

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

This Policy was last reviewed and approved in April 2024. HRAS International is committed to reviewing this policy annually.

Version	Date	Change	Author
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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and procedures for HRAS International, in relation to the requirements of UK Legislation. It covers both children and vulnerable adults (collectively referred to as “young people” throughout this document).

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the Board members, volunteers and seconded staff, mentors, agency staff, contract, seasonal, apprentices, interns, students or anyone working on behalf of HRAS International in either a voluntary or paid capacity. This also includes third party suppliers.

The purpose of this policy

Is to protect children and vulnerable adults (collectively referred to as “young people”) who receive or are part of HRAS International services. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is legally defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday.

Is to provide staff, trustees, volunteers, and third-party suppliers, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection and protecting vulnerable adults.

HRAS International believes that a young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We believe everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Legal framework

This policy (England and Wales) has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect young people, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003

- Children Act 2004
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Care Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

HRAS International is committed to:

- Safeguarding and protecting young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices.
- Identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people.
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process.
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of employees or volunteers once they have begun their role.
- Ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in some child protection training.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the young person is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- All young people, regardless of background, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some young people and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues working in partnership with young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- We have a commitment to safer recruitment of employees and volunteers.
- We have a commitment to protect young people and vulnerable adults who receive or are part of HRAS International services and who make use of information and communication technology (such as mobile phones technology and the Internet) as part of their involvement with us and ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our Online Safety policy and within the law.

We will seek to keep young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated child protection lead and as applicable, a board member who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding.
- Adopting child protection and vulnerable adults' practices through detailed procedures and a code of conduct for staff, trustees, and volunteers.

- Providing effective management for staff, trustees and volunteers through supervision, support and training, including compulsory online NSPCC training where required. We will also ensure that they understand and follow the child protection procedures.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the opportunities offered by information and communication technology in a way that keeps themselves safe and shows respect for others.
- Sharing information about our child protection policy with parents, carers, staff, trustees and volunteers, so they know what to do if they have a concern.
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and young people appropriately.

**We are committed to reviewing our policy annually.
This policy was last reviewed in April 2024.**

Key Definitions

For the purpose of the child and vulnerable adult protection policy and procedures, the terms below are defined as follows.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing the 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

Under the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 a child is legally defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Child protection and legislation and guidance therefore only applies to those users of HRAS International services up to that age. HRAS International will also work with those over the age of 18 and recognises its duty of care to all the young people with whom it works, including vulnerable adults up to 30.

A vulnerable adult

As defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, a vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is aged 18 years or over and who is:

- Living in residential accommodation, such as a care home or 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.
- Abuse can affect any vulnerable adult, but particularly someone who is, or may be, unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation, for example:
 - Older people
 - People with mental health problems
 - Disabled people
 - People with learning difficulties
 - People with acquired brain damage
 - People who misuse substances

Child protection

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

Named Person

Any of the HRAS International Designated Safeguarding Officers listed below will act, based on a duty rota approach, as the named person and be available to listen, advise and help a child or young person, or help them access other services during their participation in one of the EY Foundation programmes. They will also act as point of contact for staff and volunteers.

Code of Conduct

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of anyone who engages with young people* through HRAS International. (*Young people for the purposes of this refer to children and vulnerable adults).

Purpose

Following this code will help to protect young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will also help staff and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

Upholding this code of behaviour

- All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code under the whistle-blowing procedure or, if necessary, under child protection procedures to the Designated Safeguarding Officers.
- Any breach of the code involving a volunteer or member of staff may result in them being asked to leave HRAS International.
- Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police, the local authority children's social care department and/or the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
- If the breach involves a HRAS International employee they may be subject to HRAS International disciplinary procedures.
- If the breach involves a non-HRAS International employee on a HRAS International programme they may be subject to the procedures outlined below.

The role of staff and volunteers

When working with young people for HRAS International, all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that staff, trustees, and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by young people and must always act in an appropriate manner.

When working with young people, it is important to:

- Operate within HRAS International's principles and guidance and any specific procedures;
- Follow HRAS International's child protection and vulnerable adult policy and procedures at all times.
- Complete compulsory online NSPCC training module before engaging with young people on a 1:1 basis in any capacity, not just as a mentor.
- Listen to and respect young people at all times.
- Avoid favouritism, for example when working with two or more young people in a group.
- Treat young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Value and take young people's contributions seriously, actively involving young people in planning activities wherever possible,
- Ensure any contact with young people is appropriate and in relation to the work of the project,
- Always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory.
- Follow the Online Safety policy and report any breaches.
- Always ensure equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose.
- Provide examples of good conduct for young people to follow.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.
- Ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with young people or if this isn't possible, within sight or hearing of other adults.

- Be close to where others are working. If a young person specifically asks for or needs some private time, ensure other staff are aware of this and know where both parties are:
 - Respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
 - Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
 - Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with young people.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Patronise or treat young people as if they are silly.
- Allow allegations of abuse to go unreported.
- Develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with young people that is not a part of the work of HRAS International or agreed with the manager or leader.
- Conduct a sexual relationship with a young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a young person. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff, trustee or volunteer and a young person using the services of HRAS International represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member or volunteer and is not acceptable under any circumstances.
- Let young people have personal contact details (mobile number or address).
- "friend" or "follow" young people from personal accounts on social media such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.
- Communicate with young people via personal accounts or private messages.
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of young people.
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Make inappropriate promises to young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Rely on own reputation or that of the organisation to provide protection.

The role of parents, carers, schools and youth providers

HRAS International welcomes and encourages parental/carer involvement. Parents and carers are regarded as valuable partners in promoting positive behaviour and will be involved as appropriate. In the event of their child becoming the subject of behaviour sanctions, parents/carers will be informed.

Designated Safeguarding Officers at schools or youth providers may be contacted by HRAS International Designated Safeguarding Officers in cases when incidents are disclosed by young people during their participation on a HRAS International programme, this is to ensure young people receive the necessary support after they have completed a programme.

Procedures for young people at possible risk of abuse

This procedure applies to any paid member of staff or volunteer who may be concerned about the safety and protection of a young person.

Purpose and aim of this procedure

We aim to ensure those young people who are beneficiaries of the work delivered by HRAS International receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse. When social distancing measures are in place it is even more important to stay alert, as young people are not being seen by a range of professionals as regularly as they would usually be.

This procedure provides clear direction to staff and volunteers at HRAS International if they have concerns that a young person needs protection.

Different types of abuse (as defined by the NSPCC)

Physical abuse is defined as deliberately hurting a child and causing physical harm. It includes injuries such as: bruises, broken bones, burns and cuts.

It may involve:

- hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or any other method of causing non-accidental harm to a child

Physical abuse may also happen when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual abuse is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activity. This may involve physical contact or non-contact activities and can happen online or offline. Contact abuse involves activity where an abuser makes contact with a child. It includes:

- Sexual touching of any part of the body whether a child is wearing clothes or not.
- Forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity.
- Making a child take their clothes off or touching someone else's genitals.
- Rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus.
- Non-contact abuse involves activities where there is no physical contact. It includes:
 - Flashing at a child.
 - Encouraging or forcing a child to watch or hear sexual acts.
 - Not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activity by others.
 - Making a child masturbate whilst others watch.
 - Persuading a child to make, view or distribute child abuse images.
 - Making, viewing or distributing child abuse images.
 - Allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images.

- Meeting a child following grooming with the intent of abusing them.
- Sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status.

Emotional abuse is emotional maltreatment of a child, which has a severe and persistent negative effect on the child's emotional development. It is also known as psychological abuse. There are several categories of emotional abuse:

- Emotional neglect – ignoring the child; not showing affection.
- Rejection – verbal humiliation; name-calling; criticism; physical abandonment; excluding the child from activities.
- Isolating – putting unreasonable limitations on a child's freedom of movement; restricting social interaction; not communicating with the child.
- Exploiting or corrupting – encouraging a child to take part in criminal activities; forcing a child to take part in activities that are not appropriate for their stage of development.
- Terrorising – threatening violence; bullying; deliberately frightening a child; deliberately putting a child in a dangerous situation.

Neglect is not meeting a child's physical and psychological needs. The four main types of neglect are:

- Physical neglect – not meeting a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter; not supervising a child adequately or providing for their safety.
- Education neglect - not making sure a child receives an education.
- Emotional neglect - not meeting a child's needs for nurture and stimulation, for example by ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- Medical neglect – not providing appropriate healthcare, refusing care or ignoring medical recommendation.

Vulnerable adults may be subject to additional categories of abuse

- Financial or material: including withholding money or possessions, theft of money or property, fraud, intentionally mismanaging finances, borrowing money and not repaying.
- Discriminatory abuse: including slurs, harassment and maltreatment due to a person's race, gender, disability, age, faith, culture or sexual orientation.
- Institutional abuse: including the use of systems and routines which neglect a person receiving care. This can happen in any setting where formal care is provided.

If concerned about the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, please contact your local Adult Social Care Department, which is part of your local authority.

Ways that abuse might be brought to someone's attention

- A young person might make a direct disclosure about him or herself.
- A young person might make a direct disclosure about another young person.
- A young person might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

- A member of staff/trustee/volunteer might be concerned about a young person's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards a young person.
- A parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a young person is suffering or at risk of suffering.
- A parent/carer might offer information about a young person that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

Talking to a young person who has said that he/she or another young person is being abused

- Stay calm, listen carefully and take it seriously.
- Give your full attention and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Respect pauses and don't interrupt the young person – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. Remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what has happened to them.
- Make it clear you're interested in what the young person is telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check your understanding – use their language to show it's their experience.
- Consult a Designated Safeguarding Officer (i.e. on the same day the young person discloses information about a potential abuse).
- In the event that a Designated Safeguarding Officer cannot be reached by the close of play that day, please contact the NSPCC Hotline on 0808 800 5000.
- For out of hours, please contact the NSPCC Hotline on 0808 800 5000.
- Make a careful record of what was said – word for word if possible.
- The person reporting the abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not an abuse has occurred – this is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Give the child the ChildLine phone number: 0800 1111.

Helping a young person in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention

- If the young person is in immediate danger and is in the immediate vicinity, remain with him/her and call the police.
- If the young person is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, whilst waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge (if applicable) to help the young person.
- Contact a Designated Safeguarding Officer for child protection to let them know what is happening.

A decision will need to be made about who should inform the young person's family and the local authority children's social care department, and when they should be informed. If the police have been involved and/or the health services, they should be part of this decision.

Consider the welfare of the young person in the decision-making process as the highest priority. Issues that will need to be taken into account are:

- The young person's wishes and feelings.
- The parent/carer's right to know (unless this would place the young person or someone else in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation).
- The impact of telling or not telling the parent/carer.
- The current assessment of the risk to the young person and the source of that risk.
- Any risk management plans that currently exist.

Keeping a record of concerns

The Designated Safeguarding Officer for child protection will provide a form to record the concern and how it is dealt with. The relevant sections of the form should be completed and then it should be signed. It can be used to forward information to the statutory child protection authorities if a referral to them is needed.

The form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially on the young person's file. The name of the person making the notes should be written alongside each entry. Records are kept in a secure e-folder which only Designated Safeguarding Officers have access to.

Process

1. LISTEN
2. RESPOND
3. REPORT
4. REFER
5. RECORD

What can be considered a serious safeguarding incident?

- Incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of beneficiaries of the charity (adults or children) which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and this happened while they were under the care of HRAS International.
- Someone connected with HRAS International, for example, a staff member or volunteer, was responsible for the abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual).
- Other incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of people who come into contact with HRAS International through its work, which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and are connected to HRAS International activities.
- Breaches of procedures and policies at HRAS International which have put people who come into contact with it through its work at significant risk of harm, including failure to

carry out relevant vetting checks which would have identified a person is disqualified in law from holding their position within HRAS International. This might be, for example, because they are disqualified under safeguarding legislation from working with children and/or adults at risk.

Which details must be included in the serious incident report?

- Identification of the person who is reporting, his/her connection to HRAS International, and the authority that the person has to report on behalf of HRAS International (it is most likely to be a Designated Safeguarding Officer).
- Date of the incident and what happened.
- Date HRAS International found out about the incident and how they found out about the incident.
- What impact the incident has had on HRAS International beneficiaries, finances, staff, operations or reputation.
- Whether senior management are aware of the incident.
- Which of HRAS International policies or procedures relate to the incident and if they were followed.
- What steps HRAS International has taken to deal with the incident.
- What steps HRAS International has taken to prevent similar incidents.
- Where applicable, HRAS International's media handling or press lines, including a link to the press release if available.

Dealing with allegations involving HRAS International staff and/or volunteers, and young people

This procedure outlines what should happen if an allegation is made against an adult working for or involved in HRAS International. This procedure also applies where an allegation is made against another young person on the programme. Please also refer to the Whistleblowing policy, which is referenced later on in this document.

This procedure applies to:

- any member of staff or volunteer to whom an allegation of abuse has been made, that involves another member of staff, volunteer, or young person.
- anyone in a managerial position (including the named person for child protection, line managers, and supervisors) who may be required to deal with such allegations and manage investigations that result from them.

Concerns about staff, volunteers and other young people must be treated with the same rigor as other child protection 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 there is suspicion regarding a member of staff, volunteers or young person's conduct, with regard to children, they must be reported immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The aims of this procedure are:

- To ensure that young people who participate in HRAS International programmes, are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by an adult from within HRAS International, or another young person on the programme.
- To ensure that there is a fair, consistent and robust response to any allegations made, so that the risk posed to other young people by an abusive individual is managed effectively.
- To facilitate an appropriate level of investigation into allegations, whether they are said to have taken place recently, at any time the person in question has been employed by/volunteered with HRAS International or prior to the person's involvement with HRAS International (i.e. if it comes to attention whilst the person is working on behalf of HRAS International).
- To ensure that HRAS International continues to fulfil its responsibilities towards members of staff, volunteers or young people who may be subject to such investigations, for example giving consideration to the provision of appropriate support during and after the investigation.
- To ensure that individuals can continue in their role if they have been at the centre of allegations that are unfounded or deemed to be malicious in origin.

There are potentially three issues that need to be dealt with as a matter of urgency:

1. Is a young person in immediate danger or does she/he need emergency medical attention?

2. Is the person at the centre of the allegation another young person on a HRAS International programme?
3. Is the person at the centre of the allegation working with young people now?

If 3. is the case, the concern needs to be discussed immediately with the Directors. One of these should then, in a sensitive manner, remove the staff member involved in the allegation from direct contact with young people until the allegation is investigated.

The information provided to him/her at this stage may need to be very limited. This is because discussions need to take place first with other agencies who may need to be involved, such as the local authority children's social care department, the police or the local authority designated officer (LADO). The police and children's social care department may have views on what information can be disclosed to the person.

If the volunteer or staff is not a HRAS International member of staff, HRAS International may make a referral to their current employer (where applicable).

Taking disciplinary action

Where the allegations are particularly serious or there is no doubt, and clear evidence, that an offence has been committed the police and/or children's social care will be informed within one working day of the allegation being reported. A strategy for further action will then be agreed before a decision is taken as to notifying the staff member/ /volunteer/young person.

If the initial allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer or Executive Director should consider whether formal disciplinary action is needed.

If the local authority children's social care department has undertaken any enquiries to determine whether a child or children are in need of protection, the Designated Safeguarding Officers should take account of any relevant information from these enquiries when considering whether disciplinary action should be brought against the person at the centre of the allegations.

Where the employer is HRAS International, investigations and disciplinary action will be conducted internally. If the volunteer or staff is not a HRAS International member of staff, HRAS International may make a referral to their current employer (where applicable).

Talking to parents about the allegation or concern

If the young person's parents/carers do not already know about the allegation, the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer and the LADO need to discuss how they should be informed and by whom.

Following an allegation

If the allegation is substantiated and if, once the case is concluded, HRAS International dismisses the person or ceases to use their services, or the person ceases to provide his/her services, the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer should consult with the LADO about referral of the incident to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This should take place within a month.

Process for dealing with an allegation

[To be finalised]

Keeping a record of the investigation

All those involved in dealing with the allegation should keep clear notes of the allegations made, how they were followed up, and any actions and decisions taken, together with the reasons for these.

These notes should be compiled gradually as the situation unfolds, with each entry being made as soon as possible after the event it describes. The notes should be signed and dated by the person making them, and the person’s name should be printed alongside.

The notes should be kept confidentially on the file of the person who is the subject of the allegation. Discussion should take place with the LADO to determine whether any aspects of the notes may not be shared with the person concerned. If there are no reasons not to do so, a copy of the records should be given to the individual.

The notes should be held on file under GDPR rules for three (5) years.

Contact Details

Executive Director – David Hammond david.hammond@hrasi.org

Director – Robert Palfrey rp@hrasi.org

Other useful contacts	Phone	Internet
NSPCC Hotline	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
Childline	0800 1111 (textphone 0800 400 222)	www.childline.org.uk

ENDS.



Annex A: Safeguarding Concern Report Form

Safeguarding Concern Report Form	
Incident or concern reported by:	
Job title:	
Report date:	
Report summary	
Name of young person:	
Date of Birth:	
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? (If somebody else, please include their name and contact details)	
Date and time of disclosure or concern/incident reported:	
Location of disclosure or concern/incident reported:	
Give a brief account of the disclosure or concern/incident reported, including the observed harm/abuse, time, dates, names, locations, a description of any visible injuries (if any) or any other relevant facts:	
Action taken, including the name and details of anybody you have consulted:	

Signed

Date