



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Alderholt Village Hall (AVH) has a legal and moral duty to create and maintain the safest possible environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults when using the facilities. This Policy relates to events organised by AVH. Organisations hiring the Hall as a venue for events entirely in their own control will be expected to have their own Policy in place.

AVH is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, "users" of the Hall or its grounds. The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of organisers, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of the Hall in relation to protection of users from abuse. AVH does not employ any paid staff, all duties being carried out by volunteers. A separate Health and Safety Policy is in place.

All persons have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation. The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain the responsibilities that AVH and organisers, volunteers and trustees have in respect of protection of users.
- To provide organisers, volunteers and trustees with an overview of children, young people and vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where children, young people and vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

### **Context**

In English law, an individual may be owed a duty of care by another to ensure that they do not suffer any unreasonable harm or loss as a result of the latter's activity. A duty of care can be applicable to a wide range of situations including:

- loaning equipment to others
- charity walks and sponsored runs
- running fetes or fairs
- organising day trips
- selling food at a charity stall

### **Legislation**

This guidance reflects the principles contained within the Human Rights Act 1998, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005, covering England and Wales, provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves, or who have capacity and want to make preparations for a time when they may lack capacity in the future. It sets out who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this.

The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) created a framework for whistle blowing across the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Act provides almost every individual in the workplace with protection from victimisation where they raise genuine concerns about malpractice in accordance with the Act's provisions.

The Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures Service was established in 2002 to enable employers, contractors and community voluntary groups to make thorough recruitment checks, particularly for positions that involve regular contact with children and vulnerable adults. In 2013 this was superseded by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The Police Act 1997 makes it a criminal offence for an employer not to check an employee working with children and/or to knowingly give a job to someone who is inappropriate to work with children.

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this document:

‘children’ – children are defined as up to and including the age of 18 in The Children Act, 1989. Extensions of this exist for children who are disabled and for those in local authority care settings.

‘young person’ – a young person may be taken to be a person within the age range of 15-24 years.

‘adult’ – means a person aged 18 years or over.

‘vulnerable adult’ – means a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (1997 Consultation Paper ‘Who decides?’).

The priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults. To this end, it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

## **The role of organisers, volunteers and trustees**

All organisers, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of AVH have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Organisers, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe children or vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable organisers/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific protection issues.

## **Recruitment:**

Organiser and volunteer recruitment procedures will include a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all personnel with substantive access to children or vulnerable adults and should always include self-declaration and the use of references.

A DBS check is a document containing information held by the police and government departments. It is obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service of the Criminal Records Bureau and helps employers and voluntary organisations make safer recruitment decisions.

All organisers working with children, and those that have ‘access’ to children on a regular basis should be vetted and required to hold a DBS Certificate at the relevant level.

## **What is abuse?**

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act. It may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its ‘No Secrets’ report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:

- **Neglect** - The actual or likely persistent and significant neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry

out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development. Neglect in recreational or social activities might occur if organisers and/or volunteers fail to ensure that children, in their care, are safely protected or are exposed to undue risk, cold, sunburn or injury.

- **Physical abuse** - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

### **Procedure in the event of a disclosure**

It is important that users of the Hall are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a user has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the user who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

### **Responding to an allegation**

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to a nominated organiser who is the Designated Protection Officer on that working day where possible.

The nominated organiser shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local Social Services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority Social Services department within 24 hours.

### **Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse**

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

#### **DO**

- Stay calm
- Make sure the individual is safe

- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance and advise that you will have to pass the information on
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately consult colleague for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

### **DON'T**

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Take sole responsibility – consult someone else
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Protection Officer.

### **Photography**

Appropriate rules need to be set in line with the service being provided. Formal permission should be obtained for the use of any images, whether of a child, young person or adult.

### **Confidentiality**

Protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be understood by all. Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

Organisers, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of users of the Hall with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

All personal information will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If a user confides in an organiser or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the organiser or volunteer tells the person sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies. Within that context, the person should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where a disclosure has been made, the organiser or volunteer should let the person know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result. Where possible, consent should

be obtained from the person before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the person is the priority.

The organiser or volunteer should assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The person's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with other policies for Alderholt Village Hall including:

- Confidentiality
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Data Protection
- Recruitment and Selection

### **Named Person**

The Hall should have a 'named person' to whom a report can be made of any worries or concerns. The contact name and telephone number for 'named people' should be visibly displayed, for instance on posters.

### **Organiser or volunteer ratios**

In youth work practices, the ratio of legally responsible adults to children should be 1 to 8 regardless of age, or 1 to 10 for older children. It is recommended that there is a minimum of two organisers with legal responsibility present at all times for children under eight years old. Outside organisations hiring the Hall for events for which they are responsible for organisation should be advised of this recommendation.

### **The role of key individual agencies**

#### **Adult Social Services**

The Department of Health's 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise people from partner organisations who have the ability to influence decision making and resource allocation within their organisation.

#### **The Police**

The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

#### **Role of designated Protection Officer**

The role of the designated officer is to deal with all instances involving adult protection that arise during events organised by the Hall and taking place in the Hall or its grounds. They will respond for all vulnerable adult protection concerns and enquiries.

#### **Training**

Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that organisers are aware of these procedures. Specialist training will be provided for the member of staff with vulnerable adult protection responsibilities.

## **Complaints procedure**

AVH has a complaints procedure available to all organisers, volunteers and trustees.

## **Recruitment procedure**

The Hall operates procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable people, including arrangements for appropriate checks on organisers, volunteers and trustees where applicable for events organised and managed by the Hall.

## **References, internet links and further sources of information**

- The Department of Health web-site [www.doh.gov.uk](http://www.doh.gov.uk) contains a practical guide to the law relating to child protection, especially The Protection of Children Act 1999.
- The booklet 'Safe from Harm': Code of Practice for safeguarding the welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales' is available from the Home Office web-site [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk).
- For England and Wales, the Disclosure and Barring Service are providing a regulated 'one stop' service of records checks from information provided by Police, Department of Health and Department of Education and Skills. Further details can be found on their web-site [www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk).
- NSPCC is a registered charity established to prevent cruelty to children. Help line for concerns about a child's welfare. 0808 800 5000, web-site [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk).
- 'No Secrets' report is the first national policy developed for the protection of vulnerable adults, for use by all health and social care organisations and the police. It introduced guidance around local multi-agency arrangements and was issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. Its implementation is led by local authorities with social services responsibilities.
- Action on Elder Abuse (AEA) is a charity working to protect, and prevent the abuse of, vulnerable older adults. <http://www.elderabuse.org.uk>
- The Centre for Policy on Ageing was established in 1947 by the Nuffield Foundation with a remit to focus on the wide-ranging needs of older people. <http://www.cpa.org.uk/index.htm>.

**Alderholt Village Hall - Incident Record Form for incidents involving users of the Hall**

<b>Your Name:</b>
<b>Your Position:</b>
<b>User's Name:</b>
<b>User's Address:</b>
<b>Family contact/carer name and address (if different from above)</b>
<b>Date of birth</b> (only if under 18 years):
<b>Date and time of incident;</b>
<b>Your observations:</b>
<b>Exactly what the user said and what you said:</b> <i>(Remember do not lead the user – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet/s if necessary.)</i>

<b>Action taken so far:</b>
<b>External agencies contacted</b> <i>(date and time)</i>

<b>Police/Social Services</b>	<b>If yes – which</b>
<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Name and contact number:</b>
	<b>Details of advice received:</b>

<p><b>Have the family/carer been informed that contact is going to be made with social services?</b></p> <p><b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>No</b></p> <p><i><b>NB:</b> parents should always be informed unless to do so could place a child at risk of further harm, please seek advice of this point from the duty social worker if you are uncertain.</i></p>
<p><b>Signature:</b></p>  <p><b>Print Name:</b></p>
<p><b>Date:</b></p>

Please remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis – do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know. Please take advice on this point from the Trustees if you are uncertain.

A copy of this report should be sent to:

<p><b>Position:</b> The Secretary</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Alderholt Village Hall, 1 Station Road, Alderholt, Fordingbridge, SP6 3RB</p>
--

DO NOT INVESTIGATE – REPORT