



THE NATIONAL HOUSE PROJECT

Safeguarding Policy April 2020 - 2023

Our commitment to keeping you safe

The National House Project's vision is to create a world where 'young people in, and leaving care, live independent and fulfilling lives'. Our commitment applies to young people and young adults that are a part of Local House Projects throughout the country.

We will do all that we can to make sure that your experience of our organisation is one that is free from abuse and that you feel respected, supported and safe. We will not tolerate abuse in any form.

The National House Project has a duty of care towards you and other young people or young adults within House Projects.

The National House Project believes that:

- You should be protected from abuse and neglect, regardless of your age, ability, gender, disability, nationality, racial heritage, faith, sexual orientation, identity or any other additional needs that you may have.
- Your safety always comes first; there will be times that we can keep information you share confidential but times where we will have to share this information in order to keep you safe. We will always tell you when we need to share information, who it will be shared with, and give a reason why.
- If you share information with us that may suggest you are at risk, we may need to speak with the authority that you live in (via your Facilitator or Project Lead who will notify your Social Worker/PA); we will expect them to take any concerns seriously and act on any worries that we raise.
- Everyone who works for, or on behalf of the National House Project has a commitment to make sure that young people within House Projects are safe.
- If you raise any concern about anyone working for or on behalf of the National House Project, we will investigate this quickly and fairly.

Reasons we may worry about your safety:

Staff working for, or on behalf of, the National House Project have a duty to keep you safe. However, we might become worried about you if:

- You tell us you are being harmed or tell us about an experience or event that has happened to you in the past that was harmful
- Somebody else tells us that you are being harmed or are at risk of harm.

- We are concerned about an adult's behaviour towards you.
- We see a change in how you look, or behave, that may tell us that there is something else that might be worrying you.

What we will do with those worries:

- 1) If you tell us that you are being harmed or abused, we will always listen carefully and take what you say seriously. We will always tell you what we will do next with the information that you have shared with us. We would have to notify your local authority about these concerns (either through your Facilitator/Project Lead, or directly to your Social Worker/PA).

If someone else raises a concern that you may be unsafe, we will speak to you about this, and again would need to speak to your local authority about these concerns. However, if there is a concern that you may be at immediate risk, or if speaking with you would put you in danger, we will raise this with your Social Worker/PA and/or the Police.

If you tell a member of staff you are worried about something but don't feel able to share the detail of this, staff will make sure you have the telephone details of a confidential service that you may choose to speak with. We will also alert your Facilitator/Project Lead to this to enable them to support you.

- 2) We will make a written record of what you have told us. What you say is important and it is crucial that we record the detail of this so that no part gets missed or misinterpreted by us. We will need to send the detail of this to your local authority as this may be needed if your concerns are investigated by the local authority and/or the police.
- 3) The National House Project have a responsibility to make sure that the concerns raised are acted on; if a concern or worry has been raised to your Social Worker/PA or the Police, we will check that something has happened in response to your concern. If we are not confident that this has been acted on, The National House Project will raise this with your local authority and if required, will escalate this to someone more senior within your local authority (i.e. a Team Manager).

Staff working for the National House Project

We have a Code of Conduct for all staff that work for, or on behalf of, the National House Project. This document makes it very clear to staff what the expectations are of them in order to make sure that young people involved in House Projects are safe and feel safe. All staff working for, or on behalf of the National House Project, undergo appropriate checks (DBS – police checks, reference checks).

National House Project staff will communicate with you in lots of different ways. As well as meeting you face to face, we may also communicate with you through telephone or text messages. On occasions, social media may also be used although this will only be through National House Project accounts, not private social media accounts.

It is important that National House Project staff:

- treat you and other young people equally, respectfully, with warmth and empathy, and listen to your wishes and feelings.
- behave in a calm, positive, supportive and encouraging way.
- listen and take what you say seriously; you should be involved in all planning for your project.
- report any concerns that you raise, even if you raise a concern about them.
- make sure that their relationship with you is professional.
- respect your privacy but always be honest with you that if you were to raise a concern that you were unsafe, they may need to tell someone about it in order to protect you.
- make sure that dangerous behaviour or bullying towards you or by you is challenged and prevented.
- respect your personal space.
- Are polite, respectful, don't swear or saying anything (using the written word, images or icons) that could be regarded as sexual innuendo, bullying or discrimination.

National House Project staff must not:

- have a sexual relationship with you. This is a breach of a position of trust and is never acceptable even if you are aged 16 years or above and can legally consent to a sexual relationship in the UK.
- swear or make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or inappropriate comments in front of you.
- show favouritism or gossip about you or another young person.
- work or visit a project/programme under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- smoke or vape in front of you.
- discuss detail of their personal relationships which makes you feel uncomfortable.
- use any type of physical punishment.
- steal, or condone anyone else stealing (despite how much the item may be worth)
- photograph or film you or any member of your group without consent.
- show any audio and/or visual material (CDs, DVDs, videos, photos, films, computer or games etc.) that are not age appropriate.
- invite you or any other young person to their home.
- stay alone overnight with any young person without the NHP or your LA knowing about it.

- share confidential information with you about The National House Project, its staff or any other young person that they are working with.
- Upload anything inappropriate online, use National House Project equipment to look at anything illegal online, or use their private Social Media accounts to contact you.

If you have any concerns about the behaviour of a member of National House Project staff, it is important that you raise this with someone you trust (maybe your Facilitator, Project Lead, Carer, Social Worker, PA) or you can raise this with someone in the National House Project directly.

Any concern that you raise will be taken seriously and will be fully investigated. Depending on the type of concern this may be investigated by the National House Project and/or the local authority and/or the Police.