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## Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods' Safeguarding Policy

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### Our policy

HMHB is a Social Enterprise that works to improve the lives of the unemployed, and those in need, such as the elderly, or those suffering physical and/or mental health issues. We believe that every individual who accesses our services should be treated with dignity and respect, have their choice respected and not be forced to do anything against their will. HMHB is committed to safeguarding all clients coming into contact with the social enterprise, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

HMHB personnel will come into direct and indirect contact with clients through the delivery of a range of services. Some of these clients may be vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff who, during the course of their employment, have direct or indirect contact with vulnerable adults, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare.

This policy applies to anyone employed directly or indirectly by HMHB and includes Trustees, staff, volunteers, work placements, trainers and consultants. This policy is available to independent contractors and should be implemented as good practice. While this policy focuses on the workplace responsibilities of staff, responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults extend to an individual's personal and domestic life.

Social enterprise Trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from or working with their social enterprise are not harmed in any way through contact with it. This policy has been approved and endorsed by the Committee.

This vulnerable adult safeguarding policy statement will be available on the HMHB website, alongside all their other policies.

An annual audit of safeguarding concerns, action taken and staff training and support will be conducted annually and safeguarding policy and procedures will be reviewed every three years or in the light of significant changes to best practice or legislation.

## 1. Safe recruitment

### Staff and volunteers

For all posts at HMHB the following vetting checks will be carried out prior to confirming the appointment:

- a Self-Disclosure form to disclose previous unspent convictions and disciplinary or capability procedures.
- Identity documents including photographic identity
- Proof of right to work in the UK
- References including a professional reference using a pro-forma template
- Qualification certificates if required for the role
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check if eligible

Volunteers and freelance consultants post the same level of risk to clients as paid staff. Vetting checks include:

- a self-disclosure form to disclose previous spent/unspent convictions
- References including a professional reference using a pro-forma template
- DBS check if eligible.

A criminal record does not prevent employment at HMHB. A thorough risk assessment will be carried out if convictions are revealed on the declaration form or criminal record check, or it is not possible to obtain a criminal record check from abroad, prior to confirming or withdrawing an appointment.

As part of Induction, new staff must read key corporate policies, including Safeguarding, Vulnerable adult protection, Data Protection and Confidentiality policies, and understand their personal responsibilities within these, and that any training needs are identified and addressed.

HMHB will ensure that all staff receive regular on going management support and feedback on performance, to ensure that performance meets appropriate standards and training and development opportunities are discussed.

## **2. Safe environments**

### Safe environments

HMHB will ensure that all environments where services activities are delivered will not cause harm to vulnerable adults. As well as ensuring that suitable staff deliver activities, all service delivery environments will be assessed in line with HMHB's Health and Safety Policy.

### The media

HMHB's use of images for use of photographs ensures informed consent is given before images can be used.

## **3. Signposting vulnerable adults to support**

A number of staff come into contact with clients by phone or face to face and some staff and moderators may interact with clients via online forums, social media and other written communication.

Some of these clients may be particularly vulnerable, experiencing distress or have mental health issues. For the majority of these adults their situation will not be of a nature that requires a member of staff to report a concern. However HMHB believe it is important to recognise the vulnerability of these adults. HMHB does not have appropriate expertise to deal directly with these issues although our intervention may be helpful, nor do we provide counselling support, so it is vital that staff understand how to identify signs and signpost effectively.

HMHB will support frontline staff to recognise the signs of distress, to handle this and their own reactions, and to signpost clients to services that can provide support.

HMHB will look to provide up to date information for use by staff and volunteers which details organisations that can be contacted to support these clients in a range of situations ranging from domestic violence, to mental health, drugs and alcohol.

In addition clients will be able to download or be sent factsheets on looking after their own emotional health and helping their children through difficult situations.

HMHB will ensure that these resources are updated regularly.

## **3. Adult protection**

### Contact with vulnerable adults

HMHB has contact with clients either face to face, online, over the telephone and in writing. These situations include;

- Delivery of advice
- Client information
- Organising fitness sessions
- Research interviews
- Case study interviews
- Events
- Online

### Alert to the signs of abuse

One of our roles is to pick up cues that the client may need protecting and pass this information to those who can assess the situation and act when required. Staff are required to be aware of the different types and signs of abuse and the circumstances in which it can occur.

### Aware of duty to report concerns.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately (this may require a referral to the Police). Staff have a duty to report concerns. Failure to comply with these responsibilities will be seen as a serious matter which may lead to disciplinary action.

### Confidentiality.

While all staff should be open to the possible abuse of vulnerable adults in all situations, we envisage that there will be very few instances where staff will need to report adult protection concerns. The situations where this is most likely to happen and where staff will be expected to act are

- an adult has been assessed as being at high risk of suicide (see guidance on reporting concerns)
- There is a significant risk that the adult will seriously physically harm another person.

In respect of vulnerable adults all action, including referrals to Social Services and the police, must be subject to the consent of the service user. In every situation it will be assumed that a person can make their own decisions and action will only be taken in the absence of consent from the service user where;

- they or others are in physical danger
- after seeking advice from an appropriate agency, you have been advised to report the concern as it is believed that the vulnerable adult is unable/incapable of making an informed decision for himself or herself.

Staff should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to anyone wishing to tell them about something serious.

HMHB's complaints procedure is an important way in which concerns can be surfaced and should be easily accessible to clients.

## Aware of how and when to take action

All incidents should be recorded and emailed to the manager.

Allegations of abuse or concerns raised against members of staff, volunteers, trainers or trustees, will always be treated seriously. Where there is an allegation against a member of staff the CEO and committee should be informed and a disciplinary investigation will be carried out. There may also be criminal (police) investigations. Where the allegation concerns any of the above personnel the chair of the committee will be involved in the investigation.

## **4. Culture**

### Staff

Staff are encouraged in line with diversity policy and equal opportunities policy to value diversity and respect the contribution of each individual.

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about employment practices and concerns will be taken seriously. Unlawful discrimination, bullying or harassment will not be tolerated. Employees will not suffer any negative treatment for giving constructive criticism or raising a genuine grievance.

HMHB also has a clear Social Media policy for staff forbidding inappropriate use of materials which includes sexually explicit material, obscene remarks and abusive or discriminatory messages.

### Online blogs and Facebook

HMHB works to ensure that our online blogs and Facebook page are safe and supportive places where people feel comfortable to express themselves and share their experiences.

While we encourage lively debate, we do not tolerate behaviour which makes other users feel uneasy or unable to contribute to the page. As such, we reserve the right to remove posts which are aggressive in tone, abusive towards other users or disruptive to how the forum or page operates. Racist, sexist, homophobic or bullying posts will be removed without delay. This is common practice and corresponds with Facebook's terms and conditions.

Volunteer moderators and staff are trained to implement this policy.

