**Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy**

**Principles upon which the Policy is based:**

* the welfare of families will be promoted
* the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people,
vulnerable adults and their families will be respected and listened to
* those people in positions of responsibility within the FHLTA will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and vulnerable adults and follow the policy outlined below.
* those people in positions of responsibility within the FHLTA will ensure that the same opportunities

are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals will be treated with respect.

## **Definitions of abuse and neglect:**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults 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 or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

#### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to children or vulnerable adults 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 or vulnerable adults. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s or vulnerable adult’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or vulnerable adult participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children or vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone.

#### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (*e.g.:* rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s or vulnerable adult’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their 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 or vulnerable adult 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 or vulnerable adult’s basic emotional needs.

Responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

All FHLTA trustees must undergo a DBS (Disclosure Baring Service) check every 3 years.

All FHLTA trustees must annually complete the modules Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults on the NHS Volunteer Learning Passport or equivalent.

The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring all trustees have necessary required paperwork up to date and received required training.

**Attendance**

All Children under 16 attending FHLTA events must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or designated carer.

**Procedures**

**Immediate Action to Ensure Safety**

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children or vulnerable adults. **It is vital to take whatever action is needed to safeguard the child or adult i.e.:**

* If emergency medical attention is required, this can be secured by calling an ambulance (999) or taking a person to the nearest Accident & Emergency Department.
* If a person is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (999) as they alone have the power to remove a child or vulnerable adult immediately if protection is necessary, via Police Protection Order.
* FHLTA trustees, members and volunteers need to be alert to the potential abuse of children and vulnerable adults both within their families and from other sources including abuse by FHLTA trustees/members.
* FHLTA trustees are expected recognise and to respond to any suspected or actual abuse in accordance with these procedures.
* It is good practice to be open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However, you **must not** discuss your concerns with parents or carers where contacting them would out the child or vulnerable adult, others or yourself at risk. This could be (but not limited) to the following:
* Where sexual abuse is suspected
* Where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
* Where fictitious illness by proxy (Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected.

**What to do if a child or vulnerable adult talks to you about abuse or neglect:**

A child or vulnerable adult may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present, in these situations you must:

* Listen carefully. DO NOT ask leading questions.
* Give the child or vulnerable adult time and attention.
* Allow them to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child or vulnerable adult who is freely recalling significant events.
* Make an accurate record (using facts NOT your opinion or interpretation) of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child’s or adult’s presentation as well as what is said. Do not discard this record as it maybe later needed as evidence. (This information must be recorded (even if attached later on the FHLTA Disclosure Form)
* Use the child’s or vulnerable adult’s own words where possible.
* Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared but reassure them that you are glad you have told them, that they have not done anything wrong.
* Explain what you are going to do next.
* Explain that you may need to get help to keep them safe.
* Do NOT ask them to repeat their account to anyone.

**Consulting about your concern**

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child or vulnerable adult and decide what action is necessary.

You may become concerned about a child or vulnerable adult who has not spoken to you, because of your observations or, or information about them.

It is good practice to ask why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused or respond to them wanting to talk to you. This can clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult, you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to FHLTA Designated Persons:

For children; Michelle Saunders (michellefhlta@mail.com)

For vulnerable adults; Louise McLellan (louisefhlta@mail.com)

If these people are implicated in the concerns you should discuss directly with the Chairperson of the FHLTA (adelefhlta@mail.com)

Once the FHLTA designated person has received all the facts via the disclosure form they will decide whether a referral to the Local Children and Young Persons service or Local Adult Safeguarding or protection service is required. If they are unsure, they can contact the Local Children and Young Persons service or Local Adult Safeguarding or protection service before a referral is actioned.

The FHLTA designated person may need to investigate for further information or appoint an appropriate person to investigate and will do so if permission is given by the statutory bodies and will do so in a timely and confidential manner. Documents will be held securely for 6 years.

Following investigation, it may be concluded by the designated person that a referral is not necessary. The designated person would then in a confidential manner, advise the FHLTA board of trustees that the investigation has taken place and make any recommendations that may result.

If a referral is made to Local Children and Young Persons service or Local Adult Safeguarding or protection service, the FHLTA board of trustees will be informed and kept informed of the outcome.

Once a referral has been made, FHLTA will adhere to any instructions/guidance that Local Children and Young Persons service or Local Adult Safeguarding or protection service may provide.

Pending an investigation, it may be necessary to suspend and FHLTA member or Trustee. The decision to suspend will be made by the FHLTA designated person.

At the end of the investigation the suspension may be lifted, or membership may be terminated, and the member or trustee will not be allowed to participate in any FHLTA events again. This will be the decision of the FHLTA designated person.

The member has the right to appeal against this termination and can do so in writing to the Chairperson of the FHLTA. This must happen within 7 days of membership being terminated. The appeal will be considered by FHLTA board of trustees. There will be only one stage of appeal. The FHLTA trustee’s decision will be final.

**Making a referral to Social Services or the Police**

You should contact the Local Children and Young Persons service or Local Adult Safeguarding or protection service in the following circumstances:

* When you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether protection concerns exist.
* When there is disagreement as to whether protection concerns exist.
* When you are unable to consult promptly or at all with the FHLTA designated person.
* When concerns relate to an FHLTA Trustee.

A referral involves giving

* Local Children and Young Persons service or
* Local Adult Safeguarding or protection service or
* The Police

Information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

The parents/carers should be made aware of the referral. EXCEPTIONS to this are detailed on page 3.

IF YOUR CONCERN IS ABOUT ABUSE OR RISK OF ABUSE FROM SOMEONE NOT KNOWN TO THE PERSON OR PERSON’S FAMILY, YOU SHOULD MAKE A TELEPHONE REFERRAL DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE AND CONSULT WITH THE PARENTS/CARERS.

 If your concern is about abuse of risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the person, you should make a telephone referral to your local Social Services Office.

**Information Required**

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible BUT if you do not have all of the information (e.g., details of GP/School etc) THIS DOES NOT STOP YOU CONTACTING SOCIAL SERVICES.

* Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are talking.
* Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child or vulnerable adult.
* Gender, ethnicity, first language and any special needs.
* Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members.
* Names of professionals known to be involved with family.
* Nature of concern
* An opinion on whether child or vulnerable adult may need urgent action to make them safe.
* Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child or vulnerable adult.
* Whether the consent of the parent/guardian or carer has been given to the referral being made.

**Action to be taken following the referral:**

* Ensure you keep an accurate record of your concern made at the time.
* Put you concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
* Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is required to be taken and the reasons for the decision.

**Confidentiality**

FHLTA will ensure that any records made in relation to a referral will be kept confidentially and in a secure place. Information in relation to child or vulnerable adult protection concerns should be shared on a need to know basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to protection and the issue of confidentiality becomes secondary.

**IF IN DOUBT CONSULT**

# **Contacts**

Local Safeguarding Children’s Board or Local Designate Officer depends on location of event or incident or home area of child or vulnerable adult.

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

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| Date of Change: | Changed By: | Comments: |
| 06/01/2021 | LMcL | Policy approved by the Trustees |
| 13/01/2021 | AL | Approved by Chair |
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