

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Safeguarding Children**

**and Vulnerable Adults**

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Registered Charity No. 1167802

# Contents

## Page

2. Contents and safeguarding statement

3. Key Personnel and Review record

4. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility – responsibilities, definitions

8. Procedures – What to do if you have concerns

8. How to report a concern / make a referral

9. Process chart

10. Appendix One – Referral

11. Appendix Two – GDPR and Safeguarding

13. Appendix Three – Safeguarding Boards and National Guidance

15. Appendix Four – Internal Allegations

# Safeguarding Statement

The Cart Shed Charity recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where all are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children and vulnerable adults receive effective support, protection and justice.

The Cart Shed Charity fully recognise the contribution we can make to protect and support children. The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote children’s welfare, safety, health and well-being by creating an honest, open, caring and supportive environment. Our participants’ welfare is of paramount importance.

# Key Personnel

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL**):

Katie Eastaugh katie@thecartshed.co.uk Tel: 07796 421373

**Deputy DSL(s) are:**

Susie Gibbs susiegibbs@thecartshed.co.uk Tel: 07787 022944
Carly Price carly@thecartshed.co.uk Tel: 07827 700015
Ian Pearmain ianpearmain@thecartshed.co.uk Tel: 07795 492528

**The nominated safeguarding trustee is:**

David Hunt dshunt55@gmail.com Tel: 07855 300815

# Status & Review Cycle: Statutory Annual

Next Review Date: **January 2026**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  **Date of Change:** | **Changed By:** | **Comments:** |
| 14/02/2020 | Trish Dowling | Approved by Trustees |
| 11/02/2022 | Katie Eastaugh | Approved by Trustees |
| 02/01/2024 | Katie Eastaugh | Hope May consultants |
| 03/01/2025 | Alex Fitzpatrick | Approved by trustees |

# Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

# Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility:

Safeguarding refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children and specific vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers at The Cart Shed Charity, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults – and, in particular, protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. Some of the most vulnerable participants at The Cart Shed, and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, social care, the voluntary sector, education and other community agencies, including justice services.

For those participants who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential to safeguard and promote their welfare and – where necessary – to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against them. All agencies and professionals should:

* be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect
* be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and/or vulnerable adults
* share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the individual's needs and circumstances
* contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the individual's welfare
* take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the individual against specific plans; and
* work co-operatively with parents and/or other carers unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the individual's safety.

As one of its major activities the charity seeks to serve the needs of children and vulnerable adults, promoting holistic development. In doing so the charity takes seriously the welfare of all who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.

The charity aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

The charity recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff, paid and unpaid, to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children or vulnerable adults and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

The charity recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.

The charity is committed to supporting, resourcing and training staff and volunteers in safeguarding for both children and vulnerable adults and to providing supervision.

The charity is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory services.

# Staff awareness

This policy applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers and visitors to the charity. Safeguarding is not only everyone’s business, but also the responsibility of all staff. All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff, trustees and volunteers. Visitors to The Cart Shed will be able to access the policy on our website.

Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses – where appropriate this will also be delivered for volunteers and trustees - and any changes in the law related to Safeguarding will be disseminated immediately.

Disclosure and Barring checks will be undertaken every 3 years at The Cart Shed Charity’s cost and there is a contractual requirement for all staff, volunteers and trustees to sign an annual self-declaration to confirm their DBS status remains unchanged. If anyone has a change in their circumstances at any time that affects their DBS status they **must inform the CEO as soon as possible**. If the change in circumstances affects the status of staff or volunteers to continue to support service users, they may be reassigned to other duties or removed from those duties until additional background checks and have been completed and returned in order to ensure the safeguarding of both service users and staff alike.

## Safeguarding Children

Whilst much safeguarding in terms of signs of abuse and how these should be addressed are the same for children and adults, there are subtle differences in Safeguarding Children which should be noted. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing impairment of children's health or development
* ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

By children, we refer to all those who are under the age of 18, and when we refer to parents this includes all those with legal parental responsibility including adoptive parents, foster parents and guardians. In some instances, the Local Authority may have been given parental responsibility for the child.

## Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Whilst all children need safeguarding, the NHS defines [vulnerable adults](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teenage-mothers-and-young-fathers-support-framework) as any adult (person over the age of 18) unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from exploitation. This may be due to a variety of causes – mental health, physical health, family circumstances – however, as The Cart Shed works with people of all ages who struggle with mental health issues we can regard all adult participants as vulnerable whether they are regarded as having capacity or not.

# Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

All abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may occur in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult (or adults) 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. The same is true for vulnerable adults and may involve conveying to all ages that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or those who are vulnerable. These may include interactions that are beyond developmental or cognitive capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing someone from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing a child or vulnerable adult 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 though it may occur alone.

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (*e.g.:* rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. For children under 16, any sexual act is a crime and cannot be seen as consensual. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

This is more difficult to define for vulnerable adults and such sexual abuse is often difficult to identify but includes non-consensual penetrative or non-penetrative acts and any activities which make the vulnerable adult feel frightened or in danger.

## Neglect

In safeguarding children, 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. For both children and vulnerable adults, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect them from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a basic emotional needs.

Vulnerable adults may well neglect themselves in these ways and this is complicated by their legal autonomy. For example, one person’s cosy home may be unhealthy squalor to another person. Therefore such issues need to be handled with care.

## Exploitation

Exploitation takes many forms, including sexual abuse where children and vulnerable adults are exploited for profit. It also includes financial exploitation whereby vulnerable adults are forced or enticed into giving control of their finances to a third party. This can include ‘cuckooing’ whereby a vulnerable adult is convinced into allowing others to use their home, believing they have made friends, and can lead to other forms of abuse.

Children and young people who are vulnerable can also be subject to criminal exploitation whether this is being drawn into sexual exploitation, gang culture or county lines activity where they are used as part of a drug-selling operation. They often present as having new and fashionable clothing, phones, bikes etc. when their home circumstances could not support this expenditure.

Another aspect of exploitation of children and vulnerable adults is Radicalisation and Prevent guidelines will always be followed if this is suspected.

## Female genital mutilation

Often seen as a cultural norm in some African communities, FGM is a crime in the United Kingdom and involves surgical procedures which injure or alter the genitalia of young girls, usually (but not always) before puberty. It is often the cause of severe physical and mental health problems which may not become apparent until adulthood.

# Procedures

For reasons of consistency and practicality, the charity's procedures for safeguarding vulnerable adults will be the same as those for safeguarding children except where the law, or the specific circumstances of an individual's need require otherwise.

## What to do if you have concerns

You may have concerns because of something you have seen or heard, or a child or vulnerable adult may choose to disclose something to you. If they disclose information to you, you should:

* Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information. (Refer to Adult Social Care Services or The MASH team for children).
* Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
* Accept what is said.
* Reassure the individual, but only as far as is honest, don’t make promises you may not be able to keep *e.g.* *‘Everything will be alright now’*, *‘You’ll never have to see that person again’*.
* Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if they refer to it. For example, you could say, *‘You’re not to blame’*.
* Do not interrogate them; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
* Do not ask leading questions (*e.g.:* Did they touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as *‘Anything else to tell me?’*
* Do not ask them to repeat the information for another member of staff.
* Explain what you must do next and who you must talk to.
* Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
* Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the exact words used by the child or vulnerable adult (do not paraphrase).
* Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with your manager or designated safeguarding member of staff. See the diagram on page 9 for the process to follow.

If you still have concerns, you or your manager should refer to:

<https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/>

# Safeguarding Process

Person has safeguarding concerns about a participant

Person discusses with
manager

Still has concerns. Legal basis established

No longer has

concerns

Person refers to

Initial Response

Service and follows

up in writing within

48

hrs

No further action,

although may

consider other

agencies which could

offer

support

Social worker and

manager decide on

next course of action

within one working

day

# APPENDIX ONE – REFERRALS

## Children

Referrals are to the MASH team at Herefordshire Council

Click the link below to download:

[Multi Agency Referral Form](http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/local-content/zgjN/multi-agency-referral-reporting-concerns-marf) (MARF)

If you need to speak to the team - (01432) 260800

**Emergency Duty Team**

(01905) 768020 (out of hours number for when MASH are unavailable)

[Channel](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200139/community/307/safer_stronger_communities/5) for instances of suspected radicalisation.

**Contacting the Police when you think a child is in immediate danger:** 999 (in an emergency)

## Adults

[Safeguarding Adult Concern Form (AP1)](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/7515/ap1-form.doc)

[Safeguarding Adult Concern Form Guidance Notes](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/2096/hsab-concern-form-guidance.doc)

**If you need to speak to the Safeguarding Team ring:**

01432 260715 (weekdays 9am-5pm)

0330 123 9309 (after 5pm, weekends and public holidays)

Email: Safeguarding@herefordshire.gov.uk

Write to us at: Safeguarding Team, Herefordshire Council, Elgar House, Holmer Road, Hereford HR4 9BD

## What information will you need?

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. Such as the child or adult’s full name, date of birth, address, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities they may have. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call. For children you will also be asked for any information on the parent/carer

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs.

# APPENDIX TWO – GDPR AND SAFEGUARDING

## Information Sharing Considerations prior to making a referral

Sharing confidential information may be a breach of an individual’s Article 8 right within the Human Rights Act. A decision will need to be made prior to completing a safeguarding referral as to whether the sharing would be justified and proportionate.

The right to a private life can be legitimately interfered with where it is in accordance with the law and it is necessary.

If a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, or an adult is at risk of serious harm, or sharing is necessary to prevent crime or disorder, interference with the individual’s right may be justified under Article 8.

## Data Protection and Safeguarding:

Where personal data is required to be processed in conjunction with safeguarding action according to this policy, the processing activity must be undertaken in accordance with our data protection policy.

Data protection is not a barrier to sharing concerns about a child or an individual at risk. The Cart Shed should make a note in the safeguarding report of any express wish not to share the information but not let this prevent from sharing such data. If you have any concerns about information sharing, contact the NSPCC helpline for advice.

For guidance on information sharing, see: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf>

## Consent

The reliance on consent is not always appropriate in the following circumstances:

* consent to the processing cannot be given by the data subject;
* the controller cannot reasonably be expected to obtain the consent of the data subject to the processing:
* the processing must be carried out without the consent of the data subject because obtaining the consent of the data subject would prejudice the provision of the protection mentioned (safeguarding if children and individual at risk; safeguarding of economic well-being of certain individuals)

In the circumstances mentioned above, in order to comply with our duty of care and safeguarding, we would process information raising safeguarding concerns and share them with relevant authorities when required, under the following lawful basis:

1. Where an individual’s life may be at risk, we may process the data according to the UK GDPR Article 6(d) and GDPR Article 9 (c) where such processing is vital to the individual’s life
2. Where an individual or child is at risk – UK GDPR Article 6(f) legitimate interest, Article 9(g), substantial public interest, DPA 2018 Schedule 1, Part 2 paragraph 18 Safeguarding of children and of individuals at risk
3. Where an individual is at economic risk – UK GDPR Article 6(f) legitimate interest, Article 9(g), substantial public interest, DPA 2018 Schedule 1, Part 2 paragraph 18 Safeguarding of economic well-being of certain individuals

Where the lawful basis is either b or c above, an Appropriate Policy Document is required, which has been completed by the Cart Shed.

Data subjects’ rights and other UK GDPR provisions may be restricted when concerning personal data processed in the circumstances described above. Restrictions on the data subjects’ rights may be permitted by the exceptions included in the articles of the individual rights (UK GDPR) or by one of the exemptions included between Schedule 2 and 4 of the DPA 2018. Examples of exemptions that might apply in the circumstances of safeguarding are the following:

* Schedule 2, Part 1, paragraph 2 (crime and taxation)
* Schedule 2, Part 3 (right of others)
* Schedule 3 – Part 5 (child abuse data)

Exceptions and exemptions are applied on a case-by-case basis.

Records of such processing are kept to account for the action taken. The principles of the UK GDPR will be observed at all times.

## Caldicott guidance

Caldicott covers Health and Social Care related information and must be taken into consideration when proposing to share information of this type.

6 Caldicott Principles

* Justify the purpose before sharing information;
* Only use patient identifiable when absolutely necessary;
* Use only the minimum that is required, do not share more data than is necessary, i.e. do not send the whole patient record when the request only relates to a recent event;
* Access to the data should be on a strict ‘need to know’ basis;
* Be aware of your responsibilities in complying with organisational policies relating to confidentiality;
* Understand the law, if uncertain speak to your line manager, your Data Protection Officer or the Information Governance Team.

A further Caldicott principle was introduced in 2013:

* The duty to share information can be as important as the duty to protect patient confidentiality.

Refer to Safeguarding Adults and Children legal basis for sharing guidance document for clarification if necessary or discuss with The Cart Shed’s Data Lead. (see appendix 3)

# APPENDIX THREE – SAFEGUARDING BOARD AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE

## Herefordshire Safeguarding Boards Guidance Documents

For full information visit the Safeguarding Board’s website, but main documentation is available through the links below

## Children

National, regional and local policies, procedures and guidance are held on the [**West Midlands Child Protection Procedures Site**](https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/contents)**.**  This includes extensive information and guidance regarding areas such as neglect

In addition, Herefordshire has adopted Signs of Safety as its overarching practice model for working with children across all partner agencies in Herefordshire. <https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/professional-resources/childrens-policies-guidance/signs-of-safety-in-herefordshire>

 [Prevent for schools, colleges and childminders](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation/the-prevent-duty-an-introduction-for-those-with-safeguarding-responsibilities) gives further information on how to guard against radicalisation

## Adults

All the key partners of Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) have agreed that the regional policy for safeguarding adults should govern all safeguarding work with adults at risk in Herefordshire. The policy, therefore, applies to all professionals and agencies working with adults at risk in the county.

The regional policy is supported by a suite of Herefordshire specific policies. You can download the most commonly needed / used policies here:

## [Adult Safeguarding; Multi-agency policy and procedures for the protection of adults with care and support needs in the West Midlands](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/7333/wm_adult_safeguarding_pp_v20_nov_2019.pdf)

To view a summary of changes in the latest version of the document, click [here.](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/7334/wmpp-_summary_of_revisions_to_v10.pdf)
The Policy sets out the approach taken to adult safeguarding in the West Midlands. The Procedures then explain how agencies and individuals should work together to put the West Midlands Adults Safeguarding Policy into practice. **Adult Safeguarding supporting documentation can be found** [**HERE**](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/for-professionals/policies-and-procedures/adult-safeguarding/)

## [Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance (Department of Health, 2014)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted)

The legal framework for the Care Act 2014 is supported by this statutory guidance. It provides information and guidance about how the Care Act works in practice. The guidance has statutory status which means there is a legal duty to have regard to it when working with adults (with care and support needs) and carers.

## [Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice)

The legal framework provided by the Mental Capacity Act 2005 is supported by this Code of Practice (the code), which provides guidance and information about how the Act works in practice. The Code has statutory **force**, which means that certain categories of people have a legal duty to have a regard to it when working with or caring for adults who may lack capacity to make decision for themselves. **Mental Capacity Act supporting documentation can be found** [**HERE**](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/for-professionals/policies-and-procedures/mental-capacity-act-2005-code-of-practice/)

## [Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/6278/hsab-dols-policy-v2-january-2018-2.pdf)

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), which apply only in England and Wales, are an amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The DoLS under the MCA allows restraint and restrictions that amount to a deprivation of liberty to be used in hospitals and care homes – but only if they are in a person’s best interests. To deprive a person of their liberty, care homes and hospitals must request standard authorisation from a local authority. **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards supporting documentation can be found** [**HERE**](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/for-professionals/policies-and-procedures/deprivation-of-liberty-safeguards/)

## [Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners and Managers](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/for-professionals/policies-and-procedures/information-sharing/)

This guidance supports good practice in information sharing by offering clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally, to achieve improved outcomes. This guidance will be especially useful to support early intervention and prevention work where decision about information sharing may be less clear then in safeguarding situations. **Information sharing supporting documentation can be found** [**HERE**](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/for-professionals/policies-and-procedures/information-sharing/)

## [Making Safeguarding Personal - Practitioner Guide & Toolkit](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/6504/msp-practitioner-guidance-revised-march-2019.docx)

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is a sector led initiative which aims to develop an outcomes focus to safeguarding work, and a range of responses to support people to improve or resolve their circumstances. The work is supported by the Local Government Association (LGA) with the [Association of Directors of Adult Social Care](https://www.adass.org.uk/safeguarding-policy-page) (ADASS) and other national partners and seeks to promote this approach and share good practice. **A series of tools to support MSP can be found** [**HERE**](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/for-professionals/policies-and-procedures/making-safeguarding-personal/)

## [Self Neglect](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/6230/wm-self-neglect-guidance-v20-issued-apr-2018.pdf)

Self-neglect is defined as ‘the inability (intentional or non-intentional) to maintain a socially and culturally accepted standard of self-care with the potential for serious consequences to the health and well-being of the self-neglecters and perhaps even to their community.’ (Gibbons, S. 2006. ‘Primary care assessment of older people with self-care challenges.’ Journal of Nurse Practitioners, 323-328.) The Care Act statutory guidance 2014 defines self-neglect as; "a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding".

## [West Midlands Adult Position of Trust Framework](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/media/6539/wm-adult-pot-framework-v20-dec-2018.pdf)

Herefordshire Safeguarding Adult Board (HSAB) protocol for responding to allegations and concerns against people working with adults with care and support needs. **Position of Trust supporting documentation can be found** [**HERE**](https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/for-professionals/policies-and-procedures/west-midlands-position-of-trust/)

## Promoting Safety - Herefordshire's strategy for addressing domestic abuse 2021-24

Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in most cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer.

# APPENDIX FOUR – INTERNAL ALLEGATIONS

## Allegations Involving a Member of Staff / Volunteer / Trustee

The Cart Shed Charity is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and vulnerable adults. Where appropriate, key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with The Cart Shed Charity, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of adults by those who work with children or vulnerable adults or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to the CEO, Katie Eastaugh. Should the allegations relate to the CEO or another trustee, the Chair of Trustees (David Hunt) should be notified.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children or vulnerable adults has:

* Behaved in a way which has harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or may have harmed them
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult
* Behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with those who are vulnerable.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The Cart Shed’s safeguarding board team will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Herefordshire Safeguarding Board and the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take. If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, The Cart Shed safeguarding leads will immediately refer the matter to Herefordshire Safeguarding Boards and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened straight away.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the Safeguarding Board. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the Safeguarding Board should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that they can consult Police and Social Care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

1. The police investigation of a possible criminal offence
2. Enquiries and assessment by Herefordshire Council’s relevant Social Care Services as to whether the child or vulnerable adult is need of protection or in need of services
3. Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.