



Oldham Heritage, Libraries and Arts

Safeguarding Policy: Children and Vulnerable Adults

April 2025

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Reporting a Safeguarding Incident – Quick Reference

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Remember that the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation supports the sharing of relevant information for the purposes of keeping everyone safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

If you have any reason for concern or are aware of any allegation of child or vulnerable adult abuse, report this as soon as possible to the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Officer. If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, report concerns to one of the Deputy Safeguarding Officers.

Designated Safeguarding Officer:

Sean Baggaley:

E: sean.baggaley@oldham.gov.uk T: 0161 770 4650 or 07500043994

Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

James Atherton:

E: james.atherton@oldham.gov.uk T: 0161 770 3240

Suzanne Hudson:

E: suzanne.hudson@oldham.gov.uk T: 0161 770 8010

If you are very concerned, complete a Safeguarding Form (Appendix 1) and contact the MASH Team: (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 0161 770 7777.

For urgent concerns outside office hours, you can call the Emergency Duty Team on 0161 770 6936.

If the matter could result in death or serious injury phone 999. This could be a lost child, a child who appears to be drugged or you believe has been taken away by someone who isn't their guardian. It could also include children in extreme drowsy states, or who have unexplained illnesses/serious injuries.

Lost children and vulnerable adults - Urgent:

Gather the following information quickly and calmly if a child or vulnerable adult is reported lost or missing:

- Name of person
- Age of person
- Description of person (height, colour of hair, clothing etc...)
- Where person was last seen
- Time person was last seen

Report this immediately to all staff on site and involve all staff and volunteers in searching for the child. Remain with the adults searching for the child and keep them as calm as possible. If the child is not found after 15 minutes, ring the police (999) as an emergency.

Non-Urgent:

If you find a child with no parents, this is a non-emergency call to the police (101). If parents intentionally leave young children unaccompanied at the site, or any event managed by HLA regardless of venue, please report this to the DSO. Find out names and record a description of the incident on an Incident Form, or on paper to hand.

Staff must take charge if a child under 8 is left alone and make every attempt to contact the child's parents or relatives. Staff must not wait with abandoned children alone, and under no circumstances take children to home or offer to 'drop them off'.

1. Safeguarding Statement

'Safeguarding' means doing all we can to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults as well as taking measures to protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, to varying degrees, and all staff/volunteers have a duty to assist in reducing the risk of abuse by complying with the terms of this policy.

We believe that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount, and we want to ensure that our spaces are welcoming, enjoyable and non-discriminatory. This policy provides clear guidelines and important practical documents (within the appendices) regarding safeguarding for Oldham's Heritage, Libraries and Arts Service (HLA).

Oldham's HLA Service will:

- take all suspicions and allegations of abuse seriously.
- ensure staff, including volunteers, respond swiftly and appropriately. The term 'staff' includes all adults working on projects facilitated by the service. This may include storytellers, workshop leaders, volunteer helpers, student placements etc.
- ensure that this policy is reviewed every 3 years and read annually by all staff.

2. Vision and Values

- Everyone has the right to live free from violence, fear and abuse, and vulnerable people have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation.
- It is the responsibility of everyone, including all staff and volunteers, to play a part in preventing, detecting and reporting risk of harm by working together with the appropriate agencies to protect vulnerable adults and children.

3. Who is covered by this policy?

3.1 A vulnerable adult (over 18, or someone 16 to 18 who is married)

- Lives in residential accommodation such as a care home, residential special school or sheltered housing and is receiving domiciliary care in their own home (i.e. help with feeding, transport, finances, washing).
- Also defined as a person who, for any reason, may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This could be a short- or long-term condition.

3.2 A child (anyone under the age of 18)

4. Useful terms

- **DSO:** Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- **DBS:** Disclosure & Barring Service. DBS Check: formerly known as a CRB check.
- **Police check without DBS** – a basic police check, useful for those who might have infrequent contact with children. Only those with regular contact (more than 3 times a month) can get a full Enhanced DBS (with barred list check).
- **Regulated activity:** the term used to describe the type of activity that requires a person to have a DBS check. For more information, see **Appendix 4**.

5. Who is responsible for safeguarding?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, to varying degrees, but there are a range of people who are responsible overall for safeguarding within Oldham's HLA Service.

5.1 Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will ensure that:

- This policy is up to date.
- All staff and volunteers are aware of the procedures and how to follow them, and receive appropriate training, including on working online.
- Specific concerns are discussed, and appropriate action is taken.
- Accurate records relating to individual incidents and disclosures are kept in a secure place.
- Policy updates are undertaken every 3 years.
- Young volunteers and work experience placements are well planned and safe.
- Schools are safe on site.
- It is the DSOs responsibility to monitor volunteer and staff roles, ensuring that checks are done in accordance with government advice and regulations.
- Ensures that only children and vulnerable adults undertake age/ability appropriate tasks.

At the current time, the DSO is **Sean Baggaley**:

E: Sean.baggaley@oldham.gov.uk

T: 0161 770 4650 or 07500043994

Deputy Safeguarding Officers: if Sean Baggaley is not available, the following staff members are also safeguarding points of contact:

James Atherton:

E: james.atherton@oldham.gov.uk

T: 0161 770 3240

Suzanne Hudson:

E: Suzanne.hudson@oldham.gov.uk

T: 0161 770 8010

5.2 All staff and volunteers

- All staff and volunteers will have access to the Safeguarding Policy and procedures, stored on **SharePoint: HLA Workspace/Policies and Procedures**.
- It is not the role of staff or volunteers to solve problems by themselves, but they must be able to report problems to another (unless a specific learning difficulty makes this demanding).

6. Recruitment, selection and training of staff and volunteers

6.1 Recruitment

Oldham HLA Service follows the Oldham Council Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers Policy. This document forms part of an induction programme for all new staff, casual staff and volunteers and will be available on SharePoint.

A minimum of one member of the recruitment panel will attend the Safer Recruitment Training. Once the person is in post, training requirements are introduced, and mandatory training is scheduled. A two-month induction process is put in place to ensure smooth, effective and safe monitoring is followed.

6.2 Training

All staff will be required to complete the Council's online training module: Safeguarding Awareness on MeLearning and to read the policy once a year.

7. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All HLA staff, volunteers, students and work experience students who are likely to be working alone or undertaking regulated activity (**see Appendix 4**) with children, young people or vulnerable adults, will be required to have a current DBS certification.

The service works with authors, storytellers, performers and entertainers. If employing someone on a long-term basis, we will request the appropriate DBS Disclosure during the planning stages. For individuals working with us on short-term projects and 'one-off' activities, the project manager will ensure that no unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults takes place.

The recruiting manager will be responsible for managing the checking of staff in conjunction with the Council's HR department.

7.1 Young volunteers undertaking work experience placements

- Young volunteers and work experience students will understand that they have a part to play in safeguarding themselves. They will receive some information on what to expect and who to talk to (in the event of safeguarding concerns) during their induction.
- Details of volunteer/work experience safeguarding inductions can be found in **Appendix 3**.
- This will include information about working online and undertaking social media for the service safely.

8. Abuse: what are the essentials to be aware of?

- You need to be alert to and aware of issues of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- If you have any concerns, you need to know how and when to report them.
- You need to know how to respond if someone tells you about abuse and who to report it to.

8.1 What is abuse?

- Abuse is something that is done to another person that harms them in some way. The list below is fairly comprehensive but does not include all types of abuse. For a comprehensive list of abuse types in relation to vulnerable adults please go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance#safeguarding-1> or see **Appendix 5** for detailed explanations.
- Abuse can include one or more of the following:
 - **Neglect** is the failure to provide suitable care or attention to the point where someone's health is affected. This includes leaving young children at home unsupervised (when a potentially life threatening incident might occur).
 - **Physical Abuse** includes hitting, pinching, deliberately giving too much medication, or physically restraining someone in an inappropriate way.
 - Smacking is illegal in Scotland and is only legal in England and Wales if it's deemed 'reasonable punishment'. If it used to humiliate a child in public, it is a safeguarding concern.

- **Sexual Abuse** includes any sexual act to which the vulnerable adult or child has not consented to, cannot consent to, and/or may not understand. A child under 16 cannot consent to sexual acts.
- **Psychological Abuse** (mental or emotional cruelty) can happen when someone is isolated, verbally abused or threatened. This includes the new rules around 'Coercive Control'.
- **Financial Abuse** includes taking another person's money or possessions, or exerting pressure in connection with wills, property or financial transactions.
- **Discriminating Abuse** includes any type of abuse aimed at a vulnerable person because of e.g. their colour, religion, appearance or sexuality.
- **Any of the above online**, including targeting an individual persistently or with inappropriate or sexualised content. This could include any of the following:
 - **cyberbullying**
 - **grooming**
 - **sexual abuse**
 - **child sexual exploitation.**

8.2 Recognising signs of abuse

Some adults and children are more at risk than others.

Factors associated with higher risk for vulnerable adults:

- Being dependent on others.
- Having mental health needs and/or learning disabilities or dementia.
- Having family carers who suffer from stress, substance abuse or mental illness.

Factors which are associated with higher risk for children:

- Disabled children.
- Children using social media (susceptible to online message abuse).
- Children are more likely to be harmed in their homes and/or by those who look after them. Being alert in all situations will help children.

8.3 What to look out for

- Children or adults making a clear allegation. This might be about something that has happened to them which has been upsetting or a passing statement such as *'I'm at home on my own with my little sister this weekend'*.
- Has any injury for which there is no explanation, or for which the explanation changes or is inconsistent.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries or injuries which may appear to have a reasonable explanation.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Discloses an experience in which they or another young person or vulnerable adult may have been significantly harmed.
- Uses language of a sexual nature, routinely or in a surprising way. This is especially a concern if children are younger, although we must also be aware that grooming teenage children is a concern and should be reported.
- If a child has overly tactile relationships with older people.
- If a child is seen drinking alcohol or using drugs (including 'legal highs').
- If a child or vulnerable adult undertakes to find sexual images online, or use forums/blogs not part of their work for the organisation.
- Evidence of online bullying or abusive content on social media.

The 'gut instinct' of staff as well as factual content will also be considered. Certain situations may lead you to become alarmed. Staff and volunteers should follow safeguarding procedures if the below happens:

- Children and vulnerable adults who are hungry, fainting or seem to be suffering from neglect. Neglect may manifest in poor and unclean clothing, or children or vulnerable adults being unaccompanied.
- Children who are punished very severely should be reported. Any kind of punishment that is extreme, including swearing, public humiliation or manipulative behaviour should be reported. Repeated smacking or hitting in a public place is unacceptable.
- People accompanying children or young people who seem too familiar or overly tactile. Professionals working with children know that sitting on laps and any prolonged touching is not advisable (certainly with children over 6 years old). If you see this let the school or organisation know and inform the DSO.
- Significant bruising or unexplained injuries.
- Changes in behaviour that may link to abuse, such as change in mood, temperament and possible physical changes such as incontinence or significant weight change.
- The above list is not conclusive and numerous other signs of abuse or circumstances may be considered safeguarding incidents.
- The items on this list are offered purely as examples – if you have other concerns which are not mentioned here, you should report them in the same way.

9. What to do in the event of a safeguarding incident

All staff across Oldham's HLA Service have a duty to report suspected abuse, but it is not the responsibility of anyone working for the service in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether abuse has taken place.

The concern may be about a child visitor, member of the public, a volunteer or member of staff. During a disclosure you will need to remain in a public space, but you might want to talk quietly in a place that you can record details of the incident.

- As soon as possible write down details of what you have witnessed, ideally using a Safeguarding Form (**Appendix 1**).
- If someone is speaking, let them talk. You may ask open questions and some further questions for factual information. Do not attempt to force children or vulnerable adults to speak and don't make threats or promises.
- Make sure that your information is set out clearly and in detail. Describe the circumstances and note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- In any situation, stay calm and try not to show shock, listen carefully and be supportive. You might say 'I think you're doing the right thing'.
- Speak to the person responsible for the child or vulnerable adult, telling them that you will need to record the incident as a safeguarding concern. You may seek support from others when you do this.
- It's not up to you to prove that the information about abuse or suspected abuse is true. You must not try to investigate yourself.

9.1 Disclosure and Confidentiality

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access by designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) supports the sharing of relevant information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

9.2 Dealing with a Safeguarding issue

Incidents need to be recorded on a Safeguarding Form (**Appendix 1**).

For organised activities:

Discuss matters with the group leader or teacher and record this conversation on an **accident /incident report form**. The teacher or group leader is then responsible for informing and liaising with the relevant authorities.

For independent visitors:

Record the incident with as much detail as possible and contact MASH (details below) or 999 in the event of an emergency.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a **need to know** basis only. This includes the following people:

- **the Safeguarding Lead**
- **the parents or guardian of the person who is alleged to have been abused**
- **the person making the allegation**
- **MASH/Social Services/Police**
- **Relevant school.**

The staff member dealing with the allegation should seek the MASH's advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

The MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) is Oldham's first point of contact for:

- Safeguarding referrals to protect children, young people or adults from harm, abuse or neglect.
- Care and support services which help individuals or families to meet their long-term needs, prevent or delay needs becoming more serious, lead independent lives and reduce dependence on public services.

How to contact the MASH

- Telephone – 0161 770 7777.
- For urgent concerns outside office hours, you can call the Emergency Duty Team on 0161 770 6936 or the Police on 101 (999 in emergencies).

If the matter could result in death or serious injury phone 999. This could be a lost child, a child who appears to be drugged or you believe has been taken away by someone who isn't their guardian. It could also include children in extreme drowsy states, or who have unexplained illnesses/serious injuries.

If you have concerns about a member of staff or volunteer

- Document and report the concerns as directed above, ensuring that the DSO understands the concerns.
- Oldham HLA Service recognises that a member of staff, volunteer or visitor may need to report a serious concern about misconduct by a member of staff, paid or unpaid. In this case, Oldham HLA is clear that an individual can come forward on a confidential basis, without fear of reprisal or victimisation.
- In an emergency, dial 999.

9.3 What will happen if you report concerns?

- The DSO will discuss the issue with you and decide on a suitable course of action.
- They should provide support if you find your experience stressful. This might be to recommend a helpline or to report back – bearing in mind that this must be done with police and social services' permissions.

9.4 Staff and volunteer rights

- Reporting cases of misconduct will have no repercussions for the informant (unless in doing so, the member of staff can be shown to be motivated by malicious intent).
- If a complaint or allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, they will be made aware of their rights under both employment law and Oldham Council's disciplinary procedures by the officer in charge of personnel.
- They will be given an opportunity to respond to accusation(s) in person but will be asked to remain off site during any investigation.
- The accuser will be able to enter the site and use the services of the organisation as normal.
- HLA acknowledges that this process may be led by police and/or social services and the organisation will comply with all requests or procedures made by those institutions.

10. Accident & Injury

- In the event of an accident or injury to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, staff must complete an [accident/incident report form](#) and inform a Senior Customer Experience Assistant. In their absence, another senior member of staff should be notified. On completion of an Accident/Emergency report, the affected member(s) of staff should then email the completed form to the [Health and Safety Team](#), the relevant Senior Customer Experience Assistant, the Customer Experience Officer, and, if necessary, the [Community Safety Officer](#) who represents the district in Oldham that the incident occurred at. On receipt of the form, the Senior Library Officer, with the Health & Safety portfolio, will then file the report away in the relevant area in the [shared data area](#).

10.1 First Aid

- First Aid for serious injury should be administered with urgency.
- In the event of serious injury, first aid supersedes safeguarding good practice.
- However, if possible, a first aider should be accompanied by the parent or guardian. If this is not possible volunteers should accompany each other and not be left alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- First aid for minor injuries should be undertaken with parents/carers/teachers or other similar formal guardians present.

11. Unaccompanied or Lost Children

11.1 Lost or missing children and vulnerable adults – URGENT

Gather the following information quickly and calmly if a child or vulnerable adult is reported lost or missing:

- Name of child
- Age of child
- Physical description of child (height, colour of hair, clothing etc)
- Where child was last seen
- The time the child was last seen.

Involve all staff and volunteers in an immediate search of the building and adjoining buildings/ grounds, alerting all staff to the situation.

If they are not found after 15 minutes ring the police (999) as an emergency.

11.2 Finding an unaccompanied child – NOT URGENT

Staff must take charge if a child under 8 is left alone and make every attempt to contact the child's parents or relatives.

Abandoned Children

- Ask the child in a friendly, reassuring manner if they have their parent (s)/carer(s) telephone number. Reassure them that they are not in trouble and that you are concerned that they are alone in the building.
- If the child has a mobile phone to contact their parent or carer directly allow them to ring the number and ask to speak to the parent/carers directly.
- If the child does not have a mobile phone or telephone number to contact their parent(s)/carer(s) ask the child if they have a library card with them. Use the library card to check registration records for a contact number of a parent or carer.
- If the child has been left until a certain time, the child must wait with a named member of staff on reception until the parent or carer returns.
- When the parent or carer returns, staff must inform them of the under 8s rule. If the parent or carer has not returned and the building is due to close, staff will call the police 15 minutes before closing time.
- If necessary, they will also inform the police.
- On no account should a child under 8 be asked to leave the building on their own.
- Staff must not wait with abandoned children alone, and under no circumstances take children home or offer to 'drop them off'.

If a child or vulnerable adult has become parted from their responsible adult or carer:

- Take the person to the reception desk. Ask for a simple description of the person accompanying them.
- Organise staff/volunteers to sweep the site for the missing adult or carer.
- Wait with the child or vulnerable adult in a public space until the responsible adult is found or returns.
- Contact the local police (using 101) if the responsible adults do not reappear after 15 minutes.

12. Truancy

- When children are in a HLA building on their own, during school hours in term-time, staff should check the reason with the child. This can include school INSET (training) days or a religious holiday or for some older children i.e. secondary, they may have a pass to leave school between lessons or are currently home educated.

- Staff should talk to the child to try to establish their situation, their name and their school and to notice the general well-being of the child i.e. do they seem stressed, nervous or upset.
- Staff who feel that a child may be truanting or regularly truanting; especially if the child is reluctant to offer an explanation or the name of their school, should contact a parent or carer using library card details where possible. If this is not possible, then contact T: 0161 770 6620 or E: sais@oldham.gov.uk

13. Unaccompanied Adults in areas reserved for Children and Families

- An adult in these areas, who appears from staff observation, not to be actively using it for intended purposes, should be asked if they require help that requires the use of the area (eg Children's Library). If not, the adult should be offered seating in a different part of the building intended for adults. An explanation should be given to the person that the area is designated for children and their families.
- No lone adult (i.e. one not accompanied by a child) should be using a PC in the children's area. These should be non-bookable by adults even when their use could be for retrieving information for their children.
- Adults found using PCs in the children's area should be asked to vacate the PC immediately. Staff should explain that they are for use by children or children with parents or carers only and book a PC for the adult in the adult area once the situation has been explained. Staff should remain friendly and respectful to the person as for the majority it is a genuine mistake and may make the adult feel uncomfortable if they fail to deal with the situation sensitively.

14. Children in Organised Groups and with Schools

The organisation will have the right to turn away groups that do not have suitable adult to child ratios.

Age group	Ratios (Ofsted recommended):
• 0-2 years	1 adult: 3 children
• 2-3 years	1 adult: 4 children
• 4-8 years	1 adult: 6 children
• 9-12 years	1 adult: 8 children
• 13-18 years	1 adult: 10 children

School groups will be required to maintain control and know the whereabouts of their students at all times.

15. Promoting Good Practice

The following guidelines will help to reduce situations where abuse of children may occur and protect staff and volunteers by promoting good practice.

On Site

- Avoid situations when you could be alone with a child or vulnerable adults. Make sure others are nearby.
- Don't communicate with any children or vulnerable adults linked to your work in a personal capacity, e.g. don't become 'friends' on Facebook, or exchange personal mobile phone numbers. This includes work experience students and young volunteers.
- Don't go into toilets with children or vulnerable adults. Enable responsible adults and carers to access the toilets as they require.

- Avoid prolonged physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult. Be aware that a brief touch on the shoulder or arm is acceptable but not on any other area of the body. Touching should be relevant, for example when helping with costume.
- Only hold a lost child's hand if offered (by the child) and in order to lead them safely to another public space.
- Never leave a group of children under **the age of 13 unattended**. They may be able to move freely within one room or space but adults should be aware of the whereabouts of the child or group of children. ***This is a difficult balance – you want a group of sensible children within the space – perhaps on their way home from school etc but you will need to decide whether children are safe on your site.***
- Never use any form of physical discipline.
- Do not be overly familiar in your language or behaviour with children or be over-friendly with some at the expense of others.
- Don't take a child alone with you on foot and never invite a child into your car or any other vehicle. This includes work experience students.
- Give jobs to work experience students or young volunteers that can be done in public, shared or open areas of the centre.
- Try accepting students in pairs so they can support each other during the placement.
- Work experience students and young volunteers may on occasion have access to small spaces that are shared by a range of different adults. Doors should be kept open so that these spaces are not private.
- Always listen to and respect children and vulnerable adults in your charge and act upon any concerns or allegations of abuse.
- All volunteers and staff will provide an emergency contact.
- Do not invite children to join WhatsApp chats.
- Consider the risks of inviting a vulnerable adult to WhatsApp group. This will mean a range of people have their contacts. This should be made very clear during their induction.

15.1 Best Practice when children and/or vulnerable adults are working online

- Children should be 13+ when undertaking social media.
- Children should be 16+ when taking part in videoconferencing calls.
- Do not attempt to find out personal information about vulnerable adults or young people by searching for them on social media platforms.
- Stay alert to online and social media activity undertaken by young volunteers, vulnerable adults or work experience students on behalf of your organisation. If you find, during routine checks of the organisation activity, conversation threads of content that concerns you, act promptly as a safeguarding matter. For example, you will need to inform the DSO (and complete the reporting form) if students are developing relationships, giving personal information or contacting staff or volunteers inappropriately.
- Be alert to vulnerable adults interacting with those who request money, support or other kinds of services (such as lifts in a car or meetings). Speak to the vulnerable adult initially but if concerns persist contact an emergency contact, care home or carer.
- If problems arise always speak to the parent, carer, guardian or school. If a placement has been arranged via school, they may be your first contact but for serious concerns you should also contact parents.

- If you believe a child to be in immediate danger, contact the police as an emergency on 999. For example, if a child has arranged to meet someone via an online chat and this is happening imminently.
- This also means that when communicating with vulnerable adults or children 16+ remotely, video or phone calls including 'Zoom' calls should be done via parents or carers and in shared spaces with parents or carers present.
- Children and vulnerable adults should always be given access to the social media login information and accounts that enable them to remain anonymous.
- Work experience students should not be required to 'post' or upload pictures of themselves during a placement and should never share personal information.
- Work experience students should wait until their placement is over before posting about it in a capacity that might become public. This might include their own social media accounts.
- These guidelines protect the children and vulnerable people in your care but also protect you. Situations can be misinterpreted and young people can also make false allegations.
- Regularly check search histories, be aware of social media content and ensure that private information is password protected on shared drives.
- Zoom calls should be undertaken in a professional manner. All those participating should wear suitable clothing and should use professional and respectful language.

16. Photography and Filming

- Parental, guardian or school permission will be sought for all photographs and films of children.
- Visitors are not permitted to photograph or film children who are unknown to them, and staff or volunteers should intervene if they see (or suspect) this is happening.
- You should ask visitors to delete photos and/or film of children (as appropriate).
- Oldham HLA Service makes use of images of children, young people and vulnerable adults (for our website, brochure, marketing and records).
- All HLA buildings display signage with the disclaimer:
- *This is a public building where filming and photography may take place (including the recording of your voice) and may be used across our marketing media for promotional purposes. Should you wish to obtain more information or would like to discuss photography/video recording taking place in our buildings, then please speak to a member of our team, call: **0161 770 8000** or email: galleryoldham@oldham.gov.uk*
- If a member of the public does not wish to be filmed/recorded/photographed, they are made identifiable to the photographer.

17. Use of ICT and E-Safety for Children and Young People

Oldham HLA Service's e-safety policy and procedures should:

- Protect children and young people who use ICT within our environments.
- Protect and educate staff and volunteers on the importance of e-safety.

E-Safety is how children and young people can be protected from the risks associated with the use of the internet and online technology.

Risks include:

- Content – what the child or young person can access either accidentally or deliberately e.g. racist or biased material.

- Contact – unsuitable contact from another user e.g. cyber bullying.
- Conduct – user’s behaviour that creates risk either through illegal activity or lack of awareness of the potential consequences e.g. sexting.

17.1 Specific risks & issues:

- **Blogging and Social Networking** – anyone can produce and distribute their own content and link with other sites to create a very powerful network for sharing ideas and influencing opinion.
- **Cyber bullying** – bullying using technology such as mobile phones and computers.
- **Frape** – Facebook rape – when a Facebook user’s identity and profile are used by a third party to cause harm or hurt.
- **Online Grooming** – when someone befriends a child online and builds up their trust with the intention of exploiting them and causing them harm. Harm caused by grooming can be sexual abuse, both in person and online, and exploitation to obtain sexually explicit images and video of the child.
- **Hacking** – when details, online accounts or other personal information is accessed by an unauthorised person.
- **Identity Theft** – when personal information is used by someone else without your knowledge. It may be criminal activity involving fraud or deception.
- **Behaviours Advocate websites** - online sites that covertly advocate particular behaviours and issues to young and specifically vulnerable children including anorexia, self-harm and suicide.
- **Phishing** – tricks users into visiting malicious websites by sending emails and other messages which pretend to come from banks or online shops. The emails have links with them which take the user to false sites set up to look real and where passwords and account details may be stolen.
- **Sexting** – sending and receiving of personal, sexual images or conversations to another party, via mobile phone or instant messaging.
- **Trolling** – posting inflammatory messages with the intention of provoking an emotional response.
- **You Tube** – social networking site where users can upload, publish and share videos.

17.2 Access to PCs within library spaces

- All children ages 12 and under joining the library will require parent or carer permission to use the PCs within the library space. This will be via the library joining form and will be recorded on the Library Management System (LMS).
- All children **MUST** use the library PCs in the children’s area.
- Lone adults cannot book PCs in the children’s area.
- Positioning of the PCs in the children’s area should always be considered to ensure a safe and secure environment, with PCs visible to staff and users.
- All staff should be aware of our Acceptable Use of ICT Policy. **(Appendix 6)** This should be part of the Induction Training for new staff.

17.3 Accessing Unacceptable Material (By Children)

- Children's access to the internet is filtered by Oldham Council through the Smoothwall but that doesn't rule out that some children or young people could access unsuitable material.
- Staff should be vigilant of screen activity.
- In the event of finding a child accessing unsuitable material, then the child should be informed that the material is inappropriate with an explanation of why.
- The child's session should be terminated.
- The site details should be reported to the Council's ICT department to ensure the site is reviewed or blocked.
- Staff who are concerned for the safety or welfare of the child should consider contacting a parent or carer. This decision should be taken by a senior member of staff.

17.4 Exposure to Indecent Images of Children (IIOC)

Staff who are inadvertently exposed to IIOC while using the internet should follow the following procedure:

- Refer the exposure to the Senior Customer Experience Officer immediately and complete an incident report.
- The URL's (webpage addresses) for the suspected IIOC should be reported to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) via www.iwf.org.uk.
- DO NOT send the actual images to either the IWF or any other person.
- The DSO should contact the police. If any copies of images need to be stored at the request of the police, then they should be stored securely where no one else has access to them. If there is doubt about whether the images are criminal, then a discussion will take place with the police regarding the best way for them to receive copies to determine whether they are criminal or not.
- Quarantine the device in question and discuss with the police the next steps.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding Reporting Form

Form completed by: (please PRINT)	
Name of child or vulnerable adult (if known):	Name(s) of SCHOOL/ORGANISATION Name(s) of other responsible adults (e.g. class teacher) made aware of the details of this disclosure and/or incident:
Name of adult responsible for child or vulnerable adult (e.g. teacher or group leader):	Date of incident:
Location of incident/this could be online:	Time of incident:
Is the child or adult aware that you will be sharing this information with others? YES / NO More details (if required):	
Write all details of disclosure or safeguarding incident. If you are recording a disclosure try and use the exact words of the child or vulnerable adult:	

Details of actions taken (this may be completed by the DSO):
--

To be filled out by Designated Safeguarding Officer

Date received:	
Name of DSO:	
Signature:	

Appendix 2

Useful Contacts and Information

The MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Telephone – 0161 770 7777

For urgent concerns outside office hours, you can call:

Emergency Duty Team: Phone: 0161 770 6936

or

Police on 101 (999 in emergencies).

Childline UK - 0800 1111

NSPCC - Child Protection Helpline 24 hours, call free 0800 800 500

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/disclosure-and-barring

www.savethechildren.org.uk

www.charity-commission.go.uk/supportingcharities/protection

www.scoutbase.org.uk/hg/child-protection

Useful Government Links

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>

Useful Links for Safer Online Working

Net Aware

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

Online safety advice from Childline

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Whether you're an online expert or you're not sure where to start, our tools and advice will help you keep your child safe.

ThinkUKnow

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

A website from National Crime Agency's CEOP Command about keeping children and young people safe on the internet.

UK Safer Internet Centre

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

Promoting the safe and responsible use of technology for young people.

Useful Definitions

Handle or Identifier on Social Media

A social media handle is your username. Often on platforms like Twitter and Instagram, a handle follows an @ symbol, like @Squadhelp. It is a way for people to identify you and communicate with you

FGM

For more information about Female Genital Mutilation go to

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

Coercive Control

Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Appendix 3

Young Volunteer/Work Experience/Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Induction Notes for 'named contact' or DSO

1. Tell the young person they have the right to feel safe in any work environment. Both the organisation and the young people have a role to play in doing this. Inform them how they can access the full Safeguarding Policy that they can read if they wish.
2. Explain that you are their named contact throughout their experience so they should find you if they are concerned. They should report any problems or worries to you straight away, or tell their parents or carers and/or anyone else they trust. They can phone someone if they feel unsafe.
3. Provide details about the different volunteer and staff roles within the organisation and tell them who they might work with. Explain that only a very few people have a DBS check but everyone at the organisation has received some form of safeguarding training, so everyone should know the rules (although this does not apply to visitors).
4. Share Appendix 1 with the young person. Explain that everyone follows these rules, and as a young volunteer they need to follow them too.
5. Make sure young people/children understand:
 - a. They shouldn't accept friendship requests or exchange personal mobile numbers with older volunteers. It's not that you can't be friendly but I'd be on my guard if someone wanted my personal information on a placement.
 - b. They should always meet with staff and volunteers in public or shared spaces. If it's necessary to have a video or phone call with a member of staff or a volunteer, this should be done with parents or carers present and be pre-arranged. It could also be done via the school.
 - c. Having knowledge of a work mobile or number to contact is fine.
6. Tell the students that if they post about their placement or volunteering, they should:
 - a. Protect personal information by checking who can see their posts
 - b. Post about their placement when they've finished
 - c. Keep passwords secure
 - d. Don't put personal information online, this includes:
 - i. The times they are doing work experience and how they arrive at the site
 - ii. Personal information alongside pictures of themselves
 - iii. Pictures of themselves that might be misinterpreted or used by others.
 - e. Remind students to take care when putting opinions and feelings online. Remind them that they are speaking on behalf of the organisation. Any online content should be discussed before sharing online, this includes sharing posts created by others.
7. Remind them that all sorts of people might visit the site, and even more access information online. It's important to be aware that not all of them will be safe. They don't need to be scared but do need to be aware, and protect themselves by seeking a safe space and a safe person if they feel at risk.
8. When undertaking tasks they shouldn't send any private messages to visitors or undertake any kind of 'private' communication. If a question is asked, someone else will be able to answer it.

9. They should also consider carefully what they search for on the internet. Remind them that search histories are looked at and the systems monitored for dangerous or inappropriate content.
10. Also remind them that if they do see anything suspicious, or content that is abusive or inappropriate, they should tell someone. They will be supported and online bullying isn't tolerated.
11. Tell children and young people that they will need to act responsibly. The organisation will provide generic details for young people to use when engaging in social media which means that they will be acting on behalf of the organisation.
12. Remind them that it is important that work experience students and all volunteers be professional in their work. Spending lots of time on their phones and communicating with friends via social media at work is not appropriate. They should also make sure that they dressed appropriately even when volunteering from home. This might sound silly but if they were taking part in a work Zoom meeting we would expect them to have a professional approach which comes across in both clothing and actions.
13. Finally, when working or volunteering, participants should be aware of these things:
 - a. Keep your passwords to yourself.
 - b. Be cautious when using public WIFI – it can be nice to work in a café or similar public space but remember it isn't always secure.
 - c. Look out for fraudulent emails – if someone wants you to open a document or press a link, make sure you know them.
 - d. Be careful using public computers – it might be ok to use a library computer to do research but it could pose a risk if logins are used for social media platforms on such machines (as logins can be stored).
 - e. Safe use of removable devices.
 - f. Use a VPN – a virtual private network can be useful.
 - g. Install any updates – this is something we can all do. Make sure you know the software you're updating though. Always do the automatic updates recommended when turning your computer on and off.
 - h. Do not add pictures of yourself that could be misinterpreted or used by others.

Appendix 4

Regulated Activity

Government advice on regulated activity can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-workforce-guidance>

1. Regulated activity with children

Regulated activity is defined as many things, but includes:

- Teaching, training or instruction of children, carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on 4 or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight.
- Day to day management or supervision on a regular basis of a person providing this activity which would be regulated if unsupervised.

Services can be provided on site by volunteers and staff without checks, as long as guardians, parents or carers are present. Thus parents should remain with children when visiting (or enjoying any activity devised and delivered by Oldham HLA) and school groups should always be accompanied by school staff or representatives.

If required, HLA will seek guidance from relevant colleges and schools regarding need to seek DBS checks. Schools may not allow HLA to provide services in school without a member of the team having a DBS check.

If a member of HLA staff conducts regulated activity, then they must have an up to date DBS.

Further information on regulated activity can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

2. Regulated activity with vulnerable adults

Staff and/or volunteers are unlikely to be undertaking regulated activity with adults as this involves dressing, undressing, feeding and taking care of financial matters amongst other care-related activities.

Basic DBS checks (rather than enhanced with barred list) may be sought even if volunteers/staff are not undertaking regulated activity (contact HR). The Government DBS service does not give advice on whether you are eligible for a DBS.

Appendix 5

Definitions and Recognition of Abuse

This document sets out the definitions of abuse to which these procedures relate. The sustained abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a person's health, development and well-being. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm.

Everybody who works with children or vulnerable adults, parents, and other adults in contact with children should be able to recognise and know how to act upon indicators that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health in a child or vulnerable adult whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fabricated or induced illness.

The following are classic pointers to the diagnosis. None of them is diagnostic neither does the absence of any of them exclude the diagnosis of non-accidental injury.

- There is a delay in seeking medical help (or medical help is not sought at all)
- The story of the 'accident' is vague, is lacking in detail, and may vary with each telling and from person to person (innocent accidents tend to have vivid accounts that ring true)
- The account of the 'accident' is not compatible with the injury observed.
- The parents' affect is abnormal. Normal parents are full of anxiety for the child. Abusive parents tend to be more preoccupied with their own problems – for example, how they can return home as soon as possible.
- The parents' behaviour gives cause for concern – for example, they soon become hostile, they rebut accusations that have not been made, and they leave before the consultant arrives.
- The child's appearance and their interaction with their parents are abnormal. They may look sad, withdrawn, or frightened. There may be visible evidence of failure to thrive. Full-blown frozen watchfulness occurs at a late stage and results from repetitive physical and emotional abuse over a period. The absence of frozen watchfulness does not exclude the diagnosis of non-accidental injury.
- The child may say something. Always make a point of interviewing the child (if they are old enough) in a safe place in private. This is one of the virtues of admission to hospital. Interviewing the child as an outpatient may fail to let the child open up as he or she is expecting to be returned to the custody of the abusing parent in the near future.

The following is a brief guide to the most common physical injuries:

- General bruising not consistent with the everyday play activity for a child of their age.
- Bruised eyes, particularly not consistent with the normal play activity for a child of their age.
- Bruised eyes, particularly if both are bruised.
- Bruises around or beneath the ears.
- Bruising in or around the mouth - this may be in addition to a torn frenulum.
- Finger-tip bruises – small, round or oval and may be found on the face or body.
- Grasp marks (on the arms or chest predominantly).
- Blood spots under the eyes.
- Bite marks - may result in a set of crescent shaped bruises corresponding to the upper and lower teeth. The size and pattern may help determine the perpetrator.

- Cigarette burns - deliberate burns are clearly demarcated, round and punched out. Impetigo may mimic cigarette burns.
- Burns and scalds can be difficult to determine as abuse, as a general rule burns or scalds with a clear outline may be suspicious.
- Immersion injuries - occur when a hand, foot or buttocks are dipped into very hot water.
- Bone and joint injuries when not consistent with the explanation given. Some forms of fracture (such as spiral fractures) are more suspicious than others. Immobile babies very rarely break their bones accidentally.
- Internal injuries within the abdomen can be life threatening and may occur without any sign of external bruising or injury.
- Shaking injuries may cause drowsiness, vomiting, poor feeding or fits. Bruises may be noted on the shoulders or neck. Medical examination may reveal subdural haematoma and retinal haemorrhage. A full skeletal survey may show other fractures particularly grip related such as ribs or wrists. Shaking injuries can be life threatening
- Suffocating injuries. These may be indicative of: i) Poisoning; ii) Factitious Illness by Proxy
- Mongolian blue spot. Note that this condition can be confused with bruising. This condition is present in more than 50% of Asian/African/Caribbean babies and those of mixed heritage. Mongolian Blue spot is characterised by blue coloured areas of pigmentation, which are found on the buttocks, back and occasionally other parts of the body of non-Caucasian babies. It is rarely found in Caucasian babies but should not be ruled out as a possibility. These marks have no significance and usually disappear within the first year of a child's life.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's or vulnerable adult's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

Neglect is a chronic state, which inhibits physical, emotional and/or intellectual development. A child who is neglected or failing to thrive may show some of the following characteristics:

- Short stature
- Underweight for their height and age
- Voracious appetite or food scavenging
- Persistent loose stools
- 'Pot bellied' appearance
- Skin problems including nappy rash and poor healing of minor injuries
- Dry, sparse, lacklustre hair
- Frequent accidental injuries
- Unresponsive towards familiar adults
- Inappropriate friendliness or affection towards strangers
- Unkempt and dirty appearance
- Learning difficulties

Definition of failure to thrive

"Failure to grow in terms of weight gain and development, according to norms in a healthy and vigorous way". Current thinking deems "faltering growth" to be a more accurate description. Earlier research focused on a simple cause and effect model and distorted mother/child relationships. Studies now highlight that multiple, interactional factors may be the cause. Dividing faltering growth into organic and non-organic causes is misleading; they are not mutually exclusive. Most cases do not have organic causes. It occurs across all

socio-economic groups. It occurs because children receive or utilise insufficient calories. Only a small minority of children fail to grow because of neglect or abuse (Community Practitioners' & Health Visitor's Association, The Children's Society, Professional Briefing Paper; Batchelor, 1999).

Emotional Abuse

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's or vulnerable adult's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children or vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children or vulnerable adults to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

The following signs may be present:

- Sleep or feeding problems
- Irritability, dull, anxious or indiscriminate attachments
- Overactivity or aggression
- Poor social skills
- Attention seeking
- Wetting and/or soiling
- Learning difficulties
- Language delay
- Limited attention span
- Lack of self esteem
- Poor peer relationships
- Self-harming
- Truancy and/or running away

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adults to take part in sexual activities, whether the victim is aware of what is happening or not.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children and vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children and vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

When considering sexual abuse, the following should be borne in mind:

- the legal age of consent is 16 years regardless of gender or sexual orientation.
- Although there is no legal age of consent for heterosexual acts with males, almost any act committed by a woman with a boy under 16 years would form the basis of a criminal offence.
- Any sexual contact without consent and all incestuous sexual acts are always illegal.
- The involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent; or which violate social taboos or family roles.

Other activities that may be considered abusive include:

- Any exposure of children and vulnerable adults to sexual experiences inappropriate to their age and understanding. This includes both witnessing and being engaged in sexual acts.
- Voyeurism – children or vulnerable adults watching sexual activity or adults using children or vulnerable adults to incite sexual arousal.
- Exposure to or involvement in pornography.
- Inappropriate fondling or kissing.
- Talking to a child in a manner intended to incite sexual arousal.

The following is a list of physical signs, which may be indicative of sexual abuse in the absence of any reasonable explanation – **NO SIGN DOES NOT MEAN NO ABUSE.**

- Injuries to genital area.
- Itching, soreness, discharge, bleeding, repeated urinary tract infections.
- Rectal bleeding.
- Persistent abdominal pain or headaches without apparent cause.
- The presence of any sexually transmitted diseases or those where sexual transmission is a possible means of infection (these may be present orally, genitally or anally).
- Pregnancy of a girl under 16 years of age where the identity of the father is vague or secret.
- Children and vulnerable adults may display behavioural or emotional signs of sexual abuse. The following may be considered in this context but should never be looked at in isolation from other relevant factors:
 - Child or vulnerable adult with sexual knowledge beyond that considered age appropriate.
 - Child or vulnerable adult withdrawn or introverted.
 - Child or vulnerable adult persistently masturbating, particularly in inappropriate settings.
 - Sexualised or provocative behaviour with adults or with other children.
 - Hinting at sexual activity through words, play, drawings etc.

Appendix 6

Below are relevant sections of HLA's **Access to the Internet and Computer Services Policy**. The full policy is displayed for every user before using as public PC or Wi-Fi.

5.6 Display of Offensive Material or Images and Other Legal Conditions

Displaying or printing offensive material is not permitted. Customers must not send, receive or display offensive text or graphics: – Inappropriate use will be referred to Principal Library Officer, Oldham Library Services who may see fit to share said information to partner agencies such as, but not exclusively limited to, Social Services, Oldham Council's Safeguarding Service or the Police. Records of PC bookings are maintained for a 24-month period.

Library users must respect the privacy of all users and not deliberately access any other user's information, including printed documents.

Public computers must not be used for unlawful purposes. Users using a computer for unlawful purposes will be reported to the relevant authorities and asked to leave the library.

Television - Oldham Libraries do not allow any streaming on library devices. This includes anything shown on the terrestrial channels (which includes the BBC, but also ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) and BBC iPlayer.

Oldham Library uses Smoothwall to filter internet access. Web filtering programs screen incoming web pages to determine if the page should be displayed to the user. Filtering has limitations; therefore users must ensure material accessed does not breach this policy but if anything they deem unacceptable is accessible then they must inform a library employee.

5.7 Parental Responsibility

Children aged 12 and under must have parental consent to use the PCs. This is recorded on the Library Management System.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to work with their children and help select resources consistent with their family's boundaries and values accessible via the internet;

Parents and guardians have the option of requesting their child's computer access be disabled.

5.8 Penalties for Breach of Policies

If you breach any of the guidelines set out in this document Oldham Library reserves the right to revoke access for as long as is necessary, dependent on the severity of the transgression.

If you are subject to a banning order then you will be banned from using Wi-Fi and computers at all of Oldham's libraries. If banned, you will receive a letter outlining why you have been banned and when your ban will expire.

Oldham Library reserves the right to change the policies relating to the use of Oldham Library's public computers and internet services at any time without notice.

Oldham Library monitors activity on its computer equipment for statistical purposes. This does not include the collection and storage of personal information.