

Reviewed December 2016

Next review date December 2017

PART 1 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Purpose

This document outlines The Big House's policy on responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Combined with the associated procedures, and guidance, the policy provides a structure for all staff that may come across concerns of this nature within the context of their work.

Who the policy applies to

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers. In this instance, staff and volunteers relates to all paid employees, seconded staff, mentors, students, agency workers, contract, seasonal and unpaid staff, working on behalf of The Big House in any capacity and in any setting, and includes non-work related personal conduct.

Please note in all circumstances any seconded staff, mentors, students, agency workers, contract, seasonal and unpaid staff should always refer to paid employees in the first instance when a safeguarding concern has been identified. It is the responsibility of these individuals to remain alert and aware and report any concerns immediately. It is not the responsibility for these individuals to undertake any further action.

It relates to all young people but particularly children with whom The Big House comes into contact with, directly or indirectly, and also relates to children outside the scope of The Big House's work where reasonable concerns are raised by a third party i.e. friends, children, siblings etc.

Why we have this policy

The Big House is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment in its work with children and young people. This policy aims to:

- Ensure a safe and supportive environment for children, young people, vulnerable adults who receive The Big House's services, as well as for staff and volunteers.
- Provide all staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk from, some form of abuse.
- Ensure that staff are experienced and equipped to make clear and consistent responses to disclosure/allegations or suspicions of abuse; and that volunteers aware of the procedures for reporting any concerns.
- Put in place management responsibilities and structures to support the policy and the responsibilities of staff within their duty of care; and
- Provide a code of conduct for staff and volunteers and identify areas of good practice in working professionally and safely with children and young people.

Context

The Big House has developed policies, procedures and guidance across the scope of its work many of which support this policy's aims in safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

The Big House recognises that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse. In all work with children and young people The Big House will ensure that the welfare and safety of the child/young person is paramount and that we constantly strive to provide an environment free from abuse through implementation of appropriate policies and guidelines. We extend this safeguarding commitment to our work supporting vulnerable adults.

We will:

- Listen to and seek the views of the children and young people we work with to ensure we consider their wishes and feelings when reaching decisions that affect them as individuals and in the development and improvement of our services.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers recruitment and induction practices include appropriate vetting procedures for all staff and volunteers (DBS with Enhanced Disclosures for all identified staff and volunteers engaged in regulated activity).
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the risk of abuse and receive ongoing instruction and training in safeguarding and good practice and respond swiftly and appropriately to all concerns or allegations of child abuse within a procedure that:
 - respects and empowers the child/young person;
 - is supportive of The Big House staff and volunteers;
 - avoids collusion with the suspected perpetrator of abuse.
- Appoint a Safeguarding Advisor who has a specific responsibility for monitoring and evaluating safeguarding practice, ensuring the organisation is kept up to date with evolving safeguarding practice and providing the main reference for advising and co-ordinating Safeguarding cases.
- Ensure access to confidential information is restricted to the appropriate Trust staff and, where appropriate, to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and other relevant external bodies.
- Seek external advice and expertise when reviewing its Safeguarding Policy, practice and guidelines.
- Ensure safeguarding processes are continually monitored, reviewed, and audited at regular intervals.

The Big House values and will respond promptly and constructively to all information presented by children young people, or third parties regarding the safety and welfare of children and young people. We believe that working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is key to promoting the welfare of young people.

Key roles in the organisation:

Board of Trustees:

Tim Wright (Chairman)
James Duke
Ziyad Marar
Emma Richards
Mhairi Letcher
Derreem Huggins

CEO:

Maggie Norris

Development Manager:	Sarah Burden	
Associate Director:	Dominique Bull	
The Big House Means Business Manager:	Dawn Howley	
Engagement Manager/ Safeguarding Advisor:	Hannah Hughes	020 7923 9955 hannah@thebighouse.uk.com

Types of Abuse

The definitions of child abuse by the Department of Health, DfES, The Home Office and Welsh Office (1991) are as follows:

Physical	Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy* * Munchausen by proxy syndrome (MBPS) is a relatively uncommon condition that involves the exaggeration or fabrication of illnesses or symptoms by a primary caretaker
Sexual	Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent.
Emotional	Actual or likely severe adverse affect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.
Neglect	The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

The following may be **signs of abuse**.

Physical	Unexplained injuries or those which have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, signs of neglect
Sexual	Allegations made by the child or young person, pre-occupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults
Emotional	Regression in behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared-for.

NB. Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to

identify and prove. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important, therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place.

PART 1 Key definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy and procedure as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and;
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

A child is defined in law (Children Act 1989, 2004 and Scottish equivalent) as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Children therefore means 'children and young people'. Child Protection legislation and guidance therefore only applies to those users of The Big House's services up to that age. The Big House also works with those over the age of 18 and recognises its duty of care to all the young people with whom it works, including those who can be described as vulnerable adults.

In England and Wales, the terms 'child' or 'children' refers to all young people under the age of 18 years. In Scotland, when a child reaches the age of sixteen years, they are considered by law to be an adult, but there are however, certain instances where the law will extend up to the age of 18 years (this includes those deemed to be 'vulnerable').

A vulnerable adult is defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as a person who is aged 18 years or over and who is living in residential accommodation, such as a care home or a residential special school; who may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age and illness; detained in lawful custody and who may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

1.2 Responsibilities

The implementation of this policy is mandatory across the full scope of The Big House's work. Specific responsibilities are outlined below.

Chief Executive and Safeguarding Advisor (Maggie Norris and Hannah Hughes)
Responsible for ensuring:

- The resource available to support staff on safeguarding/child protection issues is maintained;
- That safeguarding implications are constantly reviewed across the scope of the services The Big House delivers to young people and are fully considered in the development of all new pieces of work
- The continued development of The Big House's approach to Safeguarding, considering and authorising any immediate changes in operational policy required due to a child protection



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incident or near miss;

- Safeguarding is considered in all appointments of staff (to include volunteers, freelance staff etc).

All staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to the requirements of the policy and operate within codes of conduct outlined within the various policies that support the work of The Big House.

Any behaviour by a member of staff or volunteer towards children or young people that contravenes the terms of this policy and procedure may be considered for disciplinary action which in turn may lead to dismissal.

PART 2 ORGANISATIONAL PROCEDURES

2. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable adults

All volunteers will be given the volunteer policy and safeguarding policy to read as part of their induction.

2.1) Procedure to be followed when raising a concern

If you are concerned about the safety of a child i.e. you see or suspect abuse, an allegation of abuse is made or a child reports abuse.

Discuss your concerns with your Safeguarding advisor (Hannah Hughes)

Note: Volunteers must ensure that they refer any concerns to their volunteer contact (Hannah Hughes)

Report concerns as soon as possible. This should normally be on the same working day. Do not delay in passing the information and seeking further advice on next steps.

1. Make a record
2. Ensure detailed records are made of all events (with dates and times) and include what the child/young person has said (where this applies).

Your Safeguarding Advisor/volunteer contact (Hannah Hughes) will:

1. Discuss with The Big House CEO (Maggie Norris) or Board of Trustees to decide the appropriate course of action and decide which of the following should be informed:

- the local authority designated officer
- the police and/or children's social care (LADO)
- parents and/or referral agents

2. Implement agreed actions

NB:

In an emergency and where there is immediate risk to a child or young person **ACT!**

It is essential to avoid delay as inaction may place the child at further risk.

Inform your Safeguarding Advisor (Hannah Hughes) as soon as possible.

If contact cannot be made appropriate action should be undertaken e.g. contact police.

It is the responsibility of non-staff members (e.g. volunteers to remain alert and aware and report any concerns immediately. It is not the responsibility for these individuals to undertake any further action). The following guidance applies to paid employees only:

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult confides to someone that they are being, have been or believe that they may be abused, they have placed that person in a position of trust. In all cases:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child. The overriding priority in any situation is the immediate safety of the child or young person. Stop other activity and focus on what you are being told, or have just seen. Responding to suspicion of abuse takes immediate priority. Consideration must be given to removing the victim from any potential harm to a place where any physical/emotional
- Do not promise confidentiality. Make it clear to the individual that the information must be passed on if they think the young person has been, is being or may be harmed in some way. Explain clearly to the person raising the concern about what you expect will happen next. Confirm that you will only tell those you have to tell to get the issue dealt with. You can and should state that the matter will be dealt with quickly and appropriately. Don't promise to keep information to yourself. All concerns and allegations of abuse must be raised.
- Reassure the child or young person. React calmly, panic may frighten or silence the person. Tell the person they were right to tell and make it clear the person themselves is not to blame. Take what is said seriously recognising that there may be difficulties in interpreting what is said.
- Avoid any actions that could harm subsequent investigations, including legal proceedings. Obtain the necessary information needed to make a referral. Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said. Only ask questions needed to clarify what they are being told. Do not ask about explicit details – it is up to Children's Services/the Police to investigate fully.
- In the case of FGM, forced marriage, immediate harm or sexual abuse do not inform the parents if there will be a follow up referral to social services as evidence may be covered up or lost and this could interfere with any further investigation.
- Report the concern to your manager. Do not delay in passing on the information and seeking further advice on next steps.
- Make and keep a record of the incident and action taken.

In the case of FGM (female genital mutilation) of a young person under the age of 18 whether suspected or disclosed that it is imminent or that it has happened to another child under 18, report internally and then call 101 and report directly to the police.

Staff members are encouraged to do the following online training about safeguarding from radicalization, terrorism and extremism:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

2.2 Action to be taken where an incident of abuse has or potentially has taken place under The Big House's supervision.

In most cases the same procedure outlined in Section 2.1 will need to be followed. In addition:

- a) As well as establishing initial facts, ensure that both the victim and alleged abuser are kept apart.
- b) In a residential setting give consideration to returning one or both of the individuals to their home if the police are not to be immediately involved. Bearing in mind that under-16s must be accompanied, this may mean bringing the whole group home or the accompanied return of one or both individuals. Ensure that procedures are in place to provide for this eventuality.
- c) Where unprotected sex has occurred there may be an immediate need to seek emergency contraception, and concern regarding sexually transmitted infections. Where this is sought will depend on the circumstances, however contact the Safeguarding Advisor (Hannah Hughes) at The Big House for details of appropriate agencies for use in such circumstances.

2.3 Action to be taken for allegations made against a participant by another young person, where both are members of The Big House.

In most cases the same procedure outlined in Section 2.1 will need to be followed. In addition, where both the alleged perpetrator and victim are involved in the programme The Big House will not automatically cease working with either but will consider the most appropriate way of managing future involvement and support of each individual. This may include referring either party or both on to other organisations.

2.4 Action to be taken where consensual sex has taken place where one or both young people are under age and participants on a Big House course or session.

In most cases the same procedure outlined in Section 2.1 will need to be followed. In addition, where either client is below the age of legal consent it is important to try to ensure there has been no exploitation or coercion involved. Where the relationship is clearly mutual and consensual with both individuals it may be appropriate to encourage the young people to inform their parents/guardian or referral agency.

This is important where staff/volunteers are concerned about any rumours from such an event. Counsel the individuals about the appropriateness and possible consequences of their relationship at The Big House and provide ongoing support.

- b) Where one young person is over 16 or where one person could be deemed vulnerable or where there is any concern or doubt about the relationship or where the relationship is abusive Section 2.1 of this procedure must be followed. Each situation will be considered individually, however it may be necessary to refer the case externally.

2.5 Communication during safeguarding incidents

The following communication routes should be observed whenever possible. The Big House staff will ensure that they communicate with those involved in the management of a safeguarding concern (Hannah Hughes and Maggie Norris), and those who need to be aware of safeguarding concerns raised (The Board of Trustees).

2.6 Reporting Safeguarding Incidents

- Individuals should report incidents to the Safeguarding Advisor (Hannah Hughes) or if the concern is about this individual then incidents should be reported directly to the CEO (Maggie Norris) and if the incident concerns the CEO then the report should be taken directly to the Board of Trustees. This should be done in a timely manner and at least on the same day.
- The Big House's will ensure that staff are kept informed about safeguarding incidents which occur within their areas of control, including actions taken.

2.7 Recording Safeguarding Incidents

- All concerns and reported allegations, and action taken must be recorded. Safeguarding concerns should be recorded in line with The Big House's Incident Reporting Procedures.
- Staff and volunteers must keep notes of all events as far as possible.
- When records are updated, they must be signed and dated by the person who wrote them and a copy of the update sent to the Safeguarding Advisor (Hannah Hughes), clearly stating which report they apply to. Records of incidents involving allegations and/or findings of abuse against young person will need to be retained in a line with data protection policy.

PART 3 SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

As defined in Section 1.1 A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over and who may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. Within this context abuse can take the form of physical, sexual, psychological, financial or material abuse, neglect or acts of omission, and discriminatory abuse.

3.1 Procedure for responding to safeguarding concerns relating to vulnerable adults

The principles for staff/volunteers in identifying and responding to incidents of concern in relation to adults are the same as those for children and young people. In most cases the same process and guidance outlined in Section 2.1 will need to be followed.

- Ensure the immediate safety of the vulnerable person.
- Reassure the young person.
- Obtain the necessary information needed to make a referral where appropriate.
- Report the concern to a member of staff
- Make and keep a record of the incident and action taken.

PART 4 ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING THE BIG HOUSE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Concerns about staff and volunteers must be treated with the same rigour as other Safeguarding concerns. If a concern or allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct is made against a member

of staff or a person in a position of trust, or you have a suspicion regarding a member of staffs or volunteers conduct with regard to children or young people you must contact a senior member of staff immediately (Hannah Hughes / Maggie Norris / Board of Trustees as appropriate).

4.1 Reporting procedure

The same procedure as outlined in Section 2.1 must be followed. In addition:

- a) Where the allegations are particularly serious or there is no doubt that an offence has been committed the police and/or children's social care will be informed. A strategy for further action will then be agreed before a decision is taken as to notifying the staff member/volunteer.
- b) If the complaint or allegation is such that it is clear that investigations by police and/or enquiries by children's social care are not necessary (or these bodies advise that this is the case) a decision will need to be made as to whether further action is still necessary, in particular whether action is required in line with The Big House's Disciplinary Policy and procedure.

The CEO and Trustees will coordinate decisions and any actions to be taken, including any referral to children's social care services/police and any subsequent actions by The Big House.

- The staff member/volunteer will be informed of the allegation and given an opportunity to respond.
 - The staff member/volunteer may be removed from duties that have direct contact with young people or required to take special leave with pay without prejudice.
 - If the person is a member of a union or professional association s/he should be advised to seek support from that organisation at the outset.
 - External support for the staff member/volunteer will be considered, to include accessing counselling services, where appropriate and should they require it.
- c) Where there are clear grounds to believe that the allegations are malicious, an internal investigation will be held within 3 days and referred back to the CEO (Maggie Norris) and Trustees for any further action. If the allegation was made by a child/young person, children's social care maybe notified to assess whether the individual is in need of services and/or have been abused by someone else. If the allegations were from another party disciplinary action may be taken. In serious cases (e.g. where it is believed the allegations were deliberately invented), the police may need to be notified.

4.2 Following an allegation

- a) After an allegation or suspicion about a Safeguarding concern during and whilst it is being investigated, there are likely to be strong feelings among staff, clients, and parents and possibly among the wider community, which will need to be addressed. The Big House will give careful thought to the provision of appropriate support to staff and volunteers who might be affected.
- b) If an allegation is substantiated and the staff member/volunteer is dismissed (or otherwise barred from working for and with The Big House), the CEO (Maggie Norris) will consult with

the local authority designated officer to determine whether a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority is required. If a referral is appropriate the report should be made within one month. For serious incidents it may also be necessary to notify the Charity Commission.

4.3 Support to deal with the aftermath of a report of abuse

- Consideration will be given on what support may be appropriate for children, young people, parents staff and volunteers.
- Staff and volunteers will be supported in accessing counselling services, where appropriate and should they require this.
- Staff accused of abuse, if permitted to return to work for The Big House, will attend a back to work interview in order to address anxieties, re-entry into the workplace and ongoing support in the workplace.

PART 5 WORKING WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- The Big House is committed to working in partnership with Local Authorities and other agencies. When this involves an agreement for another organisation to provide services on its behalf, The Big House will ensure that the partner organisation has appropriate safeguarding policies in place which will include safeguarding policies and procedures, sound recruitment and selection practices and formal complaints procedures for users.
- Where The Big House is working in partnership with other organisations agreement must be reached with regard to the responsibilities procedures and practices contained in this document. The written contract, agreement or protocol detailing the services to be provided should include the procedure to be followed in the event of concerns about child abuse. The purpose of this is to ensure clarity as to which organisation is responsible for taking action in specific circumstances. Failure to reach agreement, or a situation arising that causes concern with regard to the partner organisations practice, may lead to cessation of that partnership.
- Where the delivery partner is responsible for taking action, any agreement should stipulate that The Big House must be informed of all incidents.

If a staff member/volunteer becomes aware of allegations of abuse relating to a partner organisation, this should be discussed in the first instance with The Big House's team.

PART 6 SAFEGUARDING & SPECIFIC CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

- a) All Trust staff and volunteers will receive the appropriate level and ongoing Safeguarding, and specific child protection awareness /training, to ensure the organisation has proper awareness and understanding of child abuse and neglect of children and young people.
- b) All staff are required to complete The Big House's safeguarding training and induction processes.
- c) Other appropriate Safeguarding and child protection training and instruction for identified staff groups and volunteers will be available. Training will be appropriate to roles and be accompanied by written material that can serve as a reference, where appropriate.



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KEY CONTACTS

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Maggie Norris	020 7923 9955
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Hannah Hughes	020 7923 9955
Childline	www.childline.org.uk	0800 1111
Turning Point (Drug and substance misuse)	www.turning-point.co.uk	020 7481 7600
Shelter (Housing & homelessness advice)	www.shelter.org.uk	0344 515 2222
Shelter from the Storm (Free homeless shelter)	www.sfts.org.uk	07886 404 813 / 020 7697 9569