

## Our Safeguarding Policy – General Provisions

These general provisions are applicable to all activities undertaken by Chernobyl Children's Project (UK), referred to hereafter as CCP (UK), including the running of charity shops and market stalls. The documents in Appendices 1 and 2 apply, respectively, specifically to the charity's provision of recuperative holidays with host families in the UK and the provision of volunteers for work with children and adults in institutions in Belarus.

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with CCP (UK). This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with CCP (UK).
- The design and implementation of CCP (UK)'s programmes and activities.

The policy lays out the commitments made by CCP (UK), and informs staff and associated personnel<sup>1</sup> of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

### What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect<sup>2</sup>

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff, our volunteers or our programmes.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

### Scope

- All staff contracted by CCP (UK).
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to CCP (UK), including but not limited to the following: volunteers; consultants; contractors; programme visitors.

### Policy Statement

CCP (UK) believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

CCP (UK) will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff, volunteers or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

CCP (UK) commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Scope' for definition of associated personnel

<sup>2</sup> NHS 'What is Safeguarding? Easy Read' 2011

## **Prevention**

### **CCP (UK) responsibilities**

CCP (UK) will:

- Ensure all staff and volunteers have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with CCP (UK). This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff, volunteers and associated personnel.
- Ensure staff and volunteers receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

### **Staff and volunteer responsibilities**

#### **Child safeguarding**

CCP (UK) staff, volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.
- Sexually abuse or exploit children.
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

#### **Adult safeguarding**

CCP (UK) staff, volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults.
- Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

#### **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**

CCP (UK) staff, volunteers and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Additionally, CCP (UK) staff, volunteers and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by a CCP (UK) staff member, volunteer or associated personnel to the designated safeguarding officer.

## **Enabling reports**

CCP (UK) will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, volunteers and the communities we work with.

CCP (UK) will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

### **How to report a safeguarding concern**

Staff members and volunteers who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the designated Safeguarding Officer.

CCP (UK)'s designated Safeguarding Officers are:

#### **UK operations:**

Geoff Wright (UK National Safeguarding Officer)

Telephone: 01206 970872

Email: [geoff\\_wright70@hotmail.com](mailto:geoff_wright70@hotmail.com)

#### **Belarus operations:**

Lynne Murphy (Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer)

Telephone: 07821 822727

Email: [lynecm@live.co.uk](mailto:lynecm@live.co.uk)

### **Response**

CCP (UK) will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations.

CCP (UK) will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff or volunteers found in breach of policy.

CCP (UK) will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff, volunteers or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

## **Confidentiality**

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Beneficiary of Assistance**

Someone who directly receives goods or services from CCP (UK)'s programmes. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the CCP (UK) serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

### **Child**

A person below the age of 18.

### **Harm**

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

### **Psychological harm**

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

### **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

### **Safeguarding**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.<sup>3</sup>

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes. One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

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<sup>3</sup> NHS 'What is Safeguarding? Easy Read' 2011

**Sexual abuse**

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

**Sexual exploitation**

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

**Survivor**

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

**At risk adult**

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental 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.

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## **Appendix 1 - Safeguarding Belarussian Children Visiting the UK and the Children of Host Families**

These provisions apply to CCP (UK)'s activities in the UK, primarily to the provision of recuperative holidays for visiting children from Belarus.

Chernobyl Children's Project (UK) groups are required to adhere closely to these guidelines in order to determine the suitability of host families prior to placing children with them, and to provide maximum possible safeguards for the children during their stay. **All Host Families must be given a copy of this document and also 'Guidelines for Host Families'.**

Interested parents should be encouraged and expected to attend group meetings so that they understand what we are trying to achieve. At least one parent from each family should attend three meetings before the children's visit, and both parents should be known to the rest of the group.

All homes must receive a visit from two members of the group, or people known to the group. Ideally, they should both have some relevant experience in social work or health care. In the event of concern about a family the problem should be discussed with the group coordinator and the committee or steering group, if the group has one. It is better to err on the side of caution and not to put children with a family about whom there are any doubts. The Executive Director or the Groups Coordinator should be consulted in cases where the group is uncertain of the best course of action. **All members of the group should be visited, including the coordinator.**

All families must be given the Host Family Guidelines and asked to sign an Application and Agreement form. References given on this form should be taken up, except for families well known to the group. At the earliest possible date, all adults (including those who will not host but will be closely involved with the children) must complete a Disclosure and Barring Service form (DBS). (This replaces the CRB). This applies to all children 16 years and over. **Individuals must then register with the Update Service**, so that we can check in the future whether they have any subsequent convictions.

The children must always stay in pairs (except in unavoidable circumstances where one of the children does not arrive, due to illness). If any child appears to be unhappy with a family, the reasons must be investigated immediately, and the child moved to another family if the problem cannot be resolved.

The children should be visited in their homes by the interpreter within three or four days of their arrival. The interpreter should endeavour to speak to each child every day, (especially during the first few days of the visit and after the changeover to the second host family) either on an outing, a visit to the home or by telephone. The children must have the telephone number of the interpreter so they can ring at any time.

The children must meet regularly for excursions or activities - at least three times a week.

Families are not allowed to take children away from the area for more than a couple of days, and even then only when the interpreter and the group coordinator have established that the children are settled and are happy.

All Children and Young People have the right to live in an environment where they are free from all forms of ill treatment including neglect, physical, sexual, emotional abuse and violence.

Chernobyl Children's Project (UK) (the Charity) has developed its policy and procedures in line with the following:-

- The Children Act 2004 - Every Child Matters
- The Protection of Children Act 1999.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- The UK Border Agency Code of Practice for Keeping Children Safe from Harm.
- Home Office Guidance for preventing the abuse of trust 1999.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of The Child.
- Human Rights Act 1998.

The Charity is clear that it is the duty of all those working on behalf or in conjunction with the Charity, to protect and prevent the children and young people with whom they come into contact from becoming victims of harm. This duty involves more than non-participation in abuse but includes a duty to act where abuse is seen to be or suspected to be taking place.

The Charity will create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people.

The Charity recognises that abuse can be physical, sexual and emotional and may also include neglect and bullying of the child or young person.

The Charity has a **UK National Safeguarding Officer** who is responsible for all safeguarding issues within the Charity.

All Chernobyl's Children Project Groups will identify a named person from within the local group to act as their **Local Child Safeguarding Officer**. The role of the Local Child Safeguarding Officer is to ensure the Charity's duty of care towards the child or young person and to make sure that its responsibility to promote the best interests of the child is paramount. **This person must either be a professional in social work/child care/education, or they must receive training through the charity.**

The role of the Local Child Safeguarding Officer is to be a proactive point of reference for the local group regarding all child protection and safeguarding issues.

The Local Child Safeguarding Officer will be available to all those involved locally with the Charity to provide appropriate safeguarding advice and guidance.

The Charity, through its Local Child Safeguarding Officer, will ensure this Policy and Procedures document is brought to all individuals' attention prior to the commencement of contact with children.

Appropriate advice and guidelines will be provided by the Local Child Safeguarding Officer to all hosts/volunteers working directly with the children.

All host families should be given the contact details of the UK National Safeguarding Officer, as well as the Local Child Safeguarding Officer.

CCP (UK)'s UK National Safeguarding Officer is:

Geoff Wright (UK National Safeguarding Officer)

Telephone: 01206 970872

Email: [geoff\\_wright70@hotmail.com](mailto:geoff_wright70@hotmail.com)

## Information technology and safety

Children and Young People in Belarus are becoming more fluent in the use of information technology. The internet can however pose many risks for children and young people as they can access violent images and pornographic material, sometimes accidentally. Host families must be aware of the risks of computer use and provide appropriate supervision for the young person. It is strongly recommended that young people only have access to the internet within the 'public' areas of the home. CCP discourages the use of the internet behind closed doors or within the young person's bedroom.

### Guidance for working with young people if abuse occurs or is suspected

If abuse occurs or is suspected, the procedures listed below should be adopted.

### Procedures for a volunteer/host/interpreter suspecting or witnessing abuse, or having serious concerns

Contact the Local Child Safeguarding Officer **immediately** to discuss the issue.

1. The volunteer/host/interpreter should discuss the matter with the Local Child Safeguarding Officer and the Local Co-ordinator. The UK National Safeguarding officer and Chief Executive of the Charity must also be informed **immediately**.
2. Volunteers and hosts must understand that it is a **duty** to report suspicion or concerns as well as certainty.
3. The Local Child Safeguarding Officer will make a full report including:
  - The child's name.
  - The host family's name and address.
  - The date and times of the observation or disclosure.
  - An objective record of the observation or disclosure.
  - The exact words spoken by the child. If in Russian, the interpreter, or an alternative interpreter will give a written translation.
  - The name of the person to whom the concern was reported with date and time.
  - The names of any other person present at the time.
4. The Local Coordinator will then make the report available to the UK National Safeguarding Officer and the Charity Chief Executive on the same day as the suspicions/allegations are made. The UK National Safeguarding Officer and the Charity Chief Executive must confirm that a disclosure or allegation has been made; their duty is then to inform or request advice from the Local Authority Safeguarding Team.
5. The Local Child Safeguarding Officer will keep up to date documentation of all reports from a host/volunteer/interpreter and agree action points with the UK National Safeguarding Officer and Interpreter.
6. The Local Coordinator will keep the host/volunteer and interpreters informed throughout the process and provide support to the host/volunteer.



## **Procedure when a child or young person makes a disclosure**

1. Take the child seriously; this may be the very first time that the child has confided in a safe adult.
2. Reassure the child that they were right to confide.
3. Reassure the child that they are not to blame for the alleged abuse.
4. It is important not to appear shocked or disgusted if a young person reports something to you that you feel uncomfortable with.
5. Reassure the young person that disclosure was the right thing to do.
6. Do be comforting and sympathetic and tell them they are not responsible for what is happening to them.
7. Do not promise to keep secret anything that the child may disclose, however reassure the child that only essential people will be advised.
8. Keep any questions to a minimum, and immediately involve the interpreter of the child's choice.
9. Explain to the young person that you will need to share this information with the Local and UK National Safeguarding Officers who may need to take further action. Explain what the process will be and reassure them that you will keep them informed.
10. The interpreter and/or host must make a full report to the Local Child Safeguarding Officer and Coordinator immediately following the disclosure conversation.
11. As soon as possible it must be followed up with a written report, including date and time of the report.
12. Take no further action with the child or discuss further as a formal statement may be required later.
13. Under no circumstance may the disclosure be discussed with anyone other than the Local Coordinator, the local Child Safeguarding Officer, the UK National Safeguarding Officer and the Charity's Chief Executive.

### **Further Procedures:**

In the event of an allegation being made against a host, the children will be removed immediately pending an investigation by the Charity. The Charity has a duty of care to protect all children or vulnerable adults within the household or any children or vulnerable adults within the host's employment.

In the incidence of the allegation against a volunteer, the volunteer will be suspended immediately pending an investigation by the Charity.

In the incidence of an allegation against the Local Child Safeguarding Officer, Interpreter or Local Group Co-ordinator the UK National Safeguarding Officer and Chief Executive must be contacted immediately.

The Trustees of the Charity will have no hesitation in removing, and will send back to Belarus, an Interpreter found to be acting in a manner in direct opposition to this document.

The Local Coordinator and Local Child Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with the UK National Safeguarding Officer and Charity Chief Executive will seek advice and assistance from the Local Authority Safeguarding Team if appropriate, and will provide all possible assistance to that team if further action is required.

In the event of an observation or disclosure of abuse in Belarus, the UK National Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with the Chief Executive will raise the matter with the Local Authority in Belarus.

These guidelines have been prepared in the interests of providing maximum possible protection to the children visiting from Belarus, and also to protect the Trustees, co-ordinators, host families and volunteers working with Chernobyl Children's Project (UK).

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## **Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults in Belarus and the Volunteers who Visit Belarus**

These provisions apply to CCP (UK)'s activities in Belarus, namely to the visits by volunteers to the institutions and family homes.

Chernobyl Children's Project (UK) staff and volunteers are required to adhere closely to these guidelines in order to protect the safety of the children and at-risk adults who they visit in the institutions as well as the other volunteers in the group. **It is essential that all persons volunteering for visits to Belarus are given a copy of this document and also the Volunteer Contract.**

Interested volunteers should be encouraged and expected to attend the Information and Training Weekend in Buxton so that they understand what we are trying to achieve and what will be expected of them.

All volunteers must be given the Volunteer Contract and must sign it. They must also complete an application form and provide the names and contact details of two referees. References given on this form should be taken up. At the earliest possible date, all volunteers must complete a Disclosure and Barring Service form (DBS). (This replaces the CRB). This applies to all persons aged 16 years and over. **Individuals must then register with the Update Service**, so that we can check in the future whether they have any subsequent convictions.

For volunteering operations in Belarus, our **Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer** is:

Lynne Murphy (Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer)

Telephone: 07821 822727

Email: [lynecm@live.co.uk](mailto:lynecm@live.co.uk)

### **Guidance for working with young people and vulnerable adults if abuse occurs or is suspected**

If abuse occurs or is suspected, the procedures listed below should be adopted.

#### **Procedures for a volunteer suspecting or witnessing abuse, or having serious concerns:**

Contact the Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer **immediately** to discuss the issue.

1. The volunteer should first discuss the matter with the Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer. The UK National Safeguarding officer and Chief Executive of the Charity must be informed immediately.
2. Volunteers must understand that it is a **duty** to report suspicion or concerns as well as certainty.
3. The Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer will make a full report including:
  - The name of the child, at-risk adult or volunteer affected.
  - The date and times of the observation or disclosure.
  - An objective record of the observation or disclosure.
  - The exact words spoken by the person affected. If in Russian, the interpreter, or an alternative interpreter will give a written translation.
  - The name of the person to whom the concern was reported with date and time.

- The names of any other person present at the time.
4. The Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer will then make the report available to the UK National Safeguarding Officer and the Charity Chief Executive on the same day as, or as soon as practically possible after the suspicions/allegations are made. The UK National Safeguarding Officer and the Charity Chief Executive will decide on the most appropriate action to be taken.
  5. The Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer will keep up to date documentation of all reports from a volunteer/interpreter and agree action points with the UK National Safeguarding Officer.

#### **Procedure when a child or young person makes a disclosure**

1. Take the child seriously; this may be the very first time that the child has confided in a safe adult.
2. Reassure the child that they were right to confide.
3. Reassure the child that they are not to blame for the alleged abuse.
4. It is important not to appear shocked or disgusted if a young person reports something to you that you feel uncomfortable with.
5. Reassure the young person that disclosure was the right thing to do.
6. Do be comforting and sympathetic and tell them they are not responsible for what is happening to them.
7. Do not promise to keep secret anything that the child may disclose, however reassure the child that only essential people will be advised.
8. Keep any questions to a minimum, and immediately involve the interpreter of the child's choice.
9. Explain to the young person that you will need to share this information with the Belarus Volunteering and UK National Safeguarding Officers who may need to take further action. Explain what the process will be and reassure them that you will keep them informed.
10. The interpreter and/or host must make a full report to the Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer and Coordinator immediately following the disclosure conversation.
11. As soon as possible it must be followed up with a written report, including date and time of the report.
12. Take no further action with the child or discuss further as a formal statement may be required later.
13. Under no circumstance may the disclosure be discussed with anyone other than the Group Leader, the Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer, the National Safeguarding Officer and the Charity's Chief Executive.

#### **Further Procedures:**

In the incidence of the allegation against a volunteer, the volunteer will be suspended immediately pending an investigation by the Charity.

In the incidence of an allegation against an interpreter, a Group Leader or the Belarus Volunteering Safeguarding Officer, the National Safeguarding Officer and Chief Executive must be contacted immediately.

The Trustees of the Charity will have no hesitation in removing, and will return to the UK, a volunteer found to be acting in a manner in direct opposition to this document.

These guidelines have been prepared in the interests of providing maximum possible protection to the children and at-risk adults that the volunteers come into contact with when they visit Belarus, and also to protect the volunteers working with Chernobyl Children's Project (UK).

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