

5.2 Personal Safety

It is the policy of Home-Start Bristol (HSB) that the personal safety of staff and volunteers (including trustees) is crucial to them being able to deliver support to families. Personal safety considerations, which includes any threat to their health and wellbeing, should take precedence whether working with others or in lone working.

Principles

- All staff and volunteers (including trustees) should be able to carry out their HSB roles and responsibilities in conditions where any risks to their personal safety are minimised
- HSB is opposed to any form of violence (physical or verbal abuse, threats, harassment of any kind) in the conduct of human relations and will work to minimise such risks of violence at work
- Those whose health and wellbeing is affected by any kind of incident affecting personal safety, should be supported by HSB
- HSB requires that all staff and volunteers take reasonable care to protect their own safety and that of others

Procedures for delivering those principles mean that HSB will:

- maintain appropriate staffing levels
- provide training to enable staff and volunteers to assess the risk to themselves and others and to anticipate, prevent or manage those risks
- provide reasonable financial, legal, external counselling and personal support to staff and volunteers who have been subject to work related violence or the threat of work related violence
- develop ways of working which minimise any risks to staff and volunteers
- provide insurance to cover personal injury and damage to property

HSB's commitment to volunteers:

- Volunteers will visit a family only following an initial full risk assessment by the co-ordinator.
- Volunteers will not be placed with families where there is a known risk to personal safety. A question will be asked at the referral stage to establish if there are any known hazards to personal safety e.g., dangerous dogs, violent partner.
- Volunteers will visit families only where all adult members of the household have willingly requested and consent to HSB involvement.
- Volunteers will be immediately withdrawn from visiting a HSB family if a potentially dangerous situation develops or may develop.
- Volunteers will be fully supported over any personal safety concerns.
- HSB will keep a volunteers' emergency contact numbers and use them in the event of a serious incident.

Responsibilities

Trustees will:

- along with the manager ensure that staffing is at appropriate levels to enable safe working
- support the manager to provide reasonable financial, legal, external counselling and personal support to staff and volunteers
- ensure that insurance is available to cover staff and volunteers at work

Staff will:

- assess risks involved in the provision of support to families both from referral information and prior to or at the initial visit including any concerns that might be present in lone working
- risk assessments will be reviewed and updated regularly
- ensure support and training is available that will help workers to identify risks and give them the confidence to exercise their own judgement in taking appropriate action, including asking for emergency services help where necessary, cutting short visits, recording incidents and reporting to the office as soon as possible – see Appendix for further guidelines
- the Manager (re staff) and staff (re volunteers) will make sure that staff and volunteers have appropriate measures available to minimise risk both in the office and when home visiting such as: current contact details, appropriate reporting systems, planned travel arrangements, diarised appointments, knowledge of emergency procedures, office First Aid and safety equipment, mobile phones.
- monitor and take action to minimise risks associated with a volunteer with medical conditions that might make them more vulnerable to harm

Volunteers will:

- report concerns about risks to their personal safety immediately
- follow the training and guidelines for minimising risk
- exercise common sense and trust their instincts to prioritise their own safety

HSB recognises that staff and volunteers may wish to take individual legal action against any perpetrators of harm towards themselves should HSB decide not to act.

Date of Board Approval: 17 March 2022

Signature of Chair:



Review date: March 2023

This policy combines previous policies P5.2 Personal Safety and P5.3 Violence at Work

Checked and reviewed March 2022

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Appendix - Further Guidelines

Home visiting

Being in others' homes could be a risk to personal safety and anyone visiting on behalf of HSB should be aware of the need to constantly assess that risk. Staff and volunteers should always follow these guidelines:

- Be assertive about any personal safety issues arising in a home. Ask for the householder's co-operation in their personal safety, e.g., keeping a dog in another room during a visit.
- Read the signs as early as possible. If a potentially dangerous situation is developing, leave as quickly as possible. Do not attempt to referee a domestic conflict situation.
- Contact the relevant emergency services if necessary.
- Consider if there are any child protection implications and follow child protection procedures.
- Report any incidents immediately to your co-ordinator/scheme manager, seeking support and guidance for your own needs.
- Consider, with your co-ordinator/Manager, the feasibility of any continued contact with the family.
- Make sure your co-ordinator/Manager knows of any medical conditions that might affect how you work.

Travel

Travelling to and from HSB families and other events could be a risk to personal safety. It is important that staff and volunteers:

- Ensure someone knows or can easily determine their whereabouts and their expected time of return to home or office.
- Try to use the same familiar travel routes where possible, avoiding isolated areas if possible.
- Keep activities confined to daylight hours wherever possible.
- Get help as quickly as possible if concerns about safety develop.
- Are aware of possible places of safety to head for if trouble develops.
- Keep body language confident and assertive, move purposefully and avoid heroics.