



Houghton Regis Helpers  
07587 004514

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

March 2026

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 an officer of the committee to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will be the main contact for reports and following procedures. The DSL will attend relevant Safeguarding training (at least Level 2) annually.

Volunteers of Houghton Regis Helpers have a duty to identify abuse and will report any concerns or disclosure to the DSL who will notify the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Team if appropriate.

The Adult Safeguarding Boards in Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Luton work together under a multi-Agency Policy and work with a wide range of agencies, to develop, implement and monitor work to safeguard people with care and support needs from abuse, maltreatment and neglect.

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 DSL. Concerns about a child or young person are referred via the multi-agency Safeguarding Children Partnership 'Integrated Front Door'.

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

#### **The Care 2014 identifies ten types of adult abuse:**

**Physical** - being hurt or harmed either deliberately or through rough, careless, or thoughtless behaviour.

**Psychological and Emotional abuse** - Being humiliated or put down or made to feel anxious or frightened. This includes control and coercion, bullying and cyber-bullying.

**Financial abuse or theft** - someone using your money or possessions in a way that you don't want. May include pressure or coercion in connection with wills and inheritance, scams and fraud.

**Neglect and Acts of Omission** - not being given the things you need to feel safe and comfortable or not making sure you get the care or treatment you need, including medication, food or the aids to support independence.

**Sexual abuse** - including unwanted physical and sexual contact, sexual harassment, being forced to be photographed inappropriately or look at indecent images.

**Discrimination** - treating a person or group less favourably than others on the basis of their race, gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion

**Domestic abuse** - examples include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse. It also includes 'honour'-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

**Modern slavery** - includes human trafficking and forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and debt bondage.

**Organisational / Institutional abuse** - includes neglect and poor care within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home.

**Self-neglect** - includes not caring for personal cleanliness, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Definition**

A child or young person is defined as being under the age of 18.

### **Types of Abuse:**

There are four main types of abuse.

- Physical, including domestic abuse
- Emotional
- Sexual abuse and child criminal exploitation
- Neglect

Other types of abuse of children and young people include online abuse; radicalisation; female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

### **Volunteers must:**

- Treat **all** people with respect.
- Always provide an example of good conduct.
- Attend initial training in Level 1 Safeguarding Awareness and Protection of Adults at Risk (of harm or abuse) and Children and Young Persons, keep regularly updated and attend refresher training at least every two years - this may be in-house or on-line training.
- 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 children, young people and 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 children, young people and 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 DSL on the phone number provided, or if unavailable notify the phone holder (07587 004514) who will pass the report on to the DSL.

- 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 and children and young persons 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.
- Carry out Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all volunteers who may be working with volunteers who are under-18 or work regularly in households where under-18's are present.

#### **Responsibilities of Houghton Regis Helpers volunteers:**

- To be familiar with safeguarding and protection of adults at risk, and children and young persons 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 DSL, or the Chair if the allegation is against this person, will, depending on the level of harm or risk, first carry out an internal investigation.

If the matter concerns the protection of adults at risk and cannot be resolved internally, or is serious, a report will be made to the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team or advice sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Beds RCC or any other statutory agency which works in partnership with Houghton Regis Helpers.

If the matter concerns the protection of children or young people and cannot be resolved internally, or is serious, a report will be made, in the first instance, 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 of child and young persons abuse and concerns involving staff and voluntary workers. If a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm a report will be made by the DSL to the Integrated Front Door on 0300 300 8585.

**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 annually, or sooner if required within the law.

-Designated Safeguarding Lead appointed – 06/03/2026:

Jenny Gallucci (Secretary)  
Contact Tel: 07860 322977

Chair's signature:



Print Name Yvonne Farrell

Adopted on: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Review date: March 2027

