

# Sustainable Hackney

## Safeguarding Policy

Sustainable Hackney does not provide a specific service to children or vulnerable adults.

No person acting on behalf of Sustainable Hackney will have direct unsupervised contact with a child or vulnerable adult.

However it is possible that, in the course of carrying out Sustainable Hackney activities, concerns about a child or vulnerable adult could arise.

### **Safeguarding procedure**

#### **How do you define who is a vulnerable person?**

- Children and young people aged 17 and under.
- People aged 18 or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have mental health issues, a disability, a sensory impairment, are elderly and frail, or have some form of illness.

#### **What is abuse?**

Abuse can include the following things:

- Physical abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional abuse

For more information, definitions of child abuse have been defined by Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, Working Together to Safeguard Children (Revised 2006).

#### **How can you recognise abuse?**

Besides disclosure, there are different ways of recognising abuse. These can include:

Physical signs of abuse:

- Unexplained marks, bruises or injuries
- Insufficient money to cover bills, food and other day to day expenses
- Shabby appearance, self neglect

Behavioural signs of abuse

- Behaving differently or signs of fear in the presence of certain individuals
- Fear, depression and a sense of hopelessness

### **What to do if you suspect abuse has occurred**

If in the course of carrying out Sustainable Hackney activities you have observed something which leads you to suspect that a vulnerable person has or is being abused you must report concerns as soon as possible to the Chair, who is the designated person for safeguarding.

### **What to do if a vulnerable person discloses to you that they have been/are being abused**

A vulnerable person may choose to confide in you that they have been or are being abused. You need to handle this situation carefully. The following guidelines will help:

- Remain calm, and listen very carefully to what is said.
- Give the person time to tell you at their own pace, and don't ask leading questions.
- Do not promise to keep what the person has told you a secret, but say that you will only share the information with people who need to know and will be able to help.
- Finally give the person reassurance that they have done the right thing, and explain what you will do next.

### **Procedure for following up suspected abuse**

If a vulnerable person has disclosed that they have been abused, the procedure below must be followed. Note that ***under no circumstances should you attempt to carry out any investigation into an allegation or suspicions of abuse***. You should report your concerns immediately to the designated person, who will then take the lead. The role of the designated person is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to report this information to the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board, or Social Services, whose task it is to investigate the matter.

Notes should be made as soon as possible, preferably within an hour of being told, using the following guidelines:

- Write down exactly what the vulnerable person said, in their words.
- Write down what you said in reply.

- Make a note of when he/she said it and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of activity).
- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record.
- Keep all hand written notes securely, even if these have been typed subsequently.
- Give these notes the designated person as soon as possible.

The following will then be undertaken by the designated person:

1. The designated person should contact the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board or Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the vulnerable person's safety or to report allegations of abuse. The parents/ carer *should not* be informed by the organisation in these circumstances.
2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. You should inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
3. In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical help/attention is sought. The doctor will then initiate further action, if necessary.
4. If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department.
5. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, in cases of real concern, the designated person should contact City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board or Social Services for advice.

The person reporting suspected abuse has the responsibility to ensure that action is taken. If for any reason you believe that the designated person has not responded appropriately to your concerns then it is up to you to contact the safeguarding agencies directly. If the designated person is implicated or not available, you should report your concerns to another member of the steering group.

Under no circumstances should you discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated. The confidentiality of individuals will be respected in that suspicions and concerns will not be discussed other than in line with this procedure.

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Date of last review: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016

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