



Hand to Hold

Supporting Russian speaking families with
children with SEND in the UK

Safeguarding Policy

Last Reviewed: 9 January 2021

Introduction

Hand to Hold does not work directly with children, however, we recognise that children may sometimes accompany parents and we take our responsibility of safeguarding of children very seriously. Hand to Hold believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people it works with, by a commitment to a practice which protects them. The overall emphasis of Hand to Hold's approach to child protection issues is prevention through effective control procedures.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide protection for the children and young people with whom Hand to Hold communicate.
- To identify and reject applications from individuals who may place children or young people at risk during their employment or volunteering with Hand to Hold.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Hand to Hold.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers

Hand to Hold recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with family with children. As a pre-caution step we require to provide the results or provide a consent to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring service where required. If the checks reveal any offences, the selection panel will discuss these findings amongst themselves and with the applicant. Final decisions will be made by the Board of Trustees. Employment references may be requested. References may be followed up on the phone, asking specific questions about the applicant's suitability to work with family with children with SEND. All staff must provide evidence of identity.

Interview and Offer of Employment:

- All staff/volunteers will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations.
- Any gaps in the applicant's employment history should be identified through the application form. If the selection panel is not satisfied that there are acceptable or believable reasons for gaps in the employment record, this will be sufficient reason for a rejection of the application at that stage of the recruitment process.
- Any convictions or disciplinary action that may have come to light, either through the Disclosure and Barring Service or through the application procedure should be explored in depth through questioning and follow up probes.
- Specific questions should be used at the first stage of the interviewing process to probe the applicant's attitude, experience and approach to working with children relevant to the post they have applied for.
- Job history details and essential qualifications must be verified.

Induction:

All staff/volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs are identified
- Individuals should sign up to Hand to Hold's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Training: All staff/volunteers should be provided with the opportunity to identify and if needed receive training in order that they can:

- Analyse their own practice against Hand to Hold's Code of Conduct to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made
- Recognise their responsibilities and understand how to report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse
- Work safely and effectively with families with children with SEND

Hand to Hold Guide to Good Practice

Hand to Hold encourages all staff, volunteers and trustees to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. Hand to Hold aims to create a positive culture and expects all personnel to:

- Work in an open environment, minimise unobserved situations and encourage open communication with no secrets
- Treat all children and young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always consider the welfare of each child or young person to be paramount
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share and participate
- Ensure that if any form of physical support or assistance is required, it is provided openly, gently and respectfully
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible in order to share knowledge and empower
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children or young people
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people

Hand to Hold would never sanction personnel to:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games with a child or young person
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- Do things of a personal nature for children or young people, that they can do for themselves

Use of Videoing or Photographic Materials

Hand to Hold is aware of the sensitive nature and risk of misuse of images, particularly on the internet, and therefore require all staff to request explicit consent from the parents or the child legal representative to take, use and publish photo or video recording of the child. The staff and volunteers are also required to ensure that when taking video footage or still images the children and young people are not being recorded in inappropriate or sexually vulnerable positions.

Reporting Procedures of Suspected Child Abuse

All /staff/volunteers working for Hand to Hold have a responsibility to act on any concerns of child abuse. Hand to Hold encourages all staff/volunteers to accurately and timely report any suspicions or witnessing of suspected abuse against a child or young person involved with Hand to Hold to the designated Child Protection Officer (Trustee Chair). See Contact Details and Appendix B.

An accurate account should be made of:

- Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
- Names of people who were involved
- What was said or done by whom
- Any further action at the time
- Names of person reporting and to whom reported

It is not the responsibility of any of the staff/volunteers working for Hand to Hold in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, by reporting concerns to the appropriate officer Hand to Hold will ensure an appropriate level of enquiry is pursued by the Board of Trustees.

Hand to Hold will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a safeguarding investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse

Hand to Hold will take appropriate action as outlined below. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration by the board of trustees, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; Hand to Hold Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue
- If the allegation is about poor practice by Hand to Hold Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the charities commission who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported to Hand to Hold Child Protection Officer, as outlined above, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk
- Hand to Hold Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the Board of Trustees and may involve the police if necessary
- If Hand to Hold Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the chair or other member of the Board of Trustees.

Hand to Hold will ensure every effort is made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned and that the information is handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people:

- Hand to Hold Child Protection Officer
- The parents/carers of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police Information will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal enquiries

- Hand to Hold Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of any police inquiries Hand to Hold Board of Trustees will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Hand to Hold Board of Trustees must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Where such an allegation is made, Hand to Hold will follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the appropriate bodies and/or the police. This is because other children may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Contact Details and Other Sources of Information

Designated Child Protection Officer:

Anna Cook

info@handtohold.org.uk

Appendix A

Definitions and signs of abuse and neglect:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional 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.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Physical signs of abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them,
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games,
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body,
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching),
- Cigarette burns,
- Bite marks,
- Broken bones,
- Scalds,
- Injuries which have not received medical attention,
- Neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care,
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation,
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts,
- Flinching when approached or touched,
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather,
- Depression,
- Withdrawn behaviour,
- Running away from home

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or

corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other circumstances: e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care,
- Sudden speech disorders,
- Persistent tiredness,
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias,
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration,
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults,
- Being unable to play,
- Attention seeking behaviour,
- Fear of making mistakes,
- Self-harm,
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg: rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area,
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas,
- Sexually transmitted disease,
- Vaginal discharge or infection,
- Stomach pains,
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down,
- Pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive,
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people,
- Having nightmares,
- Running away from home,
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level,
- Sexual drawings or language,
- Bedwetting,
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia,
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts,
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about,
- Substance or drug abuse,
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money,

- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence),
- Acting in a sexually explicit way with adults

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children,
- Constantly dirty or smelly,
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight,
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time,
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments,
- Having few friends,
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Children with Disabilities

Any child with a disability is by definition a 'child in need' under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

A child with a disability is as vulnerable to physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect as any other child, though the level of risk may be raised by:

- A need for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate care from what may be a number of carers
- Carers and staff lacking the ability to communicate adequately with the child
- A lack of continuity in care leading to an increased risk that behavioural changes may go unnoticed #
- Physical dependency with consequent reduction in ability to be able to resist abuse
- An increased likelihood that the child is socially isolated
- Lack of access to 'keep safe' strategies available to others
- Communication or learning difficulties preventing disclosure
- Parents'/carers' own needs and ways of coping may conflict with the needs of the child

In addition to the universal indicators of abuse / neglect the following abusive behaviours must be considered:

- Force feeding
- Unjustified or excessive physical restraint
- Rough handling
- Extreme behaviour modification including the deprivation liquid, medication, food or clothing
- Misuse of medication, sedation, heavy tranquillisation

- Invasive procedures against the child's will
- Deliberate failure to follow medically recommended regimes
- Misapplication of programmes or regimes
- Ill fitting equipment e.g. callipers, sleep board which may cause injury or pain, inappropriate splinting

Where a child is unable to tell someone of her/his abuse s/he may convey anxiety or distress in some other way, e.g. challenging behaviour and carers and staff must be alert to this.

Appendix B

Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Your Name	
Position	
Child's Name	
Child's DoB	
Date and Time of the incident	
Date and Time of the Report	
Your observations	
Details provided by the child	
Actions taken so far	

Child Protection Office informed ? Yes/No. Name, Date and time. Details of the advice received	
Police Informed? Yes/No. Name, Contact details, Date and time. Details of the advice received	
Other parties informed? Yes/No. Details, Contact number and details of the advice received.	

Review history

#	Version	Status	Reviewer	Date
1	0.1	Created	AC, RK	09.01.2021