



## Little Hearts Matter

Half a heart, not half a life

### Little Hearts Matter Child or Vulnerable Person Safeguarding Policy

Little Hearts Matter is committed to **supporting, informing** and **empowering** children, young people, adults, and their families on their half a heart journey when a child is diagnosed with a single ventricle heart condition.

As the children who live with this condition age, their need for support and information increases, as does their need to develop friendships with peers experiencing similar problems living life with a cardiac disability.

Little Hearts Matter has developed support, information and activity opportunities for the children, young people, and adults and - on occasions - their siblings.

The charity has a commitment to ensuring that all children, young adults, and vulnerable adults under their care are in a safe and supportive environment whether that is online, over the phone or face to face.

The following Safeguarding Policy has been created to ensure that all staff, volunteers and the organisation's governance team have a strict code of conduct and protocols set in place to protect and support vulnerable members and child members.

Any member of the LHM team, staff, Trustees, volunteers, children or parents can raise a concern about potential abuse. It is important that everyone is alert to concerns and questions behaviour. The following information helps to highlight the different areas where abuse may be occurring.

#### **Definition of Abuse**

- **Physical injury:** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person (or vulnerable adult) including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child, smacking or causing mental harm. (Children's Act 2004)
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's or young person's (or vulnerable adult's) basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- **Emotional abuse:** persistent or emotional ill treatment of a child or young person (or vulnerable adult) that adversely affects their development. May involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate, there only to meet the needs of another;

or where inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. In addition, it includes children who are regularly frightened, exploited or corrupted or witness domestic violence.

- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person (or vulnerable adult) to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or talking about sexually inappropriate topics. This would include 'abuse of position of trust', 'Child on child abuse' (Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- **Self-abuse (self-harm):** Self-harm can take a variety of physical forms, including cutting, burning, bruising, scratching, hair-pulling, poisoning and overdosing. Rather than being a cry for attention or an attempt at suicide, self-harm is usually a way for young people to release overwhelming emotions. There are links between depression and self-harm, and quite often a child or young person who is self-harming is being bullied, under too much pressure to do well at school, being emotionally abused, grieving or having relationship problems with families or friends. (NSPCC) *The response procedure for self-harm is different to other incidences of abuse and is detailed at the end of the response procedure section.*
- **Online abuse:** Online abuse is any kind of abuse that can occur on the internet. This may come in the form of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexting, grooming and cyber bullying. Online abuse may come from other children, young people or adults. There are many forums where children, young people and vulnerable adults may experience online abuse including social media, email, live streaming, texting messaging and gaming sites.

The list above is overarching and may not include every type of abuse. Little Hearts Matter's Safeguarding team will keep abreast of the different types of abuse highlighted by the NSPCC and Kidscape.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service Check**

All LHM Staff, Volunteers, and Trustees will undergo the Government Disclosure and Barring Check; this will be updated yearly whilst they are involved with the charity. LHM Staff and Volunteers with direct responsibility for child or vulnerable adult services, and Trustee with designated Safeguarding responsibility, will have an Enhanced disclosure; (DBS Enhanced Check with check of barred lists) all other staff and Trustees will undergo a Basic Assessment. *This is the day-to-day responsibility of the Chief Executive and the Administration Manager.* Any outside agency employed to be involved with child activity will have to provide evidence that a full disclosure process has taken place before contracts of activity are drawn up.

All LHM Staff, Volunteers, and Trustees will have a yearly briefing on the charity's Safeguarding policy with clear lines of accountability and support set down. Any child or youth team volunteers brought in for a specific Child or Youth activity will receive the charity's Safeguarding briefing at the beginning of the activity. This will be conducted by the Safeguarding Leads – Head of Services and Head of Youth Services.

### **Response Procedure**

Knowing how to respond if there is any evidence that abuse of a child or young person (or vulnerable adult) has occurred is very difficult. Child abuse evokes all sorts of responses, and each of us will react differently. Here are the key steps to follow if an incident has been reported. By following this procedure, it is less likely that personal feelings will cloud any future proceedings that might be called for.

#### Listening to a concern

If a child, young person (or vulnerable adult) or a member of the Little Hearts Matter membership or another member of the LHM team reports to you, or if another member of staff, volunteer, parent, or

other young person suspects that abuse is occurring, *it must be your first priority to respond by listening to the worries expressed to you*, if you are concerned you must seek advice from the designated Safeguarding Lead at the event as a first response or follow the following action responses.

1. *Always consider whether any child or young person (or vulnerable adult) who has expressed concerns about abuse is in need of immediate protection in the light of what you have been told or of what you suspect.* If so, initiate or take necessary temporary protective action. This can be in the form of staying with the child until alternative arrangements for the child can be taken forward. Listen to the wishes of the child; they may be more comfortable staying with someone that they trust and know well. It must not be the accused. Do not make them feel like an outcast if they want to stay with their friends.
2. *It is essential that notes of any conversation to do with the abuse must be recorded on Little Hearts Matter's headed notepaper or a report in LHM shared documents.* If it is not possible to take notes at the time, then they need to be recorded as soon after any conversation as possible. Keep any notes taken at the time, without amendment, omission or addition, regardless of any subsequent reports written. The report must contain information on the child/young person/vulnerable adult that the incident is about, the name of the referrer and the lead member of the team taking responsibility for the incident, dates and times.
3. *Never promise confidentiality or agree to "keep a secret". You must take action to report an allegation or suspicion if it constitutes an allegation or suspicion that any child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm.* In other words, if you feel that the child or young person (or vulnerable adult) has or will suffer harm by someone's actions, then you must report it.
4. *You can assure the child or young person (or vulnerable adult) giving you information that you will only discuss their complaint with people who will be involved in dealing with the matter.* It will not be discussed with people who do not need to know.
5. *When listening, do not try and put words into the child's or young person's (or vulnerable adult's) mouth.* For example, do not try to guess an unnamed abuser, or what abuse took place. Never ask a leading question.
6. *Do not try to dissuade them from making a complaint, but do not add any fuel to the complaint.* Offer lots of gentle support. If the child or young person (or vulnerable adult) knows you and trusts you it may be appropriate to use physical support by the way of an arm around the shoulder. If they are unsure, this gesture may not be welcome. Similarly, various types of abuse may mean they do not welcome physical support. Carefully assess the situation.
7. *Always report the allegations you have received, or the suspicions that you have, to the onsite Safeguarding Lead or the designated off-site Safeguarding officer.* Following full discussion about the concern an action plan will be agreed.
8. *Do not discuss the allegation with the person against whom you have received allegations of abuse, or with whom you suspect of abuse.* Knowledge of the allegation might put a child at further risk and/or damage any subsequent social services or criminal investigation. The Safeguarding Lead may need to remove the alleged person from the at-risk person. Protecting a vulnerable child or adult will be a priority but the person abused will also need care and support from the Chief Executive or a designated member of the charity

Board.

9. *Do not carry out an investigation of alleged or suspected abuse yourself.*  
Once you have satisfied yourself that you have reasonable grounds for concern, the allegation or suspicion must be reported to the Local Social Service department. (This must be done regardless of your own personal opinion whether the abuse has or has not occurred).
10. If further formal action is agreed, then the Safeguarding Lead will notify the Social Service Department Child Protection Team in the local authority area in which the child is at that time. The report must be made within 24 hours of the original complaint, and it must be made directly to a child protection officer rather than by leaving a message. All conversations must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours of a verbal report being made.  
On some occasions, where the safety of a vulnerable person or the LHM team is at risk, there may also be a need to refer the issue to the police. They will then determine further action.
11. *Any member of the Little Hearts Matter Support Team must make the Head of Service and or the Head of Youth Services, Chief Executive and/or the Chair of the Board of Trustees (or a designated member of the Trustee Board) aware of any report made to Social Services.* Ensure that contact with the Social Service Team is maintained, allowing for a free exchange of information and updates on the progress of any investigation. Notes on any actions must be added to the record of the abuse.

### **Self-Harm Identification and Response Procedure**

Identifying self-harm can be difficult, but as there is a high incidence of depression and other mental health issues with our young members, it stands to reason that there may also be a high level of self-harm. There are a variety of feelings that can lead to self-harm, such as loneliness, sadness, anger, numbness, or lack of control over their lives - these are emotions that our young members often report dealing with. In a lot of cases, the physical pain of self-harm can feel easier to manage and cope with than the emotional pain that leads up to it. It can also make a young person feel that they are in control of at least one part of their lives. Those who are self-harming will often be vigilant about covering scars and injuries, and if you do spot them, they could be explained away as accidents. There are both physical and emotional signs of self-harm.

#### Physical signs of self-harm:

These are commonly on the *head, wrists, arms, thighs and chest* and include:

- Cuts
- Bruises
- Burns
- Bald patches from pulling out hair

*Young people who self-harm are also very likely to keep themselves covered up in long-sleeved clothes, even when it's really hot.*

#### Emotional signs of self-harm

*Emotional signs are harder to spot and do not necessarily mean that a young person is self-harming. But if you see any of these as well as any of the physical signs then there may be cause for concern.*

- Depression, tearfulness and low motivation

- Unusual eating habits; sudden weight loss or gain
- Low self-esteem and self-blame
- Drinking or taking drugs

**The response procedure if a child or young person (or vulnerable adult) reports to you, or if another member of staff, volunteer, parent, or other young person suspects that self-harm is occurring, is different to the response procedure for reports or suspicions of abuse.**

1. *Show you understand.* The issue will inevitably have an emotional effect on you. However, it makes you feel it is important that you stay calm and let them know that you are there to help and support them and to not be judgmental. Try not to jump to immediate conclusions, or to find instant solutions.
2. *Talk it over.* If they want to talk about their self-harm and why they are doing it, listen. If they are finding it hard to speak face-to-face, suggest they write their thoughts down as they may find it easier to be more open.
3. *Make notes of any conversation to do with the self-harm on Little Hearts Matter's headed notepaper* If it is not possible to take notes at the time, then they need to be recorded as soon after any conversation as possible. Keep any notes taken at the time, without amendment, omission or addition, regardless of any subsequent reports written. The report must contain information on the child/young person/vulnerable adult that the incident is about.
4. *Never promise confidentiality or agree to "keep a secret".* You (or the local authority team) may have to inform their parents/guardians, as well as report it to the event or service line manager, but it would be better to do this in partnership with the child, young person or vulnerable adult by asking about how they would like to do this.
5. You can assure the child, young person or vulnerable adult giving you information that *you will only discuss their self-harm with people who will be involved in dealing with the matter.* It will not be discussed with people who do not need to know
6. Where possible, *signpost the child or young person (or vulnerable adult) to places that they can get support.*
7. If a child or young person (or vulnerable adult) reports to you that they are self-harming, or you suspect that they are, always *report this to the line manager or the safeguarding team leader at an event.*

### **Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults with Additional Needs**

A number of LHM's young members have additional needs; be they physical, or developmental. This group of young members are particularly vulnerable, more so than our other young members without additional needs. Young members with additional needs are more vulnerable because:

- Many children, young people or vulnerable adults with additional needs (neurodiversity) are at an increased likelihood of being socially isolated with fewer outside contacts.
- For those with physical additional needs, their dependency on parents and carers for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate personal care, increases their risk of exposure to abusive behaviour.
- They have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse.
- They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.
- They often do not have access to someone they can trust to disclose that they have been abused.
- They are especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation.

Often, people find it more difficult to attribute indicators of abuse or neglect or are reluctant to act on

concerns in relation to those with additional needs, because of a number of factors which they may not be consciously aware of. These could include:

- Over identifying with the child's parents/carers and being reluctant to accept that abuse or neglect is taking or has taken place or seeing it as being attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for someone with additional needs.
- A lack of knowledge about the impact of additional needs on the child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- A lack of knowledge about the child, young person, or vulnerable adult e.g.: not knowing their usual behaviour
- Not being able to understand their method of communication.
- Confusing behaviours that may indicate they are being abused with those associated with their additional needs
- Behaviour, including sexually harmful behaviour or self-injury, may be indicative of abuse
- Being aware that certain health/medical complications may influence the way symptoms present or are interpreted. For example, the majority of LHM young members or are on anticoagulants are more susceptible to bruising.

All LHM Staff, Volunteers, and Trustees who work with those with additional needs should be alert to the above indicators of abuse and take them into account, where appropriate, if they have concerns about the welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.

**Little Hearts Matter's responsibility for keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe during the Covid-19, or any other pandemic.**

Safeguarding vulnerable children extends to keeping them safe from infections that may threaten their lives or their heart condition.

As well as informing members of the effects of the pandemic on children, young people and adults with SVHD it is also important that the charity ensures their safety at any LHM organised events.

The charity will work to reduce the risks of catching Covid-19 at LHM organised events including by taking the Government and Health advice and working to ensure that young members are safe.

**Vaccination.**

- Lateral flow and PCR screening
- Face masks
- Hand sanitisation
- Social distancing

Removing all risks will not be possible as some risks are beyond the charity's responsibility.

**Safeguarding Children, Young Adults and Vulnerable Adults online**

The use of social media and group video chats as a communications tool for young LHM members is an essential way to reduce the isolation felt by young people living with half a heart. It is however very important to be aware of the different risks associated with the use of social media forums.

Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

Anyone can raise a concern about a child, young adult or vulnerable adult. The LHM team will react to any reports in the same way as they would to any concern about abuse. The first priority will be to ensure that the child is safe.

All the LHM closed youth social media sites, Facebook, Instagram and the online forum, are administered by the youth and service team who watch for any signs of abuse.

All young members are sent a protocol for use when they apply to join a closed site. Only young members registered with the charity are able to join the closed sites and the forums are age appropriate in line with the rules associated with each style of forum and social media platforms.

Permission to join the child or youth social media sites is taken from their parents. They hold responsibility for their child's social media use beyond the LHM groups.

More information about the LHM safeguarding can be found here

<https://www.lhm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Youth-Hub-Governance-TCs-Policy.pdf>

Any suspected abuse will be reported to the Safeguarding Lead and discussed within the team.

Actions:

1. If you suspect a child is experiencing ***cyber bullying*** it is important they do not engage in conversation with the perpetrators online.
2. Remove any member of the closed group generating bullying comments within closed forums.
3. Document everything, save the evidence and report it straight away.

cyber bullying, you must be able to show evidence. Although it will be tempting for a child or young adult to delete distressing messages, without proof, schools, service providers or the police are limited as to how they can respond.

**Collecting and saving evidence**

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- **Text and email:** Make sure all text messages and emails are saved, and where possible, back these up elsewhere.
- **Website abuse:** For bullying perpetrated through online social platforms, take a screen shot of every incident. A 'screen shot' program or app enables you to save as a picture the contents of a screen. These are available to download (usually for free) on all internet browsers and smart phones.
- **Telephone calls:** If a child or vulnerable adult is receiving nuisance telephone calls, document the date, time, duration and what has been said. Try to establish if there are any identifiable features such as voice description or background noise.

### **Who should cyber bullying be reported to?**

Depending on the type and severity of the cyber bullying, you should report to one or all the following:

- Report to the child's parents who may report to the child's school.
- Online and telephone service providers.
- The police or children's services.

### **Reporting to service providers**

For details on how you can report abuses on social media and email, by going directly to the organisation concerned, e.g., Facebook, Instagram, there is constantly updated information at <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-young-people/dealing-with-cyber-bullying/cyber-safe-settings/>

To report abuses to a phone provider, call their general customer services number. But please note, while there are some ways in which they can help, there are limitations to be aware of.

Most phone service providers will not be able to:

- give you the number of a withheld caller without a police crime reference number. Even then, these details will usually be communicated directly to the police on your behalf;
- block specific numbers. If you continually receive malicious calls or texts, providers can only offer a change of number. However, it is usually possible to block a number from the call management features on your mobile handset;
- investigate a telephone number once it has been changed. Please be aware that in most cases, malicious calls or messages to an old number cannot be investigated. Only change your number once you are satisfied with the outcome of a complaint.

**Parents and young people should also report bullying to the social media platform directly, if an account is reported several times, it can be removed or blocked.**

### **Reporting to the police**

Cyber bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK. However, incidents which are considered as harassment, threats or menacing communication may be an offence under the following acts:

- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- Malicious Communications Act (1988)
- Communications Act (2003)
- Obscene Publications Act (1959)
- Computer Misuse Act (1990)

For more information about whether the police can help, contact your local station.

### **Reporting sexual abuse or grooming**

If you suspect that a child has experienced online abuse of a sexual nature or someone is trying to meet up with them, you should report it directly to the ***Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOPJ)***  
<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Ceop-Report/>

The charity is committed to offering opportunities to our young members, and their parents, to learn about online safety. Online and face to face education is available for young members.

Social media is now used as a platform to offer one-to-one support with young people. During these one-to-one sessions young people often feel safe so may divulge sensitive or vulnerable information. Should this occur the response procedure would mirror that of someone divulging to you in person (in detail on pages 2-6) with the added step of taking screenshots of the conversation and storing it in a secure place.

### **Safeguarding Children, Young Adults and Vulnerable Adults during mass participation online events.**

The use of online platforms like Zoom, Facetime, Netflix parties and Talk, for mass participation events, is growing. They offer amazing opportunities to link Little Hearts Matter members of all ages together, run conferences, remote parties, music, or experience events. All events undergo a full risk assessment with plans put in place to mitigate any risks.

To prevent uninvited infiltration to these events a meeting protocol for each platform has been created. It is available to all staff members as part of the Staff Handbook. If an outside agency were invited to run an event, they would be expected to follow the LHM protocol.

All online events are set up through application or invitation only, with passwords and invitations sent

through to participants with formal requests not to pass them on. ID's and passwords are changed for every event. The ability for participants to share documents is blocked. Only LHM staff or an invited event lead can post slides or documents.

Live events are managed by a member of the LHM team with connections to performers controlled by the team.

Another designated member of LHM staff or trained volunteer, with meeting administration rights, will observe the meeting.

Any concerns about a participant or an event would be highlighted to the event lead and then the Safeguarding Lead for the event. Participants may be removed, or the event could be shut down whilst investigations continued. The Safeguarding Lead would follow the Response Procedure set out above, page 2.

Normal police reporting protocol would be followed should breach concerns be raised.

### **LHM Staff, Trustees and Volunteers**

Staff, Trustees and Volunteers are in a privileged position when working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. It is important for Staff, Trustees and Volunteers to understand that the following rules will apply:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by Project Workers or by members of the Staff, Trustee or Volunteer team constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for instant termination of employment.
- Abuse of Position of Trust is unlawful under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- Sexual activity with children is prohibited. A mistaken belief about a child's age is not a defense.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour are prohibited.
- Sexual relationships between a member of the LHM team and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships would undermine the integrity of work to help vulnerable and excluded children. This again falls under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 'Abuse of Position of Trust'.
- Where a member of the LHM team develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a colleague, whether in the same organisation or not, they must report such concerns urgently in accordance with the system and procedures in place.

**The Charity will continue to support any member of staff during an investigation of child abuse, but they will be suspended from their position whilst the investigation is underway.**

### **Training for LHM Staff, Trustees and Volunteers**

All LHM Staff, Volunteers, and Trustees will be given safeguarding training. The Head of Services, Trustee responsible for Safeguarding and the Youth Project Leader will have advanced safeguarding training, The Social Media and Website lead will have advanced cyber safeguarding training. The SVH Adult service lead will have focused vulnerable adult training. The rest of LHM Staff, Volunteers, and Trustees having basic safeguarding training. The basic safeguarding training will be delivered by the Head of Services and Youth Project Leader where appropriate.

If you have any concerns about the procedure, or you are worried about how to cope with the emotion of a

Safeguarding concern or complaint, ask for help from either the Head of Services, Youth Project Leader, Chief Executive, or the Charity's designated Safeguarding Trustee, in their absence any designated member of the Board of Trustees.

**Named Safeguarding Lead: - Suzie Hutchinson Head of Services**

Who can be contacted via the LHM phone line 0121 455 8982 or by email to [suzie@lhm.org.uk](mailto:suzie@lhm.org.uk)

**Deputy Safeguarding Lead: - Alexia Katsaitis Head of Youth Services**

Who can be contacted via the LHM phone line 0121 455 8982 or by email to [lexie@lhm.org.uk](mailto:lexie@lhm.org.uk)

**Named Safeguarding Administrator – Lisa Davies – Chief Executive**

Who can be reached by phone 0121 455 8982 or by email to [lisa@lhm.org.uk](mailto:lisa@lhm.org.uk)

**Named Safeguarding Trustee – Kim Bothom**

Who can be reached by email [kim.trustee@lhm.org.uk](mailto:kim.trustee@lhm.org.uk)

**LHM aims to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation in all that we do, in line with Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC11), the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act of 2006 and the Children's and Families Act 2014.**

**All children have a right to protection from abuse, violence and exploitation.**

*I have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:

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**Working Together to Safeguard Children**

Changes to the Statutory Guidance on multidisciplinary responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are in consultation. These changes will be monitored, and any relevant changes will be added to the Safeguarding policy. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803ff395bf65000d7191a2/Working\_together\_to\_safeguard\_children\_2023\_-\_summary\_of\_changes.pdf