

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS & CHILDREN POLICY

1. Policy statement

1.1 Hull and East Yorkshire Credit Union accepts that it has a duty of care to safeguard vulnerable adults and children across all of its services and activities.

1.2 We believe that the welfare of vulnerable adults and children is of primary concern and that all vulnerable adults and children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, social-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to live free from abuse.

1.3 We seek to prevent and effectively deal with incidents of abuse by:

- Operating a 'zero tolerance' approach towards abuse.
- Raising awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to vulnerable adults and children throughout the Credit Union.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of vulnerable adults and children to protect them from harm.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Responding promptly to any allegations of poor practice, misconduct or abuse of vulnerable adults or children in line with this policy as well as implementing, where appropriate, relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.

2. Policy aims

2.1 The aims of this policy are to:

- have a transparent, fair and equitable policy for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children;
- provide vulnerable adults and children with appropriate safety and protection while in our care;
- help all employees to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues; and
- ensure we have the appropriate structures, policies and practices to protect vulnerable adults and children.

3. Key definitions

	Explanation
Abuse	'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons'. It may involve 'a single or repeated act, or omission occurring within a personal or closed relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to a person'. Friends, strangers, family members, and professional staff can all be guilty of abuse. Abuse can include physical, psychological, sexual, financial, discriminatory abuse and acts of neglect (Dept of Health, No Secrets Guidance 2000).
Alerter	Member of staff who sees abuse taking place, is told about abuse or suspects abuse is occurring.
Child	The Children Act 2004 defines a 'child' as, a person under the age of 18, or a person aged 18, 19 or 20 who is being looked after by a local authority, or a person aged 18, 19 or 20 who has a learning disability.
Child Abuse	Child abuse occurs when a child or young person suffers a violation of their human and civil rights.

Child Protection	<p>Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering significant harm.</p> <p>Effective child protection is essential as part of the wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced. (Source: Working Together to Safeguard Children).</p>
Responsible person	A named member of the Board of Directors who will act as a contact between any member of the Credit Union who has a concern and the appropriate service/agency who deal with the problem.
Mental Capacity	Mental Capacity refers to the ability of a person to make decisions about their own life. Some people have difficulties in making such decisions. This is called 'lacking capacity'. Under the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) there are laws governing who can make decisions on someone else's behalf, which help to safeguard vulnerable people.
Parent	The term 'parent' is used as a generic term to represent parent, carers and guardians.
Perpetrator	A perpetrator is a person, group or organisation that is suspected of, or has carried out, abuse. The perpetrator may or may not understand that they are carrying out abuse.
Staff	For the purpose of this policy, 'staff' relates to anyone employed by Hull and East Yorkshire Credit Union, including agency workers, apprentices, fixed term workers, consultants, secondees, Board members and volunteers who work on behalf of us.
Vulnerable Adult	'Someone who is aged 18 or over and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health or other disability; age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. (No Secrets, Dept of Health 2000)

4. Dealing with concerns and allegations of abuse effectively and efficiently

4.1 It is the role of the relevant local authority to investigate and establish abuse. It is the role of all staff or anyone providing a service on our behalf, to report any suspicions or evidence of abuse or neglect.

4.2 Any concerns should be discussed with the designated **responsible person** as soon as possible and a written record made of the concerns. Should those concerns be of an immediate nature (such as an abandoned child), then Social Services or the Police should be contacted immediately.

4.3 The **responsible person** will:

- be a named member of the Board of Directors. A deputy will be named to act in their absence;
- act as a contact between any member of the Credit Union who has a concern and the appropriate service/agency who deal with the problem;
- not be expected to be a Safeguarding expert, but will be a channel for information. They will not be expected to deal with any Safeguarding issues on their own;
- ensure that all employees receive a copy of the procedures relating to the safety and protection of vulnerable adults and children;
- establish an Incident Book in which they will record any reported incidents of breach of Safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential;
- if anyone suspects a child is being abused, the **responsible person** must ensure that Social Services are notified.

5. Mental capacity

5.1 The Mental Capacity Act 2005 requires that any intervention is done while respecting the vulnerable adult's human rights. It is the relevant local authority's responsibility to establish whether the adult has the capacity to give or refuse consent.

5.2 We recognise that vulnerable adults have the right to be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse and will respect their wishes wherever possible. However in some circumstances, the vulnerable adult's wishes may be overridden where the safety of the individual or others may be at significant risk.

6 Allegations about an employee

6.1 We will fully support and protect staff who, in good faith, report concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a vulnerable adult or child may be being abused.

6.2 If a member of staff suspects that a colleague is involved in abuse or neglect they should report this immediately through the correct channels as detailed above.

6.3 Where a member of staff is suspected of abuse or neglect, there may be three strands of investigation:

- Child/Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding investigation (led by the relevant local authority)
- Criminal investigation (led by the Police)
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (led by us)

6.4 As an employee, the usual terms and conditions for disciplinary investigations will apply, including consideration of suspension on full pay pending the outcome of the investigation.

6.5 We will assess each individual allegation on its own merits, taking into account the findings of any criminal investigation.

6.6 Depending on the outcome of the investigation, we will assess the appropriateness of the staff member returning to work in their previous environment.

6.7 In order to protect themselves from allegations of abuse or situations that could be misunderstood, staff should maintain strong professional boundaries in line with the HEYCU Code of Conduct.

7. Addressing safeguarding in recruitment and selection processes

7.1 We will make sure all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable adults and/or children.

7.2 Staff will be reference checked in accordance with best practice and legislative requirements.

8. Training

8.1 All staff will undertake safeguarding training at the level appropriate to their role to make sure they are equipped to recognise abuse and deal with concerns in the appropriate manner.

8.2 Refresher training will be available on a regular basis to ensure that skills and knowledge are kept up to date in line with statutory guidance.

8.3 Safeguarding will be included in the induction programme for all new staff.

8.4 All staff will be given a copy of this policy and any associated guidelines.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 We will always treat any sensitive or personal information given to us as confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

9.2 Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Within the Credit Union this will be the member of staff who raised the alert and the responsible person.

9.3 We will not disclose information to other agencies without the prior consent of a victim of abuse except where:

- there is a risk of serious harm to the individual or someone involved in the situation; or
- the individual has been assessed as incapable of making an informed decision; or
- we are required to do so by law or by a court order, or
- there is an information sharing protocol contract or confidentiality agreement in place.

9.4 Recorded information will be stored in a secure place with limited access e.g. only accessible to the Responsible person, and in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

10. The legal framework

10.1 This policy has been developed to comply with the legal framework and published guidance relating to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children:

- [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [Data Protection Act 1998](#)
- [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](#)
- [Public Concern at Work](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Sex Offenders Act 1997](#)
- [Sexual Offenders Act 1956](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [No Secrets, Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse \(Department of Health, 2000\)](#)
- [Forced Marriage \(Civil Protection\) Act 2007](#)
- [Mental Health Act 1983](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- ADASS Guidance 2013
- [Children and Young Persons Act 1933](#)
- [The Children Act 2004](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006](#)
- Early Help Assessment Framework
- [NSPCC](#)
- [Childline](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguarding Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children \(March, 2013\)](#)

11. Review

11.1 The Board will reviewed at least annually to ensure it remains effective.

Approved by the Board of Directors -February 2015