



Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy & Procedures

Last reviewed January 2021

Good Practice in Safeguarding Children and Young People

At Gamers@Hart we want to do a good job, professionally and caringly, with our children and young people. We want them to be happy to come to us and we want their parents to be sure their children are safe.

This document is designed to protect both children and those who work with them and to continue the openness and trust between all parties involved in our work at Gamers@Hart.

A Safe Environment

It is our aim that work and activities are planned so as to minimise opportunities for the abuse of children and for unfounded accusations being made against adults, as far as this is practicable.

This will include:

- It is desirable to have 2 leaders with any group
- A single child will not be left with an older person unless they can be clearly observed by other workers nearby
- Wherever possible, leaders of each gender are to be present in mixed gender groups
- To be conscious of how our words and actions can be misconstrued by others as harmful
- Any child not collected on time, and after the project centre is closed, will wait with 2 leaders at the main entrance.

Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

All potential staff members and volunteers will be asked to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service Check (Disclosure) prior to the acceptance onto the project team.

Full details and guidance will be given to the applicant (where required) for their application for a Disclosure.

Disclosure applications will be sent to the Gamers@Hart for application.

Upon successful receipt of a Disclosure the applicant may then begin working with children and/or young people.

If there is a concern raised by a disclosure, a risk-assessment must be conducted in line with an advisor regarding the individual's work with youth or children.

The whole application process will be conducted in a professional and confidential manner.

Support for Staff and Volunteers

The primary aim of our work with children and young people is to develop their social relationships and communication skills.

Staff members and volunteers will receive, in writing, guidelines on their tasks and to whom they are responsible and from whom they can seek support

Regular meetings with other workers in the same team will be held to plan activities and to give mutual support.

Recognition of Abuse

Those who work in statutory agencies are well trained to identify child/vulnerable adult abuse. However, they often have to rely on people close to children, spotting the signs that something is wrong. So we as project workers and volunteers have a special responsibility to look out for children in difficulty.

Abuse may be neglect, e.g. when important aspects of care are needed; or physical, e.g. where adults seek sexual gratification by using children; or emotional, e.g. when children are harmed by persistent lack of love and affection, or by threats taunting, etc.

Child abuse may be suspected for a number of reasons:

- The child may tell you outright that they are being abused
- You may notice bruises that cause you concern
- Another child may alert you to a friend that is being ill-treated
- An adult may admit they've harmed a child in some way
- An allegation may be made on a child's behalf by a parent or carer.

Making our response

We are to pass on information carefully.

Any report should be recorded in writing, signed and dated; it follows that any suspected abuse must be taken seriously. It is important to let a child know that he or she is being listened to. It is not advised to promise confidentiality since the nature of the problem may be so serious as to require professional intervention. Even if confidentiality is not requested by a child, always explain to the child that information will be shared.

What steps to take if abuse is suspected:

- Speak at once to the person who you are responsible to for your work. Do this even if you're not sure, but your suspicions have been aroused. If neither person is available speak to another responsible person, e.g. a manager.
- Adults who are Vulnerable - Safe from Harm
- The Disclosure and barring Service is the agency which provides the definition of Adults who are Vulnerable .
- Guidelines For Projects When Working With Adults who are Vulnerable
- All staff and volunteers authorised by the project should be checked under the DBS procedure, [as they are for children's work] and a register should be maintained.
- The adult protection procedure identifies three distinct roles in the protection of vulnerable people. This comes from the Government's paper on Vulnerable Adults *Safe from Harm*: The same principles apply to safeguarding children.

Alerters

Investigators

Managers

Project worker and volunteers act as Alerters. Their duty is:

- To report suspected acts of abuse
- To be alert to what abuse means and take seriously what they are told
- To think about what they see and ask if it is acceptable practice
- To work strictly in accordance with anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-ageist and anti-disability practices
- To ensure the safety of the person you suspect is being mistreated as well as your own safety
- To contact the emergency services first, e.g. police, ambulance, if in a life-threatening situation.
- To be alert to hints, signals and non-verbal communication that could indicate abuse, which is being denied or deliberately hidden.

What to do if someone discloses abuse to you:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock
- Listen carefully rather than question directly
- Be sympathetic
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed
- Tell the person that:
- They did right to tell you
- You are treating this information seriously
- It was not their fault

DO NOT:

- Press the person for more details
- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events as they may not tell you again
- Promise to keep secrets: explain that the information will be kept confidential, i.e. information will only be passed to those people who have "a need to know"
- Make promises that you cannot keep (such as "This will not happen to you again")
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgemental (e.g. "Why didn't you run away?")

- Pass on information to anyone who doesn't have a "need to know" i.e. do not gossip

Project workers should inform their manager of all allegations. Managers are to ensure all allegations are written up and dated and inform the senior safeguarding lead, who will inform the relevant authorities.