



**Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People Policy**

**Last reviewed: November 2016**

**Updated: October 2017**

## Introduction

HCT Group (HCT) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable people. Safeguarding means taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children and vulnerable people's welfare are minimised.

Children and young people are under the age of 18.

A Vulnerable Adult is a person over 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

In this respect HCT acknowledges its responsibility as a provider of transport services for children and vulnerable people, many of whom may have social, emotional, behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities.

As HCT works with children and vulnerable people on a daily basis we have developed this policy to primarily protect children and vulnerable people in our care. It is designed to reassure service users, their parents/carers/advocates and the contracting and commissioning bodies for whom we provide transport services. It also establishes the roles and responsibilities of everyone who works for HCT in relation to safeguarding the children and vulnerable people with whom we work. It does this by setting out clear guidance, so staff, trainees and management committee members are able act appropriately in any given situation.

This policy is based on and reflects the principles of both UK legislation and guidance (including the Children Act, Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Care Act) and other relevant HCT policies and procedures. The approach has been developed in such a way as to be consistent with 'Best Practice' within the field of safeguarding children and vulnerable people.

This policy is for all staff working at HCT Group and should be read in conjunction with:

- DBS Policy Statement
- Recruitment & Selection policy
- Handling Certificate information policy
- Reporting incidents procedure, Incident Reporting Form & Chronological Log
- Lone workers policy

## Forms of Abuse

Abuse can take many forms. These include:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse and exploitation
- Domestic Abuse
- Psychological Abuse
- Financial and Material Abuse (adults)

- Slavery
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Organisational Abuse
- Neglect and Acts of Omission
- Self-neglect

Significant Harm: some vulnerable people may be in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act V section 47 (1) introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of the young person.

## **Protection from Harm or Abuse**

It is everyone at HCT's responsibility to promote the safety of the children and vulnerable people we work with. Staff, trainees and management committee members are always expected to maintain a sense of proportion, apply common sense to situations and protect the child' or the vulnerable person's welfare as the key priority.

It is also HCT's duty to ensure that staff, trainees and management committee members are never placed in situations where abuse might be alleged. It is not intended that the policy should restrict staff, trainees and management committee members from normal ways of working, but they always need to consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

## **Principles of Good Practice**

HCT considers that:

- All children and vulnerable people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to be treated with care, respect and dignity;
- The welfare of the child or vulnerable person is the paramount consideration;
- That those working for HCT will be perceived by children and vulnerable people as trusted representatives of HCT;
- It is important to ensure communication with children and vulnerable people is open and clear;
- It is essential to assess the risks to children and vulnerable people of its activities through comprehensive risk assessment (please see HCT's Risk Assessment Policy and Practice for further information);

- It is important for staff, trainees and management committee members to avoid physical contact with children and vulnerable people except for that which is clearly outlined in the service user's risk assessment and the duties outlined in job descriptions and role profiles.

## **Responsibility for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People**

The person with overall responsibility for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People is HCT's Chief Executive.

The role of all managerial staff in safeguarding children and vulnerable people is to:

- Ensure that for all new and existing staff, trainees and volunteers working with children and vulnerable people undergo a Disclosure and Baring Check (DBS) at the appropriate level;
- Ensure that HCT's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People Policy is implemented throughout the group of companies;

A member of supervisory staff at each depot has been allocated the role of designated Safeguarding Lead. They are responsible for implementing the Safeguarding Policy. Their role is to:

- Ensure all staff, trainees and volunteers working with children and vulnerable people have an up to date and complete DBS;
- Carry out all necessary child protection/safeguarding-related enquiries, procedures, investigations and monitoring;
- Ensure secure and confidential record-keeping on safeguarding matters, that a "need to know" confidentiality policy is preserved on such matters and that all staff, trainees and management committee members apply themselves fully to the Data Protection Act, 1998;
- Liaise with social services/schools/day centres and the police on child protection and safeguarding matters, both formally and informally;
- Report allegations and suspicions of abuse to the appropriate authorities including the HCT Head of Safeguarding or Head of HR;
- Ensure there are adequate and appropriate induction and training for all staff, trainees and volunteers on safeguarding matters;
- Ensure that all activities carried out by HCT satisfy safeguarding requirements with regard to personnel, practices and premises;
- Check and countersign all incident reports made by staff making such reference to outside agencies as is appropriate.

### **Incorporating "Prevent" into Safeguarding**

Prevent is part of a Government initiative to develop a robust counter terrorism programme; CONTEST. The UK faces a range of terrorist threats. All the terrorist groups who pose a threat to us seek to radicalise and recruit people to their cause. The Prevent strategy seeks to:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views
- Provide practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support
- Work with a wide range of sectors where there are risks of radicalisation which needs to be addressed, including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, the internet and health.

With their wide-ranging responsibilities, and democratic accountability to their electorate, local authorities are vital to Prevent work. Local authorities will be working with their local partners to protect the public, prevent crime and to promote strong, integrated communities.

HCT Group must ensure that we understand the Prevent Strategy as implemented by our Local Authority partners, and provide awareness training to front line staff so that they are aware of the risk factors and indicators.

Frontline staff who engage with the public should understand what radicalisation means and why people may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism as a consequence of it. They need to be aware of what we mean by the term "extremism" and the relationship between extremism and terrorism. They must also know how to report and document it. Reporting concerns that a young or vulnerable person is being 'drawn into terrorism' should follow the reporting procedure of the Local Authority Safeguarding Board, as outlined in the 'Reporting Safeguarding Incidents' procedure.

The Learning Centre, as a training provider, has specific responsibilities in relation to fostering shared values and promoting cohesion amongst staff and learners which is covered within its own policy.

### **Training**

HCT Group undertakes a number of specific training programs with its staff connected to Safeguarding.

### **Management & Safeguarding Lead Training**

- This training program covers the areas of safeguarding which the manager is responsible for. This includes training of all staff; reporting procedures, record keeping and vetting of staff prior to appointment.
- This training program will be evaluated against relevant local authority safeguarding policies and where applicable amended to meet the client's requirements.
- Safeguarding leads are encouraged to access Local Safeguarding Board training.

### Staff Training (Operational)

- This training program covers how the employee should undertake their work activities in accordance with Best Practice and Safeguarding.
- Reporting procedures.
- Front line staff are encouraged to undertake Local Safeguarding Board training.

### **Staffing Issues and Disclosure**

Please see our **DBS Policy** and Recruitment and Selection Policy for information on DBS arrangements.