

Hastings Thrives Safeguarding policy



Hastings Thrives is charity that works with children and the wider community in the town of Hastings. We believe that every individual who accesses our services should be treated with dignity and respect, have their choice respected and not be forced to do anything against their will. Hastings Thrives is committed to safeguarding children coming into contact with the charity, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

The charity works mainly with children from ages 2 to 18. This policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff who, during the course of their employment have direct or indirect contact with children, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare.

This policy applies to anyone working directly or indirectly for Hastings Thrives and includes Trustees, staff, volunteers, work placements, trainers and consultants. This policy is available to independent contractors and should be implemented as good practice.

Charity Trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from or working with their charity are not harmed in any way through contact with it. **This policy has been approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees has been reviewed September 2018 at the second AGM.**

This child protection and safeguarding policy statement will be available on the Hastings Thrives website.

An annual audit of safeguarding concerns, action taken and staff training and support will be conducted annually and safeguarding policy and procedures will be reviewed every three years or in the light of significant changes to best practice or legislation.

Date of first review	September 2017	Date of next review	September 2020
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For Hastings Thrives this means...

1. ensuring that Hastings Thrives practices **safe recruitment** in checking the suitability of staff, freelancers and volunteers to work with and have contact with children.
2. ensuring **safe environments**, checking the suitability of childcare providers contracted by Hastings Thrives , ensuring services are provided in safe environments and that sufficient safeguards are in place.
3. raising awareness of how and when to **signpost vulnerable children** to appropriate services.
4. raising awareness of **child protection** situations, and our procedures for identifying and reporting concerns or suspected cases.
5. building a **culture** that values and respects all children and modelling appropriate conduct in line with our values
6. setting out clear **roles and responsibilities** for safeguarding

We set out below the steps is taking and requires all Hastings Thrives personnel to take in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

1. Safe recruitment

a. Staff and volunteers

For all posts within Hastings Thrives the following vetting checks are carried out prior to confirming the appointment:

- a Self Disclosure form to disclose previous spent/unspent convictions and disciplinary or capability procedures.
- Identity documents including photographic identity
- Proof of right to work in the UK
- References including a professional reference using a pro-forma template
- Qualification certificates if required for the role
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check if eligible. All appointments to posts involving direct work with children will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS, and agreement to re-check every 3 years.

Companies commissioned for working alongside or with Hastings Thrives will be expected to have their own safer recruitment policies in place and these will be checked as part of the commissioning process. .

Volunteers and freelance consultants post the same level of risk to clients as paid staff. Vetting checks include:

- a self-disclosure form to disclose previous spent/unspent convictions

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- References including a professional reference using a pro-forma template
- DBS check if eligible. All volunteers and freelance consultants working directly with children will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS, and agreement to re-check every 3 years.

2. Safe environments

a. Schools

Schools will have their own safeguarding arrangements and policies with all staff DBS checked.

b. Safe environments

Hastings Thrives will ensure that all environments where services activities are delivered will not cause harm to adults or children. As well as ensuring that suitable staff deliver activities, all service delivery environments will be assessed in line with Hastings Thrives health and safety criteria and the event checklist.

c. The media

Hastings Thrive's use of images [policy and consent form](#) for use of photographs on the website or other promotional material ensures informed consent is given before images can be used.

3. Child protection

Contact with children

Those working for the charity will also sometimes observe directly, infer from statements made or hear information that raises concerns about a child's welfare. It is essential that this policy is read and understood by all staff and that any concerns are reported to the relevant school, designated trustee or to the board of trustees.

Awareness of policies

All staff are required to read Hastings Thrive's *Safeguarding Policy* to know their responsibilities in their role and to provide signed confirmation of this on the Induction checklist..

Alert to the signs of abuse

Our role in protecting children is to pick up clues that the child may need protecting and pass this information to those who can assess the situation and act when required.

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Staff are required to be aware of the different types and signs of abuse and the circumstances in which it can occur.

Aware of duty to report concerns.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately (this may require a referral to children's services and / or emergencies, the Police). Staff have a duty to report concerns in line with Hastings Thrives procedures. Failure to comply with these responsibilities will be seen as a serious matter which may lead to disciplinary action.

Confidentiality.

Recognising that "the welfare of the child is paramount" Children's Act 1989, considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, Hastings Thrives will be working with vulnerable children and the confidentiality of this relationship needs to be preserved unless any safeguarding or protection issue arises. We will never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to anyone wishing to tell them about something serious.

4. Culture

a. Staff

We will work in line in line with the [equality and diversity policy](#) to value diversity and respect the contribution of each individual.

Hastings Thrives also has a clear policy for staff on [IT usage](#) forbidding inappropriate use of materials which includes sexually explicit material, obscene remarks and abusive or discriminatory messages. See '[Acceptable uses policy](#).'

b. Online forums and Facebook

Hastings Thrives works to ensure that our online forums and Facebook page are safe by following the acceptable uses policy above

While we encourage lively debate, we do not tolerate behaviour which makes other users feel uneasy or unable to contribute to the page. As such, we reserve the right to remove posts which are aggressive in tone, abusive towards other users or disruptive to how the forum or page operates. Racist, sexist, homophobic or bullying posts will be removed without delay. This is common practice and corresponds with Facebook's terms and conditions.

Hastings Thrives will ensure all volunteers are familiar with this policy

5. Roles and responsibilities

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Safeguarding and Child Protection Responsibilities are set out as follows:

- Trustees are accountable for Hastings Thrives and therefore all safeguarding within the organisation and will receive annual reports on safeguarding.

6. Related policies and resources

This policy relates to measures in a range of other Hastings Thrives policies that have been referred to and highlighted throughout this policy where relevant.

7. Definitions

[1] Safeguarding

The term 'safeguarding' refers to inward facing procedures such as awareness raising, reporting concerns, responding appropriately to issues of abuse and exploitation and preventing harm through sound recruitment and safe programming. (*Charity Commission's Strategy for dealing with safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities*, April 2012)

[3] Trustee responsibilities

Trustees of charities which work with children and vulnerable adults have a duty of care to their charity which will include taking the necessary steps to safeguard and take responsibility for those children and vulnerable adults. They must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them. Trustees also have duties to manage risk and to protect the reputation and assets of the charity. [*Charity Commission's Strategy for dealing with safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues*]