Safeguarding Policy 2026

Introduction
Hesketh Bank Community Centre (HBCC) is committed to safeguarding practices that help ensure the safety of adults and young people at risk.

We believe that all adults and young people at risk have an equal right to protection from abuse and to be kept safe from harm regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Purpose of the policy
This policy helps everyone involved within our centre to:

- be aware of our legal responsibilities
- understand the safeguarding risks presented within HBCC
- know what to do if they have a concern about the wellbeing or welfare of any adult or young person at risk that comes into our centre.

This safeguarding policy, and associated procedures, applies to all individuals involved in HBCC, including: Trustees, members of staff, volunteers, centre users, stakeholders and business partners.

Code of conduct
When working with vulnerable adults and young people we are acting in a position of trust.

We recognise that keeping our group safe is everyone's responsibility, and we expect our members, volunteers, staff and Trustees to behave according to the following values:

- We recognise some adults and young people can be vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- We listen to and respect everyone within our centre.
- We use language that is appropriate for age and ability, and not offensive or discriminatory.
- We encourage a culture of honesty, where everyone feels comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviours they feel are inappropriate.

We know it isn't always easy to voice safeguarding concerns for ourselves or for other people, however we offer a safe environment and have a supportive team who will guide and advise you on the steps to take relating to safeguarding matters.

All safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously and be responded to swiftly and appropriately using the appropriate channels.

This means when working with adults and young people at risk, we will never:

- Promise to keep secrets – effective safeguarding relies on sharing information appropriately with other people (external agencies).
- Allow suspicions or allegations relating to safeguarding concerns to go unreported.
- Act in an inappropriate manner when dealing with safeguarding concerns.

- Jump to conclusions about individuals without confirming facts.
- Enter into a sexual or intimate relationship with any person who is deemed to be at risk.

Legislation
This policy, and the practices within it, are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance.

Safeguarding legislation in the UK aims to protect vulnerable individuals, including children and adults, from harm and abuse. It outlines the responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and authorities in ensuring safety and well-being. Key legislation includes the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, and the Care Act 2014.

HBCC recognises that the local authority has the main legal duty to safeguard adults and young people at risk, and we are committed to working with them and our local Safeguarding Adult and Young Persons Board.

Definitions
Safeguarding, in general, refers to the act of protecting someone's health, well-being, and human rights, and ensuring they live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It is a collective responsibility to protect children, young people, and adults, and is an integral part of providing quality care and support.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Often the perpetrator of abuse is known to the adult or young person and may be in a position of trust and power.

Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance.

The types of abuse we need to be aware of are:
- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional/Psychological/Mental
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory
- Organisational / institutional
- Self-neglect
- Domestic abuse (including coercive control)
- Modern slavery

Recognising safeguarding concerns
There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is experiencing abuse or neglect. There may be other explanations too, but HBCC will not ignore any of these signs if they are apparent.

An adult or young person may confide (disclose) to a trustee, member of staff or volunteer, or other member of HBCC that they are experiencing abuse, inside or outside the activities of the group. Or, someone else may notice signs in a particular individual.

The signs we will look out for may include:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Belongings or money going missing from the person
- The person no longer attending or enjoying Hesketh Bank Community Centre's activities, or responding to contact from other members of the group
- A change in confidence or behaviour of a person e.g. if they are withdrawn and quiet around a particular person or people, when usually they are outgoing and confident.
- A change in appearance of the person e.g. losing or gaining weight, deterioration in personal hygiene or way of dressing.
- Someone else (e.g. a parent, carer or family member) always speaking for the person and not allowing them to make their own choices
- The person showing fear of, or not wanting to be around, a particular individual or group of people

Responding to concerns

HBCC has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) whose contact details are contained within this policy.

HBCC recognises that it can be difficult for many reasons to speak up if you think someone is being abused or neglected. However, we expect our staff, volunteers, and trustees to take action in response to any concerns. Our designated safeguarding lead will support the person raising the concerns, as well as the person being abused.

If anyone in the group notices any signs of abuse or neglect in another person, they should bring these concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

If someone discloses to anyone else in the group that they are being abused, the response should be as follows:

1) Always make sure the person making a disclosure feels they are being listened to and supported
2) Don't promise to keep information confidential between you and them
3) Tell the designated safeguarding lead about the concerns (unless the safeguarding lead is implicated in causing the harm or perpetrating the abuse. In this situation, information should be shared with a trusted committee member/trustee and they will be responsible for taking further action instead of the safeguarding lead)
4) Ask for the person's consent to share the information. If they refuse and you are still worried that they or someone else is at immediate risk of harm, you cannot wait for this consent. You must share this information with the safeguarding lead.
5) Write a clear statement of what you have been told, seen, or heard using the Safeguarding report form (copies located in the Safeguarding file in the office). This report should remain fact based.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for taking further action once concerns have been raised with them.

Throughout the process, the designated safeguarding lead will record all the information they are given, the actions they take, and why. The procedures they will follow are:

1. Initial assessment

As soon as information is shared with the designated safeguarding lead, they will make an initial assessment of the concern. They will, if possible, talk to the person reporting the concern and gather as much information as possible from them.

Key questions to ask:

- What type of concern has been reported? Different actions are required depending on what type of concern it is (see below)
- What action has already been taken?
- Is anyone else in the organisation affected by this situation (e.g. other staff or volunteers or those you work with)?
- Are there any attitudes or emotions that you may have to be aware of?
- How might this concern affect what the organisation delivers in the short term?
- Who else might need to be informed?
- What other actions now need to be taken?

2. Immediate actions depending on what type of concern has been raised

(a) Emergency incidents:

- This is when there's a life-threatening situation where there's imminent danger of harm to an adult or young person or child.
- Immediately contact the emergency services if they haven't been called already.
- Make sure the current situation is safe.
- Establish how others are coping – do they need any immediate support?
- Inform the safeguarding lead

(b) Protection concerns:

- This is when an adult or young person who you believe is unable to protect themselves is at current risk of, or has experienced, abuse or harm.
- If the person is in immediate danger, call the police.
- If they're not in immediate danger, you must contact the local authority safeguarding team within 24 hours and make a referral (contact details are contained within).

(c) Allegations concerning staff or volunteers:

- This is when someone has alleged that staff or volunteers from your organisation have harmed or abused a vulnerable adult or young person at risk.
- Contact the local authority safeguarding team (LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer) as soon as possible within 24 hours.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 01772 536694 or LADO.Admin@lancashire.gov.uk
Be guided by the safeguarding team or police on any further actions required of you.

(d) Welfare concerns:

- This is when no one has been harmed in any way, but a person shows signs of being in need. It's when you have concerns for their health, wellbeing or safety if they don't get help.
- Within 7 days you, or someone in your organisation, should speak with the person.
- When it is appropriate you should also speak with their family or carer. You must explain your concerns and make sure they have the support they need.

Depending on the conversation, the safeguarding lead may then also:

- Help the person or their family access services or give them the information they need to do this themselves.
- Speak to another professional who is already working with the person or family, such as a social worker, about their needs.

(e) Concerns about other organisations:

- This is a situation where the safeguarding concern is about another organisation, their staff, volunteers or the people they work with.
- As soon as possible (within 24 hours) contact the designated safeguarding lead of the organisation in question and pass on your concerns, if this has not already happened.
- In some circumstances you may decide to follow up with the organisation to confirm they have acted on the issue.
- If at any point you think the organisation has not acted and someone is at risk, you should contact the local safeguarding team yourself.

(f) Responding to historic or non-recent concerns:

- You may become aware or be told about a concern from an adult or young person relating to an incident which took place in the past, including when they were a child.
- Historical allegations of abuse should be taken as seriously as contemporary allegations.
- Remember that it's never too late to report abuse.
- An individual can make a formal complaint to the police about non-recent abuse, ideally in the geographic area in which the abuse is reported to have taken place.
- Establish if the person alleged to have caused the harm works with children, adults or young people at risk.
- Try to find out their recent or current whereabouts and any contact they have with children, adults or young people at risk.
- A referral should be made to social services, with the consent of the person who experienced the abuse if possible.
- Consider what consent the person has given for information to be shared. How, when and to whom they share this information should usually be with their consent.
- Signpost the person who experienced the abuse to relevant support groups that can help them.

(g) Supporting those who share a concern with you:

Your primary concern should be the best interests of the person who is at risk of harm.
However, the person sharing this concern with you may also be distressed by the situation, even if they are reporting on behalf of someone else. Everyone can respond to worries about another differently.
If someone has previously experienced trauma they can find it especially upsetting. Please remember to:

- Thank them for bringing this concern to your attention and that they have fulfilled their key responsibility.
- Explain that you will now take responsibility in leading management of this concern and any contact with statutory agencies.
- Highlight that there may be limited updates that you have or can give them on the situation; that does not mean that it was not important for them to share their concern
- Remind them of the importance of confidentiality and not sharing this information further.
- Ensure they have your contact details in case they think of anything else they have not yet shared that they think may be relevant.
- Discuss with them what additional support they may require. Consider contacting them later to check in on how they are doing.

Keeping records

HBCC recognises that it is vital to record and store details about any safeguarding concerns that arise.

We will record information, even if the concerns have not been shared with the police or the local authority safeguarding team in compliance with GDPR.

These records are extremely sensitive and will be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer (if hard copy) and/or password protected and stored on a computer with protection against hackers and viruses (if electronic).
It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the following information is recorded about every safeguarding concern:

- The date and time of the incident/disclosure/concern
- The date and time of the report
- The name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
- The name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details
- The names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses
- The name and any other relevant information about the adult and young people and young people who is the subject of the concern (including information about their care and support needs)
- What was said or done and by whom
- Any action taken to look into the matter
- Any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
- The reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant)

Each record will be signed and dated by the person making the report and stored securely in compliance with GDPR and data protection requirements.

Confidentiality, consent and information sharing
Timely information sharing is key to keeping people safe and responding appropriately to concerns about their welfare.

In general, Hesketh Bank Community Centre expects all trustees, volunteers and staff to maintain confidentiality and act in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

We will share information within the group (e.g. with other staff or volunteers) in situations where this is necessary in order to deal effectively with safeguarding concerns or to provide continuity of support. We will share information with other organisations in order to keep a person safe.

Whenever confidential information is shared, we will follow the principles below. We will:

- Have a clear and legitimate purpose
- Keep clear records of why we chose to share the information
- Ensure we are not putting the person at risk by sharing information
- Be as factual as possible
- Seek consent. If the adult or young person refuses consent, we may share information only if, for example:
    - We think they are at serious risk of harm or abuse, including harming themselves;
    - Information indicates that a serious crime has been or is going to be committed;
    - We think the person lacks the mental capacity to decide for themselves and we believe it would be in the individual's best interests;

We are required by law e.g. if we suspect FGM (female genital mutilation), FM (forced marriage), or a possible terrorist threat. The same safeguarding process for reporting concerns must be used.

Recruitment and training
HBCC Trustees, staff and volunteers that work with adults and young people at risk will be given an initial induction which covers the safeguarding policy and procedures set out within. Ongoing updates will be provided to the team on an annual basis.

They will be trained in: our code of conduct; definitions of abuse and harm; recognising signs of abuse; and how to respond to concerns and disclosures.

All trustees, staff and volunteers will know who is the designated safeguarding lead, and that they should go to them with any concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead will be offered further training to ensure they are clear about their role, and what action to take in response to different concerns.

We will apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks prior to employment commencing for all staff and volunteers for whom we are legally required to do so. For existing personnel, frequent training updates and refreshers will be provided including a 3 year enhanced DBS check.

Key contacts

Safeguarding Officer:

Name:	John Boyle
Contact details:	john@heskethbankcommunitycentre.org.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**) 01772 536694 or LADO.Admin@lancashire.gov.uk

If you need any further information, advice or guidance relation to this policy, please contact the centre manager.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, unless circumstances arise which require the policy to be reviewed earlier.

This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees of HBCC.

Policy dated: 01/10/2026

Policy review date: 30/09/2027