# Mearns Kirk Helping Hands

# Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (Policy And Procedure)

This Policy and Procedure outlines ways Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH) works to keep safe any vulnerable adults with whom we work. MKHH acknowledges its duty to respond appropriately to any allegations, reports, or suspicions of abuse.

This Policy and Procedure has been drawn up to enable Mearns Kirk Helping Hands Trustees, paid staff, and volunteers to:

* promote good practice and work in ways that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
* ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.

***Vulnerable Adults***

This Policy relates to the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults. Vulnerable Adults are defined as people aged 16 or over who:

* are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests from harm or exploitation.
* and are at risk of harm
* and because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.
* This may include a person who:

• Is elderly and frail

• Has a mental illness including dementia

• Has a physical or sensory disability

• Has a learning disability

• Has a severe physical illness

• Has problems with substance use

• Is homeless

***Principles and Objectives***

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are: the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; Care Standards Act 2000; the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003; the Adult with Incapacity Act 2000; Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; The Police Act – CRB 1997; Mental Health Act 1983; NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

***What is Safeguarding?***

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse wherever possible. In contrast, adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

***What is abuse?***

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation, and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender, or culture. It can take a number of forms, including the following:

• Physical abuse

• Sexual abuse

• Emotional abuse

• Bullying

• Neglect

• Financial (or material) abuse

***A Statement of our Commitment At MKHH:***

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is everyone’s business and responsibility. Our Board of Trustees, staff and volunteer team will work together in an environment in which no forms of abuse are tolerated, and everybody feels safe and valued. All reports of abuse will be listened to, taken seriously, and acted upon in line with MKHH policy. As a team we will look after one another, our members and anybody who accesses our groups and activities. Working together, we will keep the care and wellbeing of others at the heart of everything we do.

***How might we find out about abuse?***

There are different ways we might find out or suspect someone is being abused:

* Someone might tell us about abuse
* We might witness an event happening
* We may notice changes in behavior
* We may notice physical indicators of abuse (e.g. bruising)

***If someone tells you they are being or have been abused:***

* Stay calm and listen; be supportive and show that you believe what the person is saying. Your job is to listen and support, not to investigate. Do not ask leading or investigative questions, do not confront the alleged abuser, do not make any decisions on your own.
* Do not promise to keep what the person is telling you a secret. Let them know that you may need to share what they have told you; this reflects your belief in what they say and how seriously you take their safety and wellbeing.
* Speak to the Project Manager as soon as possible. The Project Manager is the Safeguarding Lead for MKHH and will be able to support and guide you. If the Project Manager is not available, you should speak to another member of staff in the first instance. The member of staff will be able to escalate your concern to a member of the Board of Trustees in the Project Manager’s absence.
* Likewise, if you witness abuse, you must immediately inform the Project Manager of what you have observed. Again, if the Project Manager is not available you should speak to another member of staff. The member of staff will be able to escalate your concern to a member of the Board of Trustees in the Project Manager’s absence.

For details on obtaining consent, information sharing, and confidentiality please refer to the MKHH *Privacy Policy*.

***Responsibilities of the Board of MKHH***

* To have read and be familiar with Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
* If the Policy is breached, the Board of Trustees will follow relevant MKHH Policies and Procedures (MKHH Disciplinary Procedure).

***Responsibilities of Volunteers and Staff at MKHH***

• To have read and be familiar with Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

• To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as Gross Misconduct and may lead to dismissal.

***MKHH will:***

* Ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and are adequately trained in Safeguarding.
* Notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is suspected.
* Cooperate with other agencies and the local authority in safeguarding investigations.
* PVG check all volunteers and staff that have direct access to vulnerable adults.
* To report concerns regarding a volunteer or staff member to Disclosure Scotland.
* Check at recruitment all applicants references, where references are requested.
* Ensure that this policy is kept up to date.
* Ensure any concerns raised are recorded on the appropriate forms and that all information is stored securely and confidentially for the appropriate length of time.

The Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Adults in Mearns Kirk Helping Hands is the Project Manager. The Project Manager should be contacted for support and advice on implementing this policy and procedure. If for any reason you are unable to contact the Project Manager or any other member of the staff team, and require immediate advice, please call East Renfrewshire Initial Contact Team on 0141 800 7850 or, Emergency Social Work on 0300343 1505.

If you or the adult being harmed are in immediate danger or require urgent medical assistance, you should phone 999. If medical help is required, you should phone NHS 24 on 111 or contact your doctor.

*This Policy and Procedure should be read in conjunction with the following documents:*

* *Raising an Issue*
* *Whistleblowing Policy*
* *Privacy Policy and Confidentiality Guidance (General Data Protection Regulations)*
* *Disciplinary Policy and Procedure*
* *Grievance Procedure*

***Vicky Attwood***

***March 2018***

***(Reviewed April 2020)***

***Liz Highet and Vicky Attwood***

***(Reviewed January 2021)***

***(Reviewed by MKHH Policy Review Working Group September 2021)***

***(Reviewed and amended by Vicky Attwood, March 2024)***