

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy name	Safeguarding Policy
Applicable to	Trustees, employees, volunteers and secondments including placements
Effective from	1 st October 2021
Date approved by trustees	20 th September 2021
Next revision date	September 2022
Other references	Recruitment Policy; Disclosure and Debaring Service Policy; Confidentiality Policy; Whistleblowing Policy; Lone Working Policy; Disciplinary Policy; ICT Equipment and Acceptable Use Policy

1. Introduction and definitions

1.1 Howgill Family Centre (Howgill) makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. Safeguarding involves a duty of care to everyone who comes into contact with Howgill, not just vulnerable beneficiaries like children and young people.

Safer recruitment principles will be followed to help deter or prevent the appointment of unsuitable people.

Howgill wants every child to fulfil their potential regardless of their background, disability or circumstance.

1.2 Howgill has a duty of care to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare, safety, health and guidance by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate and by ensuring strict adherence to guidelines.

The child or young person's welfare is of paramount importance in all circumstances. Howgill aims to ensure that every child:

- has a positive and enjoyable experience of activities at Howgill in a safe and child centred environment
- is protected from abuse during participation in any activity provided by Howgill, or outside the activity.

1.3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- supporting vulnerable children who may have been abused or witnessed violence by others.

1.4 *This policy does not form part of any employees' contract of employment and may be amended from time to time.*

1.5 All employees, Trustees, volunteers and secondments including placements have an obligation to familiarise themselves with and follow this policy.

2. Policy Statement

2.1 This policy seeks to ensure that Howgill undertakes its responsibilities with regard to the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support employees and volunteers in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

2.2 As part of its safeguarding policy Howgill will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse, and support is provided to any individual who raises or discloses the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

2.3 The Board of Trustees is responsible for the policy and will conduct annual reviews to ensure that it is maintained, particularly in relation to its legal responsibilities, and amendments will be made as necessary.

The Howgill Manager has responsibility for:

- ensuring that the policy is implemented
- ensuring that appropriate procedures are established to ensure compliance

and is authorised to amend Appendix A to this policy to ensure the details are up-to-date.

2.4 Everyone associated with Howgill is responsible for safeguarding – Trustees, employees, volunteers and secondments including placements – and all must play their part, for example by raising any concerns they may have about a child immediately they arise, and by keeping informed of the latest guidance on safeguarding. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

3. Framework

3.1 Howgill does not operate in isolation. The welfare of children is a corporate responsibility of the entire local authority, working in partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector and service users and carers. The overarching multi-agency partnership with statutory responsibility for children and young people's safety within Copeland is the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP).

3.2 CSCP has adopted the principles outlined in the government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' as the foundation for its work with children and their families to safeguard and promote their welfare. This is available from the Department of Education website (See Appendix A).

This document states that effective safeguarding arrangements should be underpinned by the following principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. For services to be effective, each professional and organisation should play their full part, and
- a child-centred approach; for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

3.3 Howgill adheres to these principles and the policies, procedures and guidelines adopted by the CSCP, including the Conflict Resolution policy.

3.4 Early Years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

4. Actions

4.1 Howgill will protect children from unsuitable people by strict adherence to Safer Recruitment guidelines (see Recruitment Policy). Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are mandatory for all Trustees, employees, volunteers and secondments including placements (see DBS Policy).

4.2 Howgill will designate a Lead Safeguarding Person whose responsibilities include:

- recognising signs of abuse and knowing when it is appropriate to make a referral e.g. to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
- referring cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies
- acting as a source of support, advice and expertise within the organisation when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- taking advice from others, especially the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and keeping them informed of relevant developments
- liaising with line managers over any issues and ongoing investigations
- attending and supporting others to attend Child Protection Case Conferences and contributing effectively
- ensuring that all employees and volunteers are kept up to date with changes in safeguarding regulations
- ensuring all have access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses at least every two years
- ensuring that service users have access to and understand the purpose of this Safeguarding Policy
- ensuring all employees, Trustees, volunteers and secondments including placements have induction training covering Safeguarding and are able to recognise and report any concerns immediately they arise
- advising service users of Howgill's duty to make referrals of safeguarding concerns and the organisation's role in this process, to avoid conflict later
- ensuring that, when service users leave services, relevant information is passed to the new provider as soon as possible so that vulnerable people continue to be protected.

Howgill will also designate one or more Deputy Lead Persons to ensure that Trustees, employees, volunteers and secondments including placements can access advice and report concerns at all times.

4.3 Howgill will keep records of all concerns raised about service users, and will ensure that this information is shared with others as appropriate (see Confidentiality Policy).

4.4 Howgill will learn from Serious Case Reviews and adapt practices appropriately.

4.5 Howgill will take active steps to ensure that the voice of the child is promoted at every opportunity.

5. Expectations of employees and volunteers

5.1 All Howgill employees and volunteers are expected to:

- keep themselves up to date on the latest guidance on safeguarding, primarily through frequent reference to the CSCP website (See Appendix A).
- promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

5.2 All Trustees, employees, volunteers and secondments including placements are required to raise concerns at the earliest opportunity, including concerns about a colleague (see Whistleblowing Policy).

5.3 All Trustees, employees, volunteers and secondments including placements should be alert to potential use of mobile phones, cameras and sharing of images. It is recognised that personal mobile phones have the potential to be used inappropriately. (see ICT Equipment and Acceptable Use Policy)

5.4 All Trustees, employees, volunteers and secondments including placements should be alert to potential disclosure and must take active steps to ensure that Howgill listens and responds to the voice of the child.

5.5 All employees and volunteers must follow procedures to keep themselves safe from harm and protected from unjustified complaints (see Lone Working Policy).

5.6 There are occasions when it is practical, appropriate and proper for employees to have physical contact with children and young people, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. For guidance on appropriate physical contact see the organisation's Safeguarding Procedures.

5.7 Howgill will follow the CSCP guidance where an allegation is made against an employee or volunteer (See Appendix A).

Allegations against an employee or volunteer will be dealt with in accordance with Howgill Disciplinary Policy and may result, depending on the specific nature of the allegation, in suspension from work. Howgill has a duty to refer to the DBS if an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) is removed from work, or would have done had the person not left first, because the person poses a risk of harm to children.

5.8 This Policy should be read in conjunction with Howgill's Safeguarding Procedures, which set out important details including names and contact details for the organisation's Lead Person and Deputy Lead Persons, and the Local Authority Designated Officers.

6. Supporting Vulnerable Children

6.1 Howgill will ensure that all employees, trustees, volunteers, students including those on placements understand all categories of abuse.

6.2 Misuse of drugs/and or alcohol is strongly associated with significant harm to children, especially when combined with other features such as domestic violence. When Howgill receives information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers they will follow appropriate procedures.

6.3 Domestic Abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Howgill will offer appropriate support, alongside other agencies, if families are in crisis or if there are early signs of potential abuse.

6.4 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this (see Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation, April 2016).

Howgill takes these concerns seriously and employees will be made aware of the possible signs and indicators that may alert them to the possibility of FGM. Howgill will make appropriate and timely referrals if FGM is suspected, whether the risk is imminent or has already taken place.

In these cases, parents will not be informed before seeking advice.

6.5 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Howgill will complete the CSCP Child Sexual Exploitation and make a referral if there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk.

6.6 Howgill has a duty to keep children safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Since the publication of the 2010 Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. Exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern and employees should receive prevent awareness training.

When any member of employees has concerns that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY - APPENDIX A

Howgill's Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Ishbel Cooke, Howgill Manager.

Safeguarding Howgill's Designated Safeguarding Leads for Early Years are: Early Years Setting Managers: Stephanie Carrick, RoseAnna Corcoran, Esther Lewthwaite and Deanna Harper.

Howgill's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Deputy Early Years Setting Managers: Carris Park, Rachel McKee, Anita Hunter, Laura McManus, Sarah Cook.

Howgill's Designated Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding is: Brenda Holden (Chair)

The following links provide access to related information provided by external agencies:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2021:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf .

Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP):

<https://cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/>

Allegations against employees:

http://cumbriaCSCP.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_alleg_against_staff.html

Multi Agency Practice Guidelines - Female Genital Mutilation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-guidelines>