



Houghton Regis Helpers
07587 004514

Houghton Regis Helpers Safeguarding and Protection of Adults at Risk (of harm or abuse) Policy

November 2023

Houghton Regis Helpers is committed to ensuring that adults at risk who use our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. Houghton Regis Helpers recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all adults at risk, including volunteers, by a commitment to practice which protects them. This policy ensures compliance with current UK Government legislation, including the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004; Mental Capacity Act 2005; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; the Children Act 2004; Working Together 2013; Modern Slavery Act 2015; Care Act 2014 – this Act sets out a clear framework for the protection of adults at risk of harm or abuse or neglect.

Houghton Regis Helpers will appoint a named designated person who will be the main contact for reports and following procedures. The named designated person will receive the relevant safeguarding awareness training annually. Volunteers of Houghton Regis Helpers have a duty to identify abuse and will report any concerns or disclosure to the named designated person, who will be an officer of the committee and who will notify the Central Beds Safeguarding Team if appropriate.

Houghton Regis Helpers recognises that volunteers also have a responsibility to ensure the protection of children and young people at risk. While volunteers may support children and young people within the home environment, they do not work one-to-one with under 18's. Anyone with concerns about safeguarding of children or young people will report to the named designated person.

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK

Definition

Adults at risk are people who are over the age of 18 and are receiving, or may be in need of, help and services to live in the community. Adults at risk of abuse can be vulnerable and may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

Adult abuse can include

- Discriminatory
- Psychological / Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Neglect and Acts of Omission
- Financial or Material
- Institutional / Organisational
- Self Neglect
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic

Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetrated by anyone.

Volunteers must:

- Treat all people with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct at all times
- Attend initial training in Safeguarding Awareness, keep regularly updated and attend Refresher training every two years
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities when children and young people are present, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others. Houghton Regis Helpers volunteers will not give lifts to unaccompanied children
- Respect all individuals' right to dignity, respect, and personal privacy.
- Encourage adults at risk to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with adults at risk
- Always operate within Houghton Regis Helpers principles and guidance
- Always report all unacceptable behaviour, and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse, to the named designated person on the phone number provided, or if unavailable notify the phone holder (07587 004514) who will pass the report on to the named designated person.
- In an emergency and a person, or persons, are at immediate risk of harm the volunteer must dial 999 and ask for the police
- Keep to the facts when reporting an incident

Volunteers must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children, young people, or adults at risk
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour.
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children, young people, or adults at risk.
- Make assumptions or probe for more details if there is an incident

- Conduct any investigations or discuss with anyone other than those who need to know
- Either exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues.
- Rely on your good name or that of Houghton Regis Helpers to protect you.
- Believe “it could never happen to me.”
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

Rights and responsibilities:

Responsibilities of Houghton Regis Helpers committee and officers:

- To ensure volunteers are aware of the safeguarding and protection of adults at risk policy.
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is disclosed or suspected.
- To support and, where possible, secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability.
- Carry out Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all volunteers who are working in a regulated activity with adults at risk, including the officers and phone holders who manage the volunteers carrying out regulated activities.

Responsibilities of Houghton Regis Helpers volunteers:

- To be familiar with safeguarding and protection of adults at risk policy.
- To take appropriate action and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse, in line with the policy of Houghton Regis Helpers
- To declare any existing, or subsequent, convictions.

The users of the service have the right:

- To be made aware of this policy
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate
- To receive information about the outcome, as appropriate

SAFEGUARDING VOLUNTEERS

Houghton Regis Helpers Officers and Committee have a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to safeguard our volunteers and are mindful that they have the right to be treated fairly.

Any allegations of abuse reported against or by volunteers will be taken seriously and investigated in accordance with this policy and procedures. The named designated person will, in the first instance, report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice and guidance. The LADO (known in Central Bedfordshire Council as the Allegations Manager) oversees investigations into allegations and concerns involving staff and voluntary workers.

Support for those who report abuse:

All those volunteers or users making a complaint, allegation or expressing concern, should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared with the appropriate authorities, if they or others are at significant risk.
- All written record and personal information will be kept confidential and secure

Houghton Regis Helpers committee is committed to reviewing this policy and our good practice biennially, or sooner if required within the law

Nominated Designated Person appointed 17/11/2023: Jenny Gallucci (Secretary)


Contact Tel: 07860 32297

Chair's signature: (Vice-Chair)

Print Name

Adopted on: 17 November 2023

Review date: November 2025


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