

# Honor Oak Community Centre Association

## Safeguarding Policy Statement

1 This document sets out the procedures that constitute the Safeguarding Policy of Honor Oak Community Centre Association, hereafter called the Association. It is the Association's central policy in relation to safeguarding vulnerable persons and relates to any person of any age who may be deemed as vulnerable.

1.1 The Association believes that, given a choice between protecting a vulnerable person from abuse, potential or actual, or protecting the reputation of an adult or the Association, through this policy, it will always choose to protect the vulnerable person.

1.2 Each committee member and member of staff has an individual and collective responsibility to initiate this Safeguarding Policy if abuse is suspected or detected. It is not the responsibility or within the authority of any single individual to decide whether abuse has taken place.

## 2 Policy Aims

2.1 the Association aims to ensure that vulnerable people which it encounters are:

2.1.1 Protected and kept safe from harm, exploitation or abuse;

2.1.2 Empowered through the services the Association provides; and

2.1.3 Supported in matters of self-determination and personal choice.

## 3 Scope

3.1 The Association recognises that facilitating the self-determination of vulnerable people can involve risk and will therefore ensure that such risk is recognised, understood by all concerned and minimised.

3.2 The Association will ensure that statutory requirements are observed so vulnerable people get the protection of the law and access to the judicial process.

3.3 The Association defines abuse as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In this policy, abuse is deemed to include exploitation and may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be:

3.3.1 physical, verbal or psychological;

3.3.2 an act of neglect or an omission to act;

3.3.3 occurring when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent.

3.4 The Association recognises the following main different forms of abuse:

3.4.1 **physical abuse**, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions;

3.4.2 **sexual abuse**, including rape and sexual assault or acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;

3.4.3 **psychological abuse**, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal of services or supportive networks;

# Honor Oak Community Centre Association

3.4.4 **financial or material abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance, financial transactions, the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;

3.4.5 **neglect and acts of omission**, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, nutrition and heating; and

3.4.6 **discriminatory abuse**, including racist, sexist, or abused based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

## 4 Preventing Abuse

4.1 While it is difficult to prevent all abuse, there are steps which those working with and/or volunteering with the Association can take to reduce the risk. They should:

4.1.1 Be aware of what constitutes abuse;

4.1.2 Understand how it can happen;

4.1.3 Be alert to indicators of potential abuse situations;

4.1.4 Know the procedures for reporting concerns and poor practice; and

4.1.5 Provide appropriate support through good assessment and planning.

## 5 Recognising Abuse

5.1 The following are potential social and emotional indicators of possible abuse. The vulnerable person may:

5.1.1 appear to be withdrawn, agitated or anxious;

5.1.2 be isolated in one room or confined to living in a small space;

5.1.3 have restricted mobility due to absence of suitable mobility aids;

5.1.4 be excluded from outside social contacts;

5.1.5 be overly subservient or anxious to please;

5.1.6 avoid eye contact – looking at the floor or others to answer questions;

5.1.7 show dramatic changes in behaviour or personality;

5.1.8 be depressed or confused, for which no medical explanation can be offered;

5.2 The following are indicators of possible physical abuse;

5.2.1 multiple bruising that is not consistent with the explanation, e.g., a fall;

5.2.2 cowering and flinching;

5.2.3 unexplained bruises.

## 6 Duties and responsibilities

6.1 The Chair of the Association is ultimately responsible for implementation and review of this policy.

6.2 It is the duty and responsibility of all staff members to report and follow through to the appropriate level any behaviour or allegations of behaviour towards a vulnerable person which may be considered as abuse. Allegations should be pursued but with sensitivity towards the vulnerable person's dignity

# Honor Oak Community Centre Association

## **7 Procedure**

7.1 If there is a suspicion of abuse or allegations of inappropriate behaviour having taken place, the observer or informant of such behaviour will bring it to the attention of the Centre Manager at the earliest possible instant. Depending on the seriousness of the allegation, the Centre Manager thereupon will report this to the Chair of trustees, the designated external statutory agency, or the police.

7.2 The victim of any suspected abuse should be given credence, treated with respect but should not be given any assurances regarding confidentiality as their testimony may be crucial to preventing further abuse.

7.3 If the allegation has been referred to the Chair of trustees, depending on the seriousness of allegations/behaviour and evidence available, Chair, may:

7.3.1 Immediately report it to the police and/or external statutory agency; or

7.3.2 convene a panel to investigate the allegation further, with the possibility of instituting the disciplinary procedure;

7.3.3 or both.

## **8 Respect for the Individual**

8.1 If abuse is suspected, disclosed, reported or observed, it is important that the alleged victim be treated with dignity, involved as an equal in the investigation and kept fully informed on a regular basis.

8.2 A vulnerable person has the right to be believed when they report abuse of themselves and/or others, unless there is unequivocal evidence to the contrary.

## **9 Responding to allegations of abuse**

9.1 It is not the responsibility of individual members of staff to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. The Association and each member of staff, individually and collectively, has responsibility to act promptly to activate these procedures when abuse is suspected, disclosed, reported or observed.

9.2 The Association will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports concern(s) that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a vulnerable person.

9.3 Where there is a complaint, there may be two types of investigation:

9.3.1 A criminal investigation, led by the police; or

9.3.2 A disciplinary or misconduct investigation, led by the Association.

9.4 The results of any police or Association investigation may influence any disciplinary investigation, but will not necessarily do so.

9.5 If there is a police investigation, it will take precedence. The Association will co-operate with any police and/ or statutory agency investigations by providing relevant information or attending meetings as necessary.

# Honor Oak Community Centre Association

## 10 Allegations of poor practice

10.1 If, following investigation, an allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Association will deal with it as a disciplinary issue.

## 11 Confidentiality

11.1 Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. Information should be handled on a need-to-know basis. Need-to-know includes the following people:

11.1.1 The Chair;

11.1.2 The person making the allegation;

11.1.3 Police and / or statutory agencies;

11.1.4 The alleged abuser, when appropriate and if not prejudicial to investigations.

## 12 Internal enquiries and suspension

12.1 The Chair will make a prompt decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police or agency inquiries.

12.2 The Chair, or delegated staff member, will maintain a written record of any and all action taken and a summary of the reasons for those actions or decisions.

## 13 Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

13.1 Consideration should be given to the kind of support that vulnerable individuals and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

13.2 The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899.

13.3 Consideration should also be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Signed (Trustee):			
Print name		Date:	
Signed (Trustee):			
Print name		Date:	

Date for review: **September 2018**