

Child Protection Policy

Scope:

This policy applies to all staff undertaking duties for The Hearing House.

Policy:

All services or programmes at The Hearing House will reflect the principle that the welfare and interests of the child or young person are the first and paramount consideration.

The Hearing House upholds the Children, Young Persons & their Families Act, 1989

Section 15:

“Any person who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived may report the matter to a social worker or a constable.”

We are committed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

- To protect children.
- To show the commitment The Hearing House has to children and young people.
- To deliver effective guidance, policy and procedures to staff in the event of suspected abuse.
- To ensure that appropriate staff attend relevant courses/training specific to education to Prevent Child Abuse (e.g. Child Matters Course).
- To ensure supervision processes are mandatory.

We want to demonstrate:

- Public confidence in the safe practices to protect vulnerable children.
- Provide accountability and meet government and other requirements.
- Reduce opportunities for litigation as a result of taking wrongful action.

Abuse and neglect are signals that intervention is necessary. Ignoring signals or failing to intervene will usually result in ongoing or further harm to the child or young person. The severity of a sign does not necessarily equate with the severity of the abuse (*Child Matters*).

Procedures:

In cases where a child or young person is being seriously neglected, deprived or abused, we are ethically obligated to report this to Child, Youth & Family (CYF). The family will not be informed when notifications are made in situations where this is likely to place the child at further risk.

Any staff member who suspects neglect, mistreatment or abuse of a child/young person should:

- Report the matter to the **Audiology/Habilitation Manager** who will contact the appropriate service.
- If non urgent the **Audiology/Habilitation Manager** will discuss the issue with the clinical staff and where appropriate the client will be encouraged and empowered to make a report to CYF.

HOWEVER, where a child or young persons' safety may be at immediate risk by informing parents, staff should:

- Report the matter to the **Audiology/Habilitation Manager** who will then contact the appropriate service.

- If the **Audiology/Habilitation Manager** is unavailable talk to the **CEO** for support as to what action to take.
- If either the **Audiology/Habilitation Manager** or **CEO** is unavailable **ring the Police or CYF immediately**. The **Audiology/Habilitation Manager** will have to be informed on the action.

How to refer:

**Contact - Police 111 OR
CYF on 0508 FAMILY (0800 326 459)**

When you phone it is helpful to have as much information to pass on as possible.

This includes:

- Your concerns or suspicions.
- The reasons why you believe this child is at risk or suffering abuse.
- An indication that this is a formal notification of actual or suspected abuse.
- Your opinion about whether this notification is urgent.

Guidelines for recording abuse:

When abuse has been disclosed put your information down clearly using the following guidelines outlined by *Child Matters*:

- Be specific.
- Be objective.
- Be up to date.
- Be factual.

This includes:

- What you observed.
- What you heard (word for word).
- What you were told (word for word).
- When, where, how, who was present etc.

Record and date all interactions in your records, including:

- Telephone calls made (even if no answer).
- Consultations and discussions with others regarding the case.
- Contacts with agencies and other people involved.

Include a copy of the disclosure in your notes and enter into the Disclosure Register that a notification has been made.

Note: **Deciding when and who will inform the parent/caregiver(s) will be determined by CYF and/or the Police.**

Signed:

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C Documents:

- ❖ Child Abuse Flow Diagram