet its commitment to safeguard children through the following means:

Awareness

Ensuring that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children

Prevention

Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimise the risk to children
Ensuring, through promoting children's identity, life skills and participation, that children, wherever possible, are active agents in their own protection.

Reporting

Ensuring that staff and others take seriously any concerns raised and that they are clear what steps to take regarding the safety of children

Responding

Ensuring that appropriate and effective action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse

HHC will also ensure that child protection matters will be identified as a specific goal in all programme designs including through promoting children's participation in programme design and implementation.

Terminology

The following terms are used within this document:

Child - a young person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday

Vulnerable adult – any person over the age of 18 who is associated with, participates in or benefits from our programmes

Staff member - an adult who is employed and paid by HHC

Volunteer - a person who is not paid by the organisation

Partners - Agencies or organisations with whom HHC engages for specific projects or programmes. Such partners may work either directly or indirectly with children

Others – Individuals, such as donors/supporters, journalists, consultants or researchers who may be engaged by HHC for specific purposes

Acknowledgements

The following documents have been utilised in producing this policy. They have provided invaluable advice and information.

- (1) Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. HM Government 2013
- (2) The Keeping Children Safe Coalition, 2006: Toolkit 1, Standards for Child Protection – 2006
- (3) The Keeping Children Safe Coalition, 2006: Toolkit 2, How to implement the standards
- (4) The Keeping Children Safe Coalition, 2006: Toolkit 3, Training for Child Protection

SECTION 2: DEFINING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institution or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children (1).

Categories of Abuse

The following categories are in use within England and Wales (1)

Physical Abuse

This may involve hitting, smacking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. This includes fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. This may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only when they meet the needs of another person. It may also involve unrealistic expectations being placed on the child, overprotection or preventing the child from undertaking normal activities. Emotional abuse also includes watching or hearing the ill-treatment of another person, bullying and frightening a child as well as any form of corruption and exploitation.

Sexual Abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical activities (penetrative and non-penetrative) as well as non-physical acts such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials or sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. The use of technology such as the internet by adults to entice children to meet or participate in virtual sex is also an abuse.

Neglect

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological and emotional needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. This includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter and medical care or failure to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger, including the failure to provide adequate supervision.

Effects of Abuse

It is usually the case that child abuse entails an abuse of power: someone with greater power than the child exercises that power in a way that results in harm of the child.

The effects of abuse, and particularly the long-term consequences for children, include death, recurrence of the abuse, permanent physical and psychological harm, educational and emotional failure and criminal or delinquent behaviour. Children who have been abused may experience reduced self-esteem: they feel bad about themselves, usually because they feel guilty and in some way to blame for the abuse or for what happens subsequently. There may also be problems of sexualised or aggressive behaviour. The child may try to deal with the stress and anxiety through substance abuse, deliberate self-harm and other damaging types of behaviour. It is important to note that the effects of chronic neglect are known to be as severe as for other forms of abuse.

Unfortunately many young children who have been abused become abusers themselves. In this situation the needs of the abuser also require consideration.

Vulnerability to Abuse

In the course of its work, HHC comes into contact with a wide range of children, in a variety of settings. Many of these children are at greater risk of child maltreatment than their peers as a result of the following circumstances:

- Disability
- Minority ethnic group
- Living on the street
- Living within institutional/alternative care settings and juvenile justice systems
- Severe illness within a family unit
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Emergency situations as a result of war, famine or natural disasters
- Living with families where there is alcohol and drug abuse or domestic violence
- Loss of family members as a result of illness/violence
- Harmful traditional practices e.g. female circumcision

Local Definitions of Abuse

There is enormous variation in definitions, cultural understanding and responsibilities towards child abuse within the countries in which HHC operates. Protection systems in many of these countries are often weak and unsupportive of complex child protection issues. In acknowledgement of there is a need for local policies and guidelines for each country to reflect not only these differences but also the local resources available. This must be done without compromising our belief that certain practices, such as female genital mutilation, are abusive and unacceptable even if these practices are accepted in some cultures.

Identifying Abuse in Children

Child abuse occurs in many different settings and forms. This abuse may also come to light in a variety of ways. These include direct or indirect disclosure by the child or someone known to the child, suspicions of abuse by those involved with the child, allegations and/or direct observations of signs displayed in the child's physical or emotional behaviour or of direct witnessing of abuse.

The signs and indicators of abuse to a child may not be immediately obvious or identifiable. Concerns are not usually raised over a single incident but usually over a period of time and as a result of various factors.

In some cases an individual may not report abuse until many years after the event. This is referred to as Historical Abuse. In relation to HHC this would entail the actual or likely abuse that an adult reports as having suffered as a child or young person while in contact with HHC.

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

Safeguarding children involves the process of protecting children from neglect and abuse, preventing impairment of their health and development and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care with the aim of enabling the child to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully (1).

The promotion of children's rights, with the aim of changing the way in which children are viewed and treated, is at the core of HHC's work at all levels and is a key element of an overall strategy to prevent the maltreatment of children. HHC works in many situations which are inherently abusive to children. Such wider concerns are addressed through HHC's advocacy activities at national and global levels.

In addition HHC adheres to the core principles of the United Nations Task Force of Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises 2002. These apply to implementing projects for children, families and communities and apply irrespective of whether there is an emergency situation or not.

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by project workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- Sexual activity with children is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. A mistaken belief about a child's age is not accepted as a defence.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour are prohibited.
- Sexual relationships between project workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships would undermine the integrity of work to help vulnerable and excluded children.
- Where a project worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a colleague, whether in the same organisation or not, s/he must report such concerns in accordance with the system and procedures in place.

SECTION 3: REPORTING PROCEDURES

Importance of Raising Concerns

Child abuse is distressing for all concerned and it is often difficult to accept that it may have occurred. Failure to do something may result in a child continuing to be abused and/or exploited and on occasions may even result in the death of a child.

Concern about 'getting it wrong' is possibly the factor that most often prevents people reporting incidents of suspected abuse. Other factors include reluctance to get involved, fear of reprisals, or knowing the person suspected of abuse (possibly personally as a colleague or member of the community) and being aware of the impact of such an allegation on them.

To ensure that HHC's commitment to safeguarding children and promoting their rights is upheld, it is essential that anyone connected with HHC who suspects or knows of abuse, both minor and major incidents, raises their concerns in line with the process identified within this policy.

The principle of 'best interest' of the child and the desire to secure the best outcomes for the child should always govern decisions regarding what action to take in response to concerns.

It is also important for HHC to monitor all concerns regarding child abuse, and to be aware of any specific cases as they arise. Issues that may at first appear to have only localised impact, may well have wider implications for the organisation as a whole, therefore requiring a more co-ordinated response. This should be undertaken as part of the regular reporting and review process.

Responding to Disclosure

Disclosure of abuse may come directly from the child. In such circumstances, it is important to respond in a calm, caring and supportive manner. The child is never to blame in situations of abuse and should be reassured they have done nothing wrong, either in relation to the abuse itself or in reporting it.

Children need to know that you are listening and taking seriously the information that they divulge and that you will respond positively to ensure their future protection. It is important to record what is said – at the time if appropriate, or as soon as possible following the disclosure. It may not be appropriate to enquire into the details of the abuse at this stage. It is important to listen and respond positively to the child and be supportive without asking leading questions. The child also needs information and an explanation of what will, or is likely to, happen next.

Immediately following disclosure, it is crucial that staff or others report the alleged abuse in line with national laws and the reporting process described below and within the section Raising Concerns – a Framework for Action. This framework should be readily available in all country programmes and the HHC office in the UK.

Responsibility Framework

The Chief Executive has the final responsibility for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy within HHC.

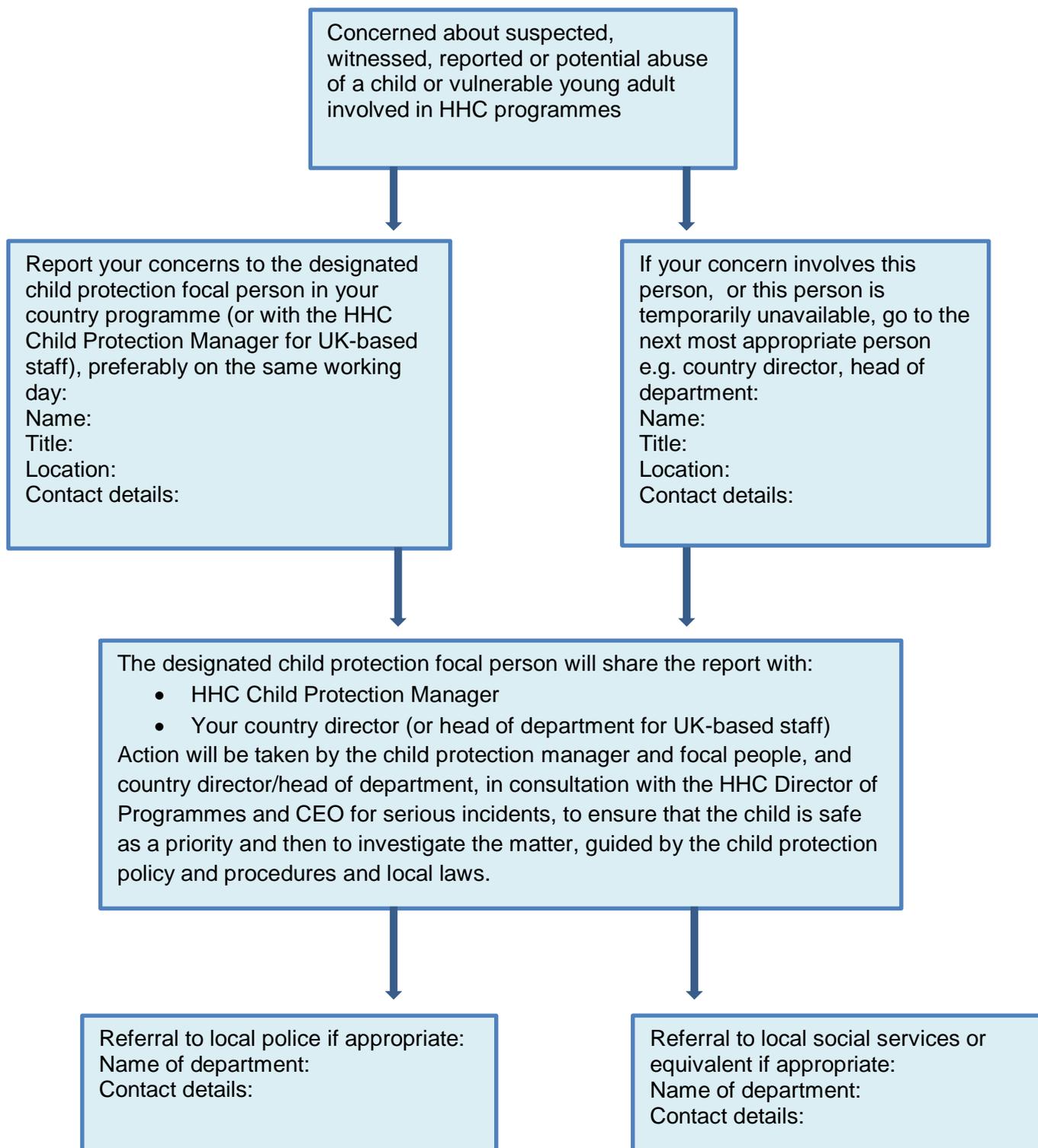
The Senior Management Team (SMT) is collectively responsible for the development of policy and good practice. This includes the development and implementation of policies and local procedures, monitoring and benchmarking procedures and identifying and providing the necessary resources.

HHC has a named Child Protection Manager, situated at Management Group level, who is responsible for making sure that the child protection policy is up-to-date, understood, implemented and followed.

At country programme level country directors hold final responsibility for developing and implementing local child protection policies and procedures based on and consistent with the global policy. Child Protection Focal People within each country team are responsible for championing and monitoring the child protection policy at country programme level.

Reporting Process

The HHC reporting framework below illustrates the line of response for reporting concerns.



This framework should be available and visible within each local office and in the UK office. Each local framework will include the name and contact details of the child protection focal person for that country

programme. It is important that the framework is followed correctly without delay and that clear action plans are formulated as a result of the process.

The HHC child protection incident reporting form (see pages 12-13) is an important part of the reporting process and should be completed with as much information as possible by the relevant member of HHC staff. Both the reporting framework and reporting form are available in English and local languages. They should also be readily available and all staff made aware of them. HHC country programmes may decide to use a different reporting form, for example an official form developed by state authorities in their country. In this case the form used must include as a minimum the areas covered by the HHC form, and the form should be included within the local HHC child protection procedures.

It is important that completed incident report forms are emailed to the local child protection focal person within 24 hours, preferable within the same working day. Consideration will always need to be given to who should be informed of the disclosure/allegations, and by whom. Serious incidents and concerns should be reported to the Child Protection Manager, also within 24 hours, using the incident reporting form. Less serious incidents and concerns may be responded to locally and then included in regular child protection quarterly reports which are sent to the Child Protection Manager.

The reporting process at HHC is at two levels:

Internal reporting within HHC

It is vital that all concerns are raised and discussed both locally and with the Child Protection Manager. It may be that in some circumstances no action can or will be taken. However, the main objective is to ensure that clear outcomes result from the reporting process.

External reporting outside HHC

Concerns should be referred to the relevant external agencies wherever possible and appropriate. This will normally follow internal discussion. However, if the case is of an urgent nature, a direct referral may be made in advance of the internal discussion. This step recognises the fact that HHC does not have a statutory role in investigating child protection concerns, and that it may not be the agency best placed locally to respond to such matters.

Local considerations

A number of factors/considerations will need to be taken into account when deciding on the process of reporting to external agencies in each country context. These will include:

- Local environment
- Situation of children (for example institution-based)
- Local culture, traditions and religious beliefs and rituals
- The nature of HHC's work/volunteering schemes (e.g. staffing, management, partnerships)
- Legal and social welfare structures and resources (e.g. child rescue centres, clinics, hospitals, community leaders and networks)
- Individuals who may work on issues of abuse (e.g. doctors, health workers, lawyers)
- Legal obligations to report suspected abuse

Details of contacts for all relevant parties and organisations will be kept by all managers and clearly displayed within the local policy and reporting framework.

In some local areas, there may be no or very limited functioning legal and social welfare infrastructure, in which case local contacts such as those mentioned above may prove very important. Wherever possible, contacts should be established locally in advance of any case arising. Established local contacts can be used to discuss any concerns and to assist in decision-making in respect of particular cases.

Reports of Abuse against HHC Personnel

Allegations of possible abuse may be made against individuals working within HHC or partner organisations. These may be via a third party or as a result of observations of the way an individual conducts him/herself with children. Poor practice in working with children may be a sign that there is a risk to children – for example, where a staff member frequently insists on working alone with a child or working with them at home. Such practices should always be challenged and reported, never dismissed or ignored. Further information and advice must be sought from the person next in line in authority and the relevant child protection focal person.

If allegations of abuse are made against any individual working within HHC, then both the local police and social services may need to be alerted.

Disciplinary Procedures for HHC Personnel or Associates

Any behaviour towards a child or children which is abusive or exploitative in nature (and which takes place either inside or outside the work environment) will be considered as gross misconduct and disciplinary action may result.

This may mean:

Staff	-	Disciplinary action/dismissal
Volunteers	-	Ending of volunteering relationship
Partners	-	Withdrawal of funding/support
Contractors	-	Termination of contract

Depending on the nature, circumstances and location of the case, HHC, where appropriate, will consider involving authorities such as the police. This may result in criminal prosecutions.

Disciplinary appeals

A disciplinary appeals procedure is in place to ensure that all appeals are dealt with constructively, promptly and with fairness and transparency. Appeals will be afforded the same level of confidentiality as the original complaint.

Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is of vital importance. In responding to issues and concerns regarding possible abuse, staff and others must exercise extreme vigilance in protecting information and only pass on information to those who need to be involved via the specified reporting process.

Situations may arise where, in order to ensure protection, information will need to be reported against the express wishes of the person or child concerned. For this reason, it is essential that everyone involved is made aware of the reporting process as early as possible. Displaying the Reporting Framework will assist in this.

Sensitivity is required in explaining that although other persons/agencies may need to be informed and involved, all information will be protected and only made available to those who need to know. This is of particular importance when it is a child making the complaint. Never promise to keep secrets.

It should also be made clear that the decision to pass on information will be discussed with the child/person concerned and their views sought. Information on the process, likely sequence of events and possible outcomes should also be discussed with them. It is also important to ensure that the child continues to be

informed of what is happening and has the opportunity to discuss and, where appropriate, influence the process.

Confidential Record Keeping

Child abuse is a very emotive subject and so care must be taken to complete all forms as comprehensively and objectively as possible.

Any concerns, allegations or disclosures made must be recorded using the specific form (see pages 12-13) within 24 hours, preferably immediately. The report form and any additional records should be signed and dated.

Records should be as detailed and precise as possible, giving an exact account of what was said, especially where it is a child who is disclosing abuse or making an allegation. The report should include the details as disclosed or alleged, including who was present and what happened, the sequence of events, and so on. All subsequent action should also be documented.

Safe handling, storage and disposal must be ensured. Records must be kept securely locked in a place to which access is restricted. If information is held on a computer then these should be password protected. Managers and child protection focal people have a particular responsibility in maintaining the confidentiality of these records and must ensure that the records, or any information they contain, are made available only to relevant parties. The transfer of information – verbally, through the mail or electronically should be done in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

CONFIDENTIAL

HHC CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Details of Person Reporting Concern	
Name	
Date	
Location	
Email Address	
Telephone / Mobile Number	
Position within HHC	
Relationship to child concerned (if relevant)	

Details of Referral			
Is this a direct referral?	Yes		No
If no, please give name and contact details of person(s) raising concern			

Details of Child / Children	
Name(s)	
Age or date of birth of child/children	
Address/Place of residence	
Telephone Number	
Who is responsible for the child/children	
What is their relationship to the child/children?	

Details of Concern				
Brief description of concerns – including dates and details of specific incidents				
Has the child/children been spoken to?	Yes		No	
If Yes, what was said?				
Is there evidence of physical abuse (e.g. bruising) or obvious distress?	Yes		No	
If Yes, please provide details				
Has an allegation been made about a specific person(s)	Yes		No	
Have any external agencies been notified in accordance with local procedures?	Yes		No	
If Yes, please provide contact name and details				
Details of any immediate actions taken e.g. medical aid				
Location of child/children at time of reporting				
Additional information that is relevant to this incident				

This form should be completed within 24 hours, preferably within the same working day, as the reported concern.

Please email the completed form as soon as possible to the Child Protection Focal Person in your programme. If this is the person suspected of abuse, please email this form to the Country Director.

SECTION 4: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

HHC is committed to applying rigorous recruitment and selection processes which emphasise the importance of child protection. Particularly rigorous processes are required for any post that involves direct contact with children, either as a paid employee or volunteer.

Every manager who recruits and selects staff for UK-based or for UK-appointed overseas posts is accountable for ensuring the specified procedures are adhered to.

For non-UK appointed posts, the senior manager in-country is accountable for developing and implementing recruitment and selection procedures which take full account of child protection issues and in line with HHC's UK guidelines as set out below.

Determining Level of Risk

For UK-based and UK-appointed posts, four levels have been defined, based on seniority and/or levels of contact with children or access to sensitive information about children. Each role profile should clearly identify which level applies to that post. The levels are as follows:

Level 1: Those with a level of seniority that directly impacts HHC's profile and reputation. This level includes Trustees and SMT

Level 2: Those with access to children and/or information about children. This level includes, Programmes Team, Communications Team and UK-appointed overseas posts

Level 3: Those who may have access through visits, to children and/or to information about children. This level includes fundraising staff participating in visits to programmes

Level 4: Those with no contact with children and no access to personal information about children. This level includes some members of the resources team, some fundraising staff and others

A range of core recruitment and selection measures will apply to all posts, with additional safeguards being added as the level of seniority or access to children increases. In relation to UK-appointed overseas posts, all posts are categorised as being at Level Two, irrespective of the specific requirements of the post. This reflects the fact that expatriate staff members overseas occupy positions of considerable trust and power in the communities in which they are based.

Volunteers will need to undergo the same level of recruitment if their role involves direct contact with children and/or access to personal information about children. This applies to volunteers being appointed either in the UK or locally within project countries.

Pre-employment Procedure

Post Vacancy Notification		
Item	Action	Applicable roles
Advertisements	A child protection statement will be included in external advertising for level 1 and 2 posts	Level 1 & 2 posts
Role profile and person specification	The child protection risk level of the role will be included in each role profile and whether or not a DBS is required. Specific responsibilities for implementing and safeguarding HHC's Child Protection Policy to be highlighted	All

Job Pack and Supporting Statement	Job pack to include statement of commitment to HHC's child protection and pre-recruitment checking for level 1 and 2 posts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting information form to emphasise commitment to pre-employment checks and seek consent to DBS checks, where required 	All
Selection process	Identification and explanation of any employment gaps. For levels 1 and 2 posts: consideration of how child protection issues should be built into the design of the selection process and specific questions on child protection issues relevant to the post	All Level 1 & 2 posts
Pre-Employment Checklist		
Offer of employment	Letters sent to successful candidates, offering employment, will include that the post is offered conditional to DBS checks	Levels 1 and 2 posts
Qualifications	False information may lead to HHC withdrawing an offer or dismissal reflected in Supporting Statement and offer of employment.	All
Right to Work	HHC will comply with its legal responsibility to establish the right to work of all prospective UK-based employees. Country programmes need to comply with their national laws.	All
Visas	If the prospective employee is neither a British citizen nor a citizen of one of the EEA countries, they may need entry clearance before they can travel to the UK.	All
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) standard checks will be required for Level 1 and Level 2 posts	Levels 1 and 2 posts
References	References will include suitability to work with children and/or to work with sensitive information about or images of children	Levels 1 and 2 posts
Regarding Outcomes	The outcomes of the pre-appointment checks should be recorded in a consistent manner and stored in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy	All
Induction		
Induction	New employees will receive induction into HHC child protection policy and practice. Employees will confirm they have received the child protection induction and read, understood and will comply with the policy by signing the induction checklist. Satisfactory completion of probation is dependent on the signed checklist being returned to HR, where it will be retained as a central record.	All

SECTION 5: OUR RESPONSIBILITY

While everyone attached to HHC has a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children there are some specific areas of responsibility we need to note.

1. Working with Partners and Others

Child protection must be included in any negotiations with partners and others and a summary of the HHC Child Protection Policy should be included in all partnership agreements.

It should also be made clear to any potential or existing partners that if poor practice or abuse exists within the agency or organisation then HHC will be unable to continue any partnership arrangements.

Any concerns regarding possible abuse in partner agencies or others whilst working with or on behalf of HHC will be treated as a child protection matter in accordance with the process set out in this policy.

2. Overseas visits

For staff managing or leading an overseas visit it is your responsibility to:

- Ensure that all people on the visit (including HHC staff) understand and sign the Communications Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Overseas Visits (see pages 19-20)
- Ensure that you are aware of the latest rules and regulations relating to taking pictures in the country you are visiting and that they are clearly communicated to everyone on the visit and adhered to (this information will be available from the Programmes Team)
- Liaise with the Programmes and Communications Team about the photographic requirements of your visit to enable them to seek appropriate permissions from staff, beneficiaries, local authorities etc. Seeking permission to take photos of children in state care can be complicated and time-consuming and therefore might not be appropriate for all visits. In this instance approved photographs, will be provided by the Communications Team if they are available
- Ensure that all people attending the visit receive a verbal briefing on the Communications Guidelines prior to or at the start of the visit
- Ensure that the Communications Guidelines and Code of Conduct are adhered to throughout the visit
- Address any behaviour by visitors which contravenes the Communications Guidelines or Code of Conduct
- Ensure that all photos taken during an overseas visit by staff or supporters are approved by the Communications Team
- Ensure that all information (including case studies prepared by country staff) collected during the trip by staff or supporters is approved by the Communications Team before it is used

Further reading around the issues of child protection is encouraged as it enables us to speak with conviction about our approach to children as well as explaining our policy to volunteers and visitors and informing the development of proposals and the implementation of programmes. Resource material is available on the G drive in the 'Child Protection – Resources' folder.

3. Personal responsibility

As representatives of HHC we have the duty to be aware of our actions and surroundings especially when travelling (see Code of Conduct for the prevention of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism) and to ensure, as far as possible, we are not compromising the safety and wellbeing of children.

ANNEXE: Hope and Homes for Children Communications Guidelines for General Overseas Visits for Supporters

Children's safety and wellbeing is of the greatest importance to Hope and Homes for Children. The child's best interest is paramount in all our actions and activities. As you prepare to visit one of our country programmes we ask that you read, and agree to abide by, the following guidelines and code of conduct which aim to ensure that your visit will be a positive experience for all concerned.

Local legislation and regulations

Please be aware that all countries where we work have measures in place to protect the safety and privacy of all children cared for in the national childcare system. These measures cover aspects ranging from general protection to accepted use of images and the type of information which can be used to identify children.

For example it is against the law in many countries to take pictures of children in state care – this is likely to include children living in institutions, small family homes and foster care.

Irrespective of the country and child protection system we have to ensure that children's dignity and universally recognised rights to privacy are respected. We also have to comply with general data protection best practice.

Guidelines for visitors to HHC country programmes regarding photographs and information:

The following is a general policy for all country programmes where we operate. Each country, however, may have specific laws or cultural sensitivities that need to be considered and you will be advised on this before or at the start of your visit.

Photographs:

We understand that visitors to our country programmes may want to take photographs as a record of their visit, however as an organisation dedicated to protecting and improving children's lives our first duty is to ensure that the rights, privacy and, in some cases, the identity of our beneficiaries are protected. Therefore the following guidelines should be followed:

- Whilst positive group shots of children and adults are fine if permissions have been obtained, we ask that you do not take pictures of individual children or families who have been introduced to you by Hope and Homes for Children.
- The person leading the visit will advise you on where permission has been obtained to take group shots. However, as a courtesy to people, please always ask permission before taking any pictures to ensure the subjects are happy with this. This includes photographs of staff members.
- Please do not take photographs in any children's institutions
- Photos of beneficiaries (both children and adults) are only to be used as a personal record. If you would like images for use in talks, presentation, publications or on social media these can be obtained from Hope and Homes for Children in UK. If you have personal photos that you would like to use, you can submit these to the UK Communications Team for approval
- Any additional guidelines specific to the country or country partner should be respected.

Communication, Information and Case Studies

During your visit you may be given access, directly or indirectly, to information about beneficiaries.

- Information you receive from Hope and Homes for Children about individual children, adults or families must be treated confidentially
- Information that beneficiaries may tell you directly must also be treated confidentially
- If you wish to use any of the information about individual beneficiaries you have met, in talks or for publications, then the information first needs to be approved by the UK Communications Team to ensure identities are changed and privacy is respected
- Please do not give personal email addresses or phone numbers or agree to conduct individual communication by written, electronic means or by private visits with any beneficiaries you meet on your trip
- Please do not make any promises of help or support to individual beneficiaries or projects during your trip
- If you wish to bring gifts for children and/or other beneficiaries, please speak first to the country director who will distribute them on your behalf or advise you on the most appropriate way of distributing them yourself.

ANNEXE: Hope and Homes for Children Code of Conduct for Overseas Visits

The aim of Hope and Homes for Children's Code of Conduct for Overseas Visits is to protect children and adults in our care from abuse. At Hope and Homes for Children we strive to ensure that the Code of Conduct is interpreted in the best interests of the child. The Code of Conduct is a guide on expected standards when visiting a Hope and Homes for Children programme overseas.

The Code of Conduct is binding on all Hope and Homes for Children paid and unpaid staff and anyone acting as a representative of our organisation. It also includes all visitors, donors and journalists.

It is important to recognise the trust placed in adults by children, and recognise the power held over children by adults. Treat this trust and this power with the highest responsibility. Always be aware as a visitor from overseas of the unequal power dynamic between visitors and local staff and beneficiaries.

As part of our Child Protection Policy we ask all visitors to our overseas projects to sign up to the following:

1. Maintain an appropriate relationship with children and beneficiaries. Any form of sexual relationship or activity with a child or with a beneficiary is totally unacceptable. Visitors will not be left alone with children.
2. Use appropriate and respectful forms of communication. Physical aggression, intimidation, verbal abuse and persistent shouting are not acceptable. Any form of assault (e.g. hitting, kicking, pinching, slapping) is strictly forbidden.
3. Use appropriate language. Do not swear and never make sexual or suggestive comments to a child or beneficiary. If a child or beneficiary makes such comments, be prepared to enforce these boundaries in your response
4. Do not discriminate against a child or beneficiary because of his or her age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity. Conversely do not favour or give all of your attention to one particular child or beneficiary.
5. Be vigilant and aware of how actions can be misinterpreted by children and beneficiaries. Actions made with good intentions can seem intrusive or intimidating to some children and beneficiaries. Sometimes children become attracted to the adults visiting them. Adults should be aware of the impact of their actions and should sensitively address any misunderstanding.

ANNEXE: Hope and Homes for Children Code of Conduct Declaration

I have read the Hope and Homes for Children’s Code of Conduct and Communications guidelines and understand them to be an essential component of the Hope and Homes for Children Child Protection Policy.

I declare that I understand and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct and the Communications Guidelines

Name

Date

Signature

Authorised by

Date

Signature

Should a visitor travelling as a representative of Hope and Homes for Children refuse to accept, or agree to be bound by Hope and Homes for Children’s Child Protection Policy the visit will be cancelled.

SECTION 6: GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

This section aims to promote good practice by defining what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working with children. This in turn will help to provide a safe environment and one that minimises opportunities for child maltreatment.

In addition to the general principles of good practice in working with children, staff and others should recognise that they, as adults, have a responsibility, and in some cases a legal duty, to ensure the safety of the children with whom they work.

All staff should also be aware that a child is someone under the age of 18.

Implementation of these guidelines will require assessment of current practice in all local areas as there can be great variations in understanding of what constitutes child abuse. Amendments to local practices or clarification of guidelines may be required to ensure full implementation.

Promoting Children's Rights

A key element in working to safeguard the welfare of all children is the promotion of their rights. HHC believes that children have the right:

- To have their health, safety and wellbeing, and their best interests considered paramount
- To have their welfare and development promoted and safeguarded so that they can achieve their full potential
- To be valued, respected and understood within the context of their own culture, religion and ethnicity, and to have their needs identified and met within this context and within the context of their family wherever possible
- To be listened to and to have their views given careful consideration, and to be encouraged and helped to participate in decisions which affect them.

In order that these rights are respected, when staff and others are in contact with children, they should:

- Treat children with equal rights and recognise them as individuals at all times
- Treat each child with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness
- Regard them positively and value them as individuals who have specific needs and rights and a particular contribution to make.
- Work with them in a spirit of co-operation and partnership based on mutual trust and respect
- Value their views and take them seriously
- Work with them in ways that enhance their inherent capacities and capabilities and develop their potential
- Strive to understand them within the context in which they live

Code of Practice and Behaviour

It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these appropriately
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks
- Be visible in working with children as far as possible
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed

- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- Discuss with children their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem
- Promote the use of positive ways of managing the behaviour of children that does not involve physical punishment or other forms of degrading or humiliating treatment
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Provide advice and support to children on how to keep themselves safe
- Only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to that particular activity
- Seek agreement of the child prior to any physical contact
- Make sure that you inform disabled children of any necessary physical contact and ensure that they are comfortable with this
- Endeavour to be an excellent role model for dealing with other people

In general it is not appropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves

Staff and others must never:

- Hit, smack or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive or abusive in terms of the child's race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others

Expected and Acceptable Behaviour between Children

It is important that HHC promotes a culture that ensures children respect and behave well towards other children and adults. This guidance should be provided verbally and by following examples of good behaviour displayed by staff at all times. Once again, developing positive ways of managing challenging behaviour will be helpful in this context. Children should also be involved in developing their own codes of behaviour e.g. anti-bullying.

SECTION 7: COMMUNICATING THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone working for or connected with HHC knows how to keep children safe. It will only be effective if people, including children, are aware of it, can contribute to its further development and have the opportunity of expressing their views on how the policy is working. Although management processes will be different in the case of volunteers and other partners, the same minimum requirement to disseminate the policy applies.

Multifaceted Approach

For this purpose, a multifaceted approach is required to actively promote the policy to the many people involved within the organisation.

- HHC will ensure that there is a designated person within the organisation who has overall responsibility for making sure the policy is implemented and followed. Each HHC country programme will also have a designated person responsible for implementation of and adherence to the policy in their country context
- It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that staff and others whom they manage are made aware of the policy and the reporting procedures. This will include volunteers and partners
- All staff with a responsibility for child protection should be easily identifiable to others when at work
- The policy is easily available to all staff and other interested parties in both written and electronic forms. This also includes the incident reporting procedure
- The policy must be included as part of the induction process for all new staff and for any staff who are changing their role within the organisation
- The policy should be disseminated by the use of appropriate formats such as training sessions or workshops. These should be based on the HHC Child Protection Core Training Module (see Section 8) and should be made available to all existing members of staff and as part of any induction programme for new staff
- Annual updates must also be given, which will provide an opportunity to inform staff of any changes to the policy or procedures and also allow time for staff to feed back on the local working of the policy and to raise any concerns they may have
- Exit interviews with staff should also address child protection matters and any issues arising from it
- Any changes to either the policy or procedures will be communicated directly to Country and Regional Managers via the HHC UK office at the earliest opportunity. It will be their responsibility to inform all local project managers
- Information concerning the policy, including the reporting framework, should be openly displayed in all HHC offices, available to adults and also to children, who have a right to information and support. This should include up-to-date contact details for local support agencies and services and information about the complaints procedure
- This information must be available in the local language of the area. An explanation of the policy should be written in a format that is easily understood by children
- Leaflets containing the summary points of the policy and information on how to access the full policy are readily available to members of staff, beneficiaries, volunteers and members of the public

Funding and Resources

As child protection is such an integral part of HHC's work, sufficient funding must be secured on a recurring basis to support it. Funding will be required for promotional materials, staff training (internal and staff of services HHC develops), work with children and for the ongoing training of those within the organisation who have direct responsibility for child protection. There may also be a need to finance the services of outside experts within the field. Funding for future developments must also be considered.

Staff Support

It is recognised that dealing with child protection matters is emotionally demanding and very stressful. To ensure a duty of care by HHC, it is important that staff feel supported by adequately trained and experienced managers. This support (which may be external) should also extend to senior managers.

SECTION 8: STAFF TRAINING

Everyone involved with HHC has a role to play in the protection of children. They can only carry out this role confidently and effectively if they have the right attitude towards children, are sufficiently aware of child protection policies and procedures and have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe.

In order to fulfil this aim, all staff, trustees, volunteers and other partners associated with HHC will receive training on child protection as part of their induction programme. This will include HHC policy and local procedures.

Staff members employed to deliver child protection training will themselves have sufficient knowledge and skills in order to deliver comprehensive and effective training. They will also have access to specialist advice, information and support in relation to child protection if required as well as additional training to ensure their practice is both current and relevant. Training will also be provided in effective communication to ensure that staff can communicate effectively with children in difficult circumstances.

In order to facilitate a standardised approach to training, in 2013 HHC developed a child protection core training module. The training module comprises two 4-hour sessions and covers the following areas:

Session 1: Introduction

1. Introduction
2. Definitions and descriptions of different types of child abuse and neglect
3. Causes and effects of abuse and neglect on children
4. Child protection laws and systems
5. Introduction to HHC local child protection policy, reporting procedures and code of conduct

Session 2: Process

1. How to prevent abuse and neglect
2. How to recognise warning signs that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect
3. How to respond to allegations/suspicions of child abuse and neglect
4. Child protection for children with special needs
5. Training Evaluation

Internal child protection training, based on the core module, will be provided annually for the UK-based team and in each country programme. Records of attendance will be kept for each training session. In addition, evaluation forms will be completed by attendees following all sessions. The results of these will be used to evaluate the training programme and to identify areas for development.

The overall training strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and will take into account reports from the monitoring process and any changes/developments in legislation. It is important that 'lessons learnt' are fed back into the organisation and reflected in the annual review process. The strategy may need to be amended at different stages in order to accommodate any new projects or undertakings by HHC.

SECTION 9: MONITORING THE POLICY

Policies and procedures can only be effective if implemented across the entire organisation and at each level. Checks are therefore required for the following reasons:

- To ensure that implementation is happening consistently across the organisation
- To identify any practical difficulties in implementing the policy at an early stage
- To identify support required to fully implement the policy
- To assist in gathering information of examples of the policy in practice, to be used for practice sharing and development

The monitoring process includes the following:

- Annual child protection plans at central and country programme levels
- Quarterly child protection reporting at central and country programme levels
- Annual child protection self-audit and review at central and country programme levels

The monitoring process will also include a review of incidents reported as a result of implementing the policy. All incidents will be reported in strict confidentiality.

Regular opportunities to discuss concerns about current procedures within teams or with other colleagues will help to develop a safe working environment and an open and supportive culture. Feedback from such opportunities as well as from exit interviews with staff should be included in the monitoring process.

The monitoring process should also incorporate the views of the children for whom it is intended, as well as local communities, foster families and other stakeholders.

Annual Review

The results of the annual review can also be used when working with other agencies and organisations in order to work together in achieving a greater common understanding of issues across agencies.

Policy review

The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed every three years.