

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS' POLICY

May 2023

1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is made in accordance with Herefordshire County Business Improvement District vision to make sure every child and vulnerable adult can use Herefordshire County Business Improvement District area safely. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District works indirectly with children, young adults, and vulnerable adults on a range of its projects and programmes and has a responsibility to promote the wellbeing and safety of all people it comes into contact with. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District believes that it is always unacceptable for a person to experience abuse or neglect of any kind. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District is committed to practice that protects children and vulnerable adults from harm and recognises its duty to ensure that appropriate action is taken where a child or vulnerable adult is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm.

2. PURPOSE

- To safeguard and promote the wellbeing of the children and vulnerable adults with whom Herefordshire County Business Improvement District encounters
- To ensure that all employees and others covered by this policy understand the context within which checking with the Disclosure and Barring Service takes place
- To provide all employees with guidance on how they should behave if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing or be at risk from abuse or harm.
- To guide employees on how to respond to - and report - concerns
- To ensure compatibility with other Herefordshire County Business Improvement District policies.

3. WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY?

This policy applies to all paid employees, seconded staff, trustees, board members, volunteers, mentors, student's, agency workers, contract, and unpaid staff working on behalf of Herefordshire County Business Improvement District in any capacity and in any setting. Young members, young people on work experience and any children or young adults involved in the work of Herefordshire County Business Improvement District should be made aware of Herefordshire County Business Improvement District's safeguarding policies and procedures. Those with specific communication needs because of language or disability should have access to information in appropriate forms to ensure their understanding. This policy relates to all children from unborn up to 18 years of age and includes children with whom Herefordshire County Business Improvement District has direct or indirect contact with, for example children known to adults with whom Herefordshire County Business Improvement District works directly.

This policy also relates to vulnerable adults who need to be safeguarded from harm. In project proposals and tenders, Herefordshire County Business Improvement District's Safeguarding policies should be mentioned and attached where appropriate. Project information leaflets for children and vulnerable, parent/carers and local agencies should all have a statement on safeguarding with contact details as appropriate.

4. DEFINITIONS

As per the definitions set out in the Children Act 1989, a 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. It also includes unborn children. Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations. An adult may be vulnerable if they:

- Have a learning or physical disability.
- Have a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs.
- Have a reduction in physical or mental capacity.
- Is in the receipt of any form of healthcare.
- Is detained in custody.
- Is receiving community services because of age, health, or disability.
- Is living in a sheltered or residential care home.
- Is unable, for any other reason, to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Everyone has a right to be safeguarded from abuse or neglect. There is a legislative framework in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults through The Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004) and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. Further guidance that sets out the requirements and expectations on professionals to work together to effectively safeguard children include Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015), Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (2009) and What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015) Department for Education 2015).

Herefordshire County Business Improvement District does not have a statutory duty to comply with the key arrangements listed in Working Together, however it should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as well as vulnerable adults.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. While the duties under the Act are limited to regulated health & social care professional and teachers, non-regulated practitioners also have a responsibility to take appropriate safeguarding action in relation to any identified or suspected case of FGM.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 sets out the “need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The Prevent strategy is part of an overall counterterrorism strategy, CONTEST, and aims to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Organisations such as Herefordshire County Business Improvement District do not have a duty to adhere to the Prevent duty but do still have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people it works with.

6. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Safeguarding relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to protect them from harm. All staff should have a basic awareness of safeguarding issues.

This includes:

- Being alert to the possibility of abuse and neglect
- Having enough knowledge to recognise an abusive or potentially abusive event or set of circumstances
- Knowing who in the organisation to raise concerns with
- Being competent to take the appropriate immediate or emergency action.

If any member of staff has any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult, they must alert Herefordshire County Business Improvement District Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) immediately. If the DSO agrees there is grounds for concern, they must take appropriate action to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult. This may include contacting the relevant local authority social care service or the local police child abuse investigation team. If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger the member of staff who first becomes aware of the danger should dial 999 for the police. The above may include concerns about a member of staff, a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected, or a suspicion that an activity is taking place that could place a person at risk. If the concern relates to a member of staff, Herefordshire County Business Improvement District DSO should contact the local authority designated

officer (LADO) responsible for providing advice and liaison in such cases. This is a general guide as the role of the LADO is expected to change, additionally some local authorities will have new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. In any situation where there is a suspicion of abuse, the welfare needs of the child or vulnerable adult must come first even where there may be a conflict of interest (e.g., where the suspected perpetrator may be a member of staff).

7. WHAT CONSTITUTES ABUSE?

Abuse is a deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a person's safety, wellbeing, and development. Abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional. Abuse may not, however, fall easily into these categories and staff/associates are not expected to be experts in the field. Neglect also constitutes abuse but can be defined as failing to provide or secure a child or vulnerable adult with the basic needs required for physical safety and wellbeing. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District recognises that a person's welfare is paramount and that all children and vulnerable adults - regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief and sexual orientation or identity - have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.

1. Categories of abuse

Children and vulnerable adults can experience abuse in several ways. Forms of abuse that may affect children and vulnerable adults include:

- Abuse of trust
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child Trafficking
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Financial or material abuse
- Grooming
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Modern slavery
- Neglect
- Online abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Radicalisation of children or vulnerable adults
- Self-neglect
- Sexual Abuse

These categories can overlap, and an abused child or adult often suffers more than one type of abuse. Disabled children and young people are particularly vulnerable to abuse in any form. Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children. Staff must maintain high standards of practice, remain vigilant to the possibility of a child being abused and minimise situations of risk. All staff must ensure that the children they work with know how to raise concerns and have access to interpreters/specialist workers and other aids to communication if required. Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy. The same thresholds for action apply. Where concerns are raised about a child who has communication difficulties, appropriate support, interpreting services, and communication aids must be secured.

8. PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

8.1. Organisation duties and responsibilities:

- Raise awareness of the need to protect children and vulnerable adults and reduce risks to them
- Ensure that staff in contact with children and vulnerable adults have the requisite knowledge, skills, and qualifications to carry out their jobs safely and effectively
- Ensure safe practice when working in partnership with other organisations, in particular that they have in place adequate safeguarding arrangements, including appropriate policies and mechanisms to provide assurance on compliance
- Maintain an organisation that is safe for all staff, children and vulnerable adults and an environment where poor practice is challenged
- Ensure that all staff, associates, volunteers, young people and Board members who will be working with children and vulnerable adults' consent to vetting through the Disclosure and Barring Scheme where applicable
- Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken
- Ensure that the Chief Executive, members of the SLT and the Designated Safeguarding Officer are accountable for the effective implementation of this policy
- Ensure that all staff receive a copy of safeguarding policies, are trained in their meaning and application and understand their responsibilities.

These procedures are set within the wider context of Herefordshire County Business Improvement District organisational policy and practice, which promote children and young adult's interests across all aspects of their lives. All of Herefordshire County Business Improvement District work is underpinned by the values and principles that Herefordshire County Business Improvement District advocates.

8.2. Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is given high priority within Herefordshire County Business Improvement District. Specific responsibilities include:

- Providing support and advice to managers and all staff on safeguarding matters related to children and vulnerable adults
- Ensuring that all members of staff receive training on child protection and safeguarding as part of their induction, and on an ongoing basis where required
- Managing referrals/cases reported and working with Senior Management to ensure resolutions
- Carrying out referrals to the relevant local authority social care team where abuse of a child or vulnerable adult is reported or suspected
- Referring the matter to the local authority designated officer (LADO) where a member of staff is suspected of abuse
- Maintaining an overview of safeguarding issues and monitoring the implementation of this policy, in conjunction with the HR manager.

The DSO has responsibility for deciding whether to refer any reported matters onto the police or to the local authority social care service. Where possible, referrals should be made on the same working day and certainly within 24 hours. It is the responsibility of the DSO to decide whether the parents/carers (if applicable) of the child or young person should be informed of the referral.

8.3. Responsibilities of the HR Manager

- Supporting the DSO in the above tasks
- Auditing the operation of the policy and procedures
- Implementing a training strategy for employees
- Ensuring that the policy and procedures are implemented throughout the organisation
- Ensuring that the organisation's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually

8.4. Responsibilities of line managers

Individual line managers are responsible for ensuring staff comply with the expectations set out within this policy. Specific responsibilities include:

- Being the first point of contact for reports of concerns
- Ensuring that all employees and volunteers in regulated roles are subject to DBS checks where applicable.
- Reporting all concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
- Providing advice and support to employees reporting disclosures or concerns
- Working with the DSO to resolve issues.
- Ensuring that when working

8.5. Employee responsibilities

All Herefordshire County Business Improvement District staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults with whom they work. It is the responsibility of staff to promote good practice and minimise and manage potential risks. All staff – including volunteers, freelance staff, and associates - must be aware of the requirements within these procedures.

Action to safeguard:

Herefordshire County Business Improvement District staff have no powers to investigate abuse. Nonetheless all Herefordshire County Business Improvement District staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults and a responsibility to work closely and co-operatively with other agencies to achieve this. Staff may have a role as referrers, witnesses, or supporters in safeguarding processes. If a member of staff suspects that a child or vulnerable adult is being harmed by experiencing, or already has experienced, abuse or neglect and/or is likely to suffer harm in the future, they must talk to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The DSO will agree next steps including making any necessary referrals. If anyone other than the DSO makes a referral, they should inform the DSO as soon as possible. It is not the responsibility of Herefordshire County Business Improvement District to decide whether abuse has taken place. It is the responsibility of staff at Herefordshire County Business Improvement District to act if there is cause for concern, in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any action necessary to protect the young and/or vulnerable adult.

If a member of staff is concerned that a child is in immediate danger, or requires immediate medical treatment, they should call the police and/or emergency medical services on 999 straight away.

9. STAFF BEHAVIOUR

9.1. Code of conduct

Herefordshire County Business Improvement District staff working with children and/or vulnerable adults may be required to undergo awareness training.

Staff should not:

- meet with a child or vulnerable adult on their own
- ask overly personal questions, including those about age or appearance (unless specifically related to a work project, in which case it must be documented)
- send/ give out material that could be considered offensive, which includes material on social media sites
- suggest or imply a personal relationship could develop
- take an aggressive or bullying tone
- have physical contact
- offer or accept personal gifts

- travel alone with a young and/or vulnerable person

9.2. Website/online safety

Any project that provides service users with direct access to the Internet must have protocols in place to ensure safe use. The Internet is a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs and some adults use the Internet to try to establish contact with young and/or vulnerable people to “groom” them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District would consider staff involvement in such activities as gross misconduct, which could ultimately lead to dismissal and referral for police investigation.

9.3. Presence on websites and social media

Staff should take care when communicating with others online, particularly when identifying themselves as Herefordshire County Business Improvement District staff members and when in contact with children and vulnerable adults.

9.4. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District staff obtaining and accessing inappropriate text and images (see also Herefordshire County Business Improvement District internet policy) Many websites contain offensive, obscene or indecent material such as:

- Sexually explicit images and related material
- Advocating of illegal activities
- Advocating intolerance for others.

Staff members authorised to use the Internet must not download pornographic or other unsuitable material on to Herefordshire County Business Improvement District machines or distribute such material to others. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District would consider this gross misconduct which could ultimately lead to dismissal and referral for police investigation. In addition, users must not place any material on to the Internet that would be considered inappropriate, offensive or disrespectful of others. Disciplinary action will be taken against staff that breach this policy. Where this is done inadvertently, the user must escape from the website and/or delete the material immediately. They should also report the incident to their line manager, the DSO or HR Manager. Breach of this will be treated as gross misconduct. Where exemption is required, because of the nature of the work of the member of staff, permission must be given in advance by the line manager, Designated Safeguarding Officer and in consultation with the IT services provider. Children and vulnerable adults should not be given access to such websites.

9.5. Children or vulnerable adults obtaining indecent images or ‘sexting’

If a child or vulnerable adult reports to a member of staff that they have sent, or been sent, indecent images (sometimes referred to as ‘sexting’), they should discuss the concern with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The police and children's social care should always be contacted if:

- Somebody involved is over the age of 18 or under the age of 13
- There are concerns about the ability to give consent
- The images are extreme or show violence
- The incident is intended to cause physical or emotional harm
- There is reason to believe that the young person has been blackmailed, coerced, or groomed.

Details of the incident and the actions taken must be recorded in writing.

Staff should avoid looking at the image, video or message in question. If it is on a device belonging to Herefordshire County Business Improvement District, it may need to be isolated so that nobody else can see it.

This may involve blocking the network to all users.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING INFORMATION

10.1. Confidentiality and the possible impact on the child or vulnerable adult

In any work with children and/or vulnerable adults it is important to be clear about confidentiality. Confidentiality and safeguarding should be discussed with children and/or vulnerable adults at the beginning of any piece of work and reminders and information given from time to time, to ensure that they understand the processes and what responsibilities members of staff have. It is essential to be clear about the limits of confidentiality well before any such matter arises. While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the subject's consent, it is essential that staff respond quickly where they have concerns or suspicions of abuse. Any concerns about confidentiality should not override the rights of children and/or vulnerable adults at risk of, or suffering, harm. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District responsibility for protecting children and vulnerable adults means that, where necessary to protect welfare, it will breach confidentiality to raise concerns. Information sharing must be done in a way that is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the common law duty of confidentiality. However, a concern for confidentiality must never be used as a justification for withholding information when it would be in the child or vulnerable adult's best interests to share information.

10.2. Do not promise to keep secrets.

Should it become necessary to pass on information shared by another party this decision should always be discussed with the person in question and where possible their cooperation sought beforehand. Explanations of the reasons; processes; likely sequence of events; and who to contact for information or for support should also be provided. When a child or vulnerable adult makes an allegation of abuse, they may hope that the abuse will stop without further enquiries. They may fear the effect this will have on their family and may fear retribution from the abuser. They should be helped to understand why the referral (to the Designated Safeguarding Officer) must be made and what is likely to happen as a result. It is important to reassure the child or vulnerable adult, but they must not be told that their allegation will be treated in a particular way or that the information will be kept a secret. A record should be kept of any decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

10.3. Confidential Record-Keeping

Even if a concern has been discussed with a line manager/ the DSO, it is important that all concerns are properly recorded in writing whether or not further action has been taken. Herefordshire County Business Improvement District has a standard Safeguarding & Child Protection Report form for recording suspected abuse to help people record relevant information. This form must be used for all concerns and passed as soon as possible to the DSO. It is important that concerns raised are recorded accurately and in detail. All discussions should end with clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action. Where no further action is the outcome the reason for this should be clearly recorded. Some of the information requested by the form may not be available. Staff should not pursue the questioning of the child or vulnerable adult for this information if it is not given freely. There should be no delay in reporting the matter by waiting for all the information. In completing the form, it is important not to write speculative comments but to stick to the facts. Staff's opinion may be crucial, but it should be recorded as an opinion and any evidence stated to support these opinions. Records pertaining to issues of child protection may be accessible to third parties such as Children's Services, Police, the Courts, and Solicitors. Records must be kept securely in a locked place or file to which access is restricted. Managers have a particular responsibility in maintaining the confidentiality of these records and must ensure that the records, or any information they contain, are made available only to relevant parties. The transfer of information - verbally, through the mail, electronically, etc. - should be done in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

On and off-site activities

A Risk Assessment should be carried out at least 48 hours before any activity involving a child and/or vulnerable adult takes place. Safeguarding and Code of Conduct procedures apply whether the activity is on or off-site.

11. SAFE RECRUITMENT

11.1. Recruiting staff

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 sets out that it is an offence for an employer to knowingly employ someone in a regulated position if they are barred from doing so. Where there is regular contact but not 'regulated' i.e., supervised it is still possible to consider an enhanced criminal records check but this will not include a check of the barred list through the Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS). You must seek advice from HR. Some roles within Herefordshire County Business Improvement District, whilst not 'regulated positions', may involve working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Activities could include (but are not limited to):

- Convening meetings; holding focus groups; and conducting interviews with children and/or vulnerable adults. Where this is the case, the relevant member of staff will be required to have a DBS check carried out prior to commencing any direct work with children and/or vulnerable adults.
- Where a criminal conviction is disclosed by an applicant or through a DBS check/basic disclosure, the employees' line manager and the HR Manager, will consider this assessment objectively and, where the assessment indicates that the level of risk is too high to allow the individual to start/continue working in a particular role/activity, the consequences of this for the individual will depend upon:
 - The check concerned.
 - The reason for the check (that is, check for a new employee, a recheck for an existing employee in their current post or a check for an existing employee in a new post)
 - Relevant legislation
 - The post concerned
 - Whether the individual is suitable for other employment opportunities available within the organisation.

Possible outcomes include amended duties, redeployment, and withdrawal of an offer of employment or, where the individual started work before the relevant screening check was completed, dismissal. Safe recruitment practice of checking work history, identity and explanations for any gaps must be followed for all staff working at Herefordshire County Business Improvement District and partner organisations even if direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults is not part of their role.

11.2. Supporting staff

It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that the staff they line manage are aware of and understand the procedures and have levels of knowledge and skills commensurate to the level and nature of their direct involvement with children and/or adults.

All staff should:

- be supervised and supported in their work
- work to Herefordshire County Business Improvement District safeguarding procedures which are reviewed and updated as necessary
- receive training in safeguarding at a level appropriate to their work situation
- be able to raise concerns about poor and dangerous practice through Herefordshire County Business Improvement District whistle blowing policy

- have access to personal safety procedures
- have training and support as required to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

11.3. Allegations against staff

Any suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a child or vulnerable adult by an employee, trustee, volunteer, mentor, student, agency worker, contract, and unpaid staff must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or to the HR Manager immediately. Concerns about staff must be treated with the same rigour as other concerns. If there are concerns that abuse has taken place the DSO will pass this information to the Local Authority Designated Officer for investigation. The DSL will work with the member of staff's line manager and with HR. The DSO and senior managers will also need to refer to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and decide whether the member of staff should be suspended pending a full investigation.

If the member of staff is not happy with the response they receive from the DSO, then they should refer to the Herefordshire County Business Improvement District Whistle Blowing Policy. There may be instances when a staff member's performance or conduct when working with children and/or vulnerable adults will lead to Herefordshire County Business Improvement District disciplinary procedures being invoked. The Disciplinary Policy is available in the Employee Handbook. The nature of the concern about the staff member's conduct and or performance will determine how and what disciplinary action is taken. On occasion, a child or vulnerable adult may abuse another child or vulnerable adult. Safeguarding procedures should be followed in respect of all parties in those situations.

11.4. Reporting a serious safeguarding incident

If any member of staff is involved in an actual or suspected serious safeguarding incident, or if a serious safeguarding incident takes place within any of Herefordshire County Business Improvement District workplaces or working context, in addition to following the protocols set out within this policy. It is the responsibility of Directors to ensure that this takes place.

All suspected or actual safeguarding incidents should be reported, and immediate action should be taken to

- prevent or minimise any further harm
- report it to the police, if it is suspected a crime has been committed, and to any other regulators the company is accountable to
- plan what to say to staff, volunteers, members, the public and the media
- review what happened and prevent it from happening again - this may include strengthening internal controls and procedures, and/or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers.

12. COMPLYING WITH THIS POLICY

12.1. Expectations of employees

It is important that staff always work to a high standard of professional conduct and act with integrity, in order to minimise the risk of abuse from within Herefordshire County Business Improvement District. It is important to create a work environment where the risk of abuse is minimised, and children and vulnerable adults feel comfortable and safe. When incidents of abuse are raised or suspected it is important that staff have the necessary information and support and follow the procedures appropriately. Staff should make sure they have read Herefordshire County Business Improvement District safeguarding procedures in full. They should highlight and discuss any issues requiring clarification and any training issues with their line manager. Staff should make sure that they have a working knowledge of the different forms of abuse and possible indicators.

All staff should ensure that, when working with children and/or vulnerable adults, all colleagues, volunteers, and other staff from partnering organisations have the appropriate employee checks in place which must include a full career history, identity checks and references and adherence to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) where applicable.

12.2. Freelance staff and associates

It is the responsibility of the commissioning manager to ensure that these staff are familiar with this document and agree to work within this framework. If there are any concerns with the conduct of freelance staff or associates, these concerns must be raised following the steps outlined in this policy.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

If you suspect that a child or vulnerable adult needs protection or is at risk of abuse, please contact Herefordshire County Business Improvement District CEO who is the Designated Safeguarding Officer

The following legislation is relevant to this policy, either because it has influenced its introduction and/or its content:

- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Children Act 1989, 2004
- The Police Act 1997

14. LOST CHILDREN PROCEDURE

In today's busy environments and especially during events, it is all too easy for young children and vulnerable adults to become separated from their parents or carers. When this happens, it can be very distressing for both the individual and the carer. Most are reunited with their families very quickly, but this is not always the case.

See below for general Guidance Notes in dealing with this situation.

The following is designed to minimise danger and anxiety when children or vulnerable adults become separated from their families/groups/guardians in busy shopping/event environments and to ensure that they are reunited as quickly as possible.

If you find a lost child or vulnerable adult:

1. Use Radio/ Mobile Phone network to immediately make other event colleagues aware of the situation and your location. If there is CCTV in operation make contact so the camera system can be used to monitor your location. NO CHILD'S NAME to be given over the radio.
2. Use your Radio/Phone network to request a colleague to join you asap (to avoid being alone with the child).
3. Use your Radio/Phone network to Inform all security/ marshalling staff so they can help look for the family or carers of the lost child/ vulnerable adult.
4. Get down to the child/ vulnerable adults height. Show them your name badge or give your name and tell them that you are working here before trying to find out their name. Tell them that they are

safe and that you are trying to find their family/ carers. Make a note of any essential information they give you.

5. Carry out a brief visual search of the immediate area. This is immediate vicinity only as mostly, lost children/ vulnerable adults are near their family/ carers who are simply obscured from vision by displays.
6. Confirm the identity of anyone claiming the child and make sure the child can identify them. Only release the child to a responsible person. If in any doubt, contact the police.
7. If the child is not collected quickly within 15 minutes, keep reassuring them that they are safe and avoid confusing a distressed youngster. At this point make contact with the police and give the police all the relevant information regarding the child/ vulnerable adult.
8. Keep the child/ vulnerable adult in the area where you found them to increase the likelihood that you will find their guardians. Once the police arrive allow them to take control of the situation but offer to stay with the child/ vulnerable adult if you have built a rapport with them to help keep them calm.

If you find a parent/adult carer who has lost a child:

1. Reassure parent/adult carer that this is a partnership approach, and we will do all we can to reunite them with the child/ vulnerable adult.
2. Ask them for the following details of the child or vulnerable adult.
 - a. Name
 - b. Age
 - c. Sex
 - d. Ethnic origin
 - e. Hair colour
 - f. Build
 - g. Clothing
 - h. Location last seen
 - i. Who they were with the last time they were seen.
3. Use Radio/ Mobile Phone network to immediately make other event colleagues aware of the situation and your location. If there is CCTV in operation make contact so the camera system can be used to monitor your location and look for the child/ vulnerable adult or any suspicious activity within the town centre. NO CHILD'S NAME to be given over the radio.
4. Using absolute discretion convey clear descriptions and information gathered to send a message across the Radio/Phone network to Inform all security/ marshalling staff so they can help look for the lost child/ vulnerable adult. NO CHILD'S NAME to be given over the radio.
5. If the child/ vulnerable adult has not been found within 10 minutes call the situation into the police.
6. Once the police arrive allow them to take control of the situation but offer to stay with the parent or carer if you have built a rapport with them to help keep them calm.

Re-uniting Parent /Personal Assistants with Children /Vulnerable Adults

If a child or vulnerable adult is reluctant to go with a collecting adult then the adult should be asked for proof of ID and the police MUST be informed of the situation.

Once a child or vulnerable adult has been re-united with their collecting adult all security, staff and police will be informed immediately.

Lost persons log - All lost persons / children's incidents must be logged and filed at the event Management Office.

POLICY OWNER

The Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy is owned by Herefordshire County Business Improvement District. It will be annually reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and internal change.