



Safeguarding Children Policy

Introduction

The Critical Fish recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the framework of the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

All practitioners working in these organisations and agencies who are working with children and their families are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid or a volunteer.”
(Working together to safeguard children; a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – July 2018)

It is difficult to acknowledge that abuse or harm could take place within our organisation but any group working with children is vulnerable. It is the responsibility of all of us to put the welfare of children and young people first, and to recognise behaviours that can put children at risk. Under the terms of the Children Act 2004, anyone up to the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that can have an adverse impact upon their lives, such as domestic violence, parental substance misuse or neglect.

We aim to create a safe and fun environment within which children and young people can thrive in the security of clear guidance.

These guidelines are for the use of all freelance staff, volunteers, community partners and the parents/ carers of the children/young people, and vulnerable adults we often work. We will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children, young people and vulnerable adults are listened to, valued and respected
- All freelancers and volunteers are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance
- All freelancers and volunteers are signposted to appropriate child protection training and support.

The Guidelines are divided in to the following sections:

1. Understanding & Recognising Signs of Abuse
2. What to do with your concerns and how to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse
3. Allegations made against staff
4. Safe Recruitment
5. Good Practice
6. Safe Behaviour Do's and Don'ts
7. Safeguarding children in the East Riding of Yorkshire
8. Contacts

All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child is at risk of or actually suffering abuse, you should tell the designated Safeguarding Children Officer within The Critical Fish.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads for The Critical Fish are: **Jill Howitt and Lauren Saunders**

In an emergency, or if you do not agree with the decision made by your Designated Safeguarding Lead(s), you can make a referral directly yourself by contacting your local councils Safeguarding team.

Local HEY Referrals can be made by calling:

Hull - Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHASH)

Tel: 01482 448 879 op. 4 (office hours) or 01482 300 304 (out of hours)

Self-service hub: <https://childrensportallive.hullcc.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home>

East Yorkshire – Families Information Service (FISH)

Tel: (01482) 396469 Email: fish@eastriding.gov.uk

ERY Children's Safeguarding Hub

Tel: 01482 395500 (office hours) or 01482 393939 (out of hours)

Additional:

Please also contact the child or young person's local ERYC Early Help Locality Hubs:

- Hull North Locality Hub – 01482 828 901
- Hull East Locality Hub – 01482 708 953
- Hull West Locality Hub – 01482 305 770
- Bridlington: ehp.bridlington@eastriding.gov.uk
- Beverley: ehp.beverley@eastriding.gov.uk
- Goole: ehp.goole@eastriding.gov.uk
- Anlaby: ehp.haltemprice@eastriding.gov.uk
- Hedon: ehp.holderness@eastriding.gov.uk
- Driffield: ehp.wolds@eastriding.gov.uk

NB: If a child is suffering abuse and requires urgent attention because of immediate danger, call the Police on 999.

1. Understanding and Recognising Signs of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. 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.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption

of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's 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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

There are also additional areas of safeguarding children that we must be aware of, these are:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Radicalisation (Prevent)
- Self-harm and suicide prevention
- Online safety

The Critical Fish will ensure that all freelancers or volunteers working with children or young people are encouraged to attend training on the above to gain a better understanding of the associated risks and issues. For further information on training available we will use:

The Safeguarding training that we recommend you start with is:

Safeguarding Everyone (previously an Introduction to safeguarding children):

https://www.erscp.co.uk/more/training/?entry=safeguarding_everyone_level_1_previously_an_introduction_to_safeguarding_children&p=2

Any questions regarding safeguarding requirements or training please contact Jill Howitt or Lauren Saunders

2. What to do with your concerns

In the event that a child or young person makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse about an adult or another child or young person it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour
- Do not try to question the child in detail. If a child tells you someone has hurt them, listen carefully and explain that you will have to tell someone else who will help them to stop this happening. Tell them that you believe them.
- Make a note of what is said as soon as possible, remembering the exact words used if you can. Do not make judgements, rather evidence based recordings. Sign and date your notes.
- Inform your Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible
- Where possible it is good practice to inform the parent/carer of the disclosure and referral, however, **do not inform the person named as the abuser if you feel this might place the child at risk of further harm.**
- Do not discuss concerns/allegations/disclosures with other people. The child/young person and family have a right to confidentiality with only people who 'need to know' sharing the information.

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will help you decide what to do.

It is not however the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or other staff to investigate suspected abuse.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or young person or the concerns of an adult, lies with the local Safeguarding Children Unit, including the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) and police

officers from the Protecting Vulnerable People Unit (PVPV). It is normally the responsibility of your Designated Safeguarding Lead to make a referral to these agencies but if you judge the situation to be urgent and/or you require immediate advice you can report your concerns directly.

Either the local Safeguarding Children Unit, LADO or the PVPV officer will advise you if or when to inform the child's parents or carers about any concerns. If they decide to pursue a child protection investigation you should;

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, in order to keep the child safe;
- Attend a child protection conference, if you are invited, where you will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the child. This is one of the reasons why it is important to keep dated records of your concerns;
- Attend any subsequent child protection conferences.

You can find out more detail about the identification of abuse and what to do from either the Hull Safeguarding Partnership website (<https://www.hullscp.co.uk/>) or the East Riding Safeguarding Children Partnership website (<https://www.erscp.co.uk/>)

3. Allegations made against The Critical Fish freelancers, volunteers or sub-contractors

All organisations that work or come in to contact with children and young people need to be aware of the possibility that allegations may be made against those working or volunteering for them. Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. They may be made by a child, young person, a vulnerable adult or another concerned adult. Allegations may be made for a variety of reasons, some of them being that:

- Abuse has actually taken place
- Something happens to a child that reminds them of an event that happened in the past – the child is unable to recognise that the people and situation are different
- Your language or actions are misinterpreted by a child or young person because they are reminded of someone else
- Some children know how powerful an allegation can be and, if they are angry or upset with you, have made the allegation as a way of hitting out
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

It may be difficult to accept that abuse could occur in our organisation or that the person being named could be responsible but **all allegations should be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately**. In cases where the allegation is against one

of the co-ordinators, the complaint should be taken to the other one, or you should take the following action yourself:

- Make sure that the child or young person is safe and away from the person alleged to have abused them
- Contact the Hull Safeguarding Team or the East Riding Safeguarding Children Team (depending on where the child lives), including the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) as explained above. In case of activity happening elsewhere in the UK, the equivalent local authority safeguarding teams should be contacted.
- Contact the parents/carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker or police officer in charge of the investigation
- Irrespective of any investigation by local Safeguarding Children Unit, LADO or the police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedures. Common practice is for the alleged abuser to be banned from attending any organisational events or activities until the outcome of any investigation is known;
- Consider whether the alleged abuser has access to children anywhere else and whether those organisations or groups need to be informed;
- Act upon the decisions made in any strategy decision

All incidents should be investigated internally, after any external investigation has finished in order to review practice and put in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again.

It is good practice for organisations to develop and encourage an environment where people feel safe to express their concerns about the practice of others. If a staff member, volunteer or participant has concerns they should not be victimised in any way for expressing them.

4. Safe Recruitment

To reduce the risk of abuse to children and the likelihood of allegations being made that are founded, we have clear and rigorous procedures. These following procedures are relevant to short term and 'one off' events and activities:

- All prospective workers (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity with children must have a new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before commencing work with you – anyone who refuses to do so should not be employed. Freelancers are expected to provide evidence of a recent (<6mos) DBS check done elsewhere or a screenshot of their update register with their certificate number.
- **Nobody** should start work before the DBS process completed with a disclosure certificate received (see exceptional circumstances below)*

- Members of the team should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible work to an agreed job description.
- These guidelines should be made available to all members of the team, including freelancers and volunteers.
- *There may be exceptional circumstances where individuals are involved with the project who will not be required to have a DBS. For example for technical support or a talk/presentation. In this case there will always be another DBS cleared member of the facilitation team present.

5. Practical Basic Procedures

The Critical Fish are committed to good Safeguarding practice. This includes:

- Having two Designated Safeguarding Leads who have undergone safeguarding children training acceptable to local authorities. They are responsible for making sure their training is up to date.
- Display the name and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Leads on our website, including children, young people, parents & carers, so that they are aware of who to talk to if there are any concerns
- Ensuring that all freelancers and volunteers working with children should have attended basic child protection training and are able to provide evidence of such.
- Observing Health and Safety Regulations (as explained in our Health and Safety Policy).
- Having an attendance register for every tutor/group leader if there are classes/activity sessions being run
- Making sure everyone involved in the organisation actively promotes a culture of openness, where everyone (including children and young people) feels free to share their views and concerns
- Dealing with any allegation about a child or adult in a confidential manner and only share the information with those who need to know
- Not allowing any member of staff to be left alone with a child/children where they cannot be observed by others
- Not, under any circumstances, allowing visitors to wander around the spaces where The Critical Fish activity is taking place unaccompanied when there are children and young people present
- Endeavouring, where possible, that there should always be at least two members in the facilitation team with a group of children – it is vital that the ratio of child to adult is adequate to ensure safety. For children under 8 no more than 1:8 and under 5 no more than 1:6

- Being alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose. Children should not be collected by anybody other than their parents unless prior notification has already been received
- Inform freelancers and volunteers that if a child has not been collected after a session it is reasonable to wait for at least half an hour. If the parent or carer has still not arrived and cannot be contacted they should contact the nearest duty team or the police and request advice and assistance
- Talking to young people and encourage their involvement and participation.

If any outings or trips have been arranged The Critical Fish must ensure that:

- All vehicles being used are insured, roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts, or are otherwise hired from reputable services
- All drivers have at least one DBS checked escort
- Roll call is taken at the beginning of the journey and again on the return trip. If more than one vehicle is used children and young people should use the same vehicle both ways
- Team members accompanying the trip have contact numbers for the Safeguarding Leads, emergency contact details for each child, and emergency services
- If a child goes missing on a trip, activity facilitators should instigate an immediate search and alert appropriate security staff. If the child cannot be found within half an hour the police must be notified
- If, having notified security staff and the police, the child still cannot be found the parents/carers must be informed immediately
- The care of the remaining children is paramount and it is imperative that they return to the home site as quickly as possible. At least one of the Safeguard Leads must remain at the visit site to co-ordinate contact between security/police staff and the parents/carers. Where one of the Safeguard Leads was not involved in the initial activity, the facilitator leading the activity should also remain on-site to assist emergency services.

Declaration

On behalf of The Critical Fish we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Policy Date:	Review Date:	Adopted by:
18/7/22	Due December 2026	Jill Howitt
		Lauren Saunders
Reviewed: 12/12/23		Thomas Robinson

Appendix 1:

Seven Golden rules of information sharing

'Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers' (2008) is aimed at supporting good practice in information sharing by offering clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally in order to achieve improved outcomes. It can be especially useful in supporting early intervention and preventative work where decisions about information sharing may be less clear than in safeguarding or child protection situations.

Below are the 7 golden rules of information sharing that this guidance recommends.

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. From the outset be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share

information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgements on the facts of the case.

5. Consider safety and well being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reason for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

