

# The Hamlet

Overcoming Barriers, Creating Opportunities  
For Children and Adults with Disabilities



## Induction Training



## Volunteers

## Our Vision

To provide an environment for children and adults that overcomes the challenges of their disabilities and complex health needs and provides each with opportunities to unlock their potential.



## Our Beliefs

Our belief is that everyone at The Hamlet:

- should be happy and safe,
- is unique and valued,
- can explore choice and opportunities,
- is encouraged to unlock their potential,
- can communicate in their own way,
- and is part of the wider community.

## What we do

We believe people with disabilities and complex health needs deserve to be valued for who they are. This means being given the chance to explore choice, communicate, unlock potential and take new opportunities.

We work with babies to young adults at 29 years. This allows us, often over many years, to gain both trust and a real insight as to how best to create a person-centred plan to support each individual and their family.

### What makes us different?

- We go the extra mile
- We place an emphasis on fun
- We choose vibrant and innovative approaches which embrace technology
- We create a family feel

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## The Hamlet Children's Centre

Johnson Place provides a range of activities for children and young people with learning disabilities and complex health needs, some who may be very poorly. Play-schemes are planned with a range of activities and experiences which include trips out, sensory exploration, sports, cooking, music and art.



## The Hamlet Adult's Centre

Ella Road provides a range of activities for young adults/members with learning disabilities and complex health needs. We offer a varied timetable which is planned with a range of activities and experiences which include trips out, sensory exploration, sports, cooking, music and art, which changes on a termly basis, reflecting the needs and interests of our students.

## Working with those with Disabilities

Working with someone with a learning disability may challenge your idea of what communication is, and how you make yourself understood.



## Top 10 Tips for Communications

1. Find a good place to communicate in – somewhere without distraction. If you are talking to a group be aware that some people may find this difficult.
2. Ask open questions; questions that don't have a simple yes or no answer
3. Check with the person that you understand what they are saying e.g. "the TV isn't working? Is that right?"
4. If the person wants to take you to show you something, go with them.
5. Watch the person; they may tell you things by their body language and facial expressions.
6. Learn from experience – you will need to be more observant and don't feel awkward about asking parents or carers for their help.
7. Try drawing – even if your drawing isn't great, it might still be helpful
8. Take your time, don't rush communication
9. Use gestures and facial expressions. If you're asking if someone is happy or unhappy, make your facial expression unhappy to reinforce what you're saying
10. Be aware that some people find it easier to use real objects to communicate, but photos and pictures can really help too



## Policies

**The most important thing to remember when working with our children, adults and members is that we do not want to cause anyone any harm at all, whether physical, emotional or otherwise.**

It is therefore incredibly important that, as a team, we all take any issues very seriously.

Our Full policy pack is available on our website (<https://www.thehamletcharity.org.uk>)

If you have any questions or difficulties accessing our policies, speak to your line manager.

All volunteers should read and sign our essential policy document.

## Health and Safety

Health & Safety information will be explained to you by the person running the session or activity you are supporting.

This could include physical safety but also safety from the risk of allegations or inappropriate attention.

If you have any issues, questions or problems relating to health & safety, you should contact your manager straight away.

If you are supporting a person with a learning disability, then you will need to make sure that you are alert in monitoring their safety and taking appropriate action where necessary to keep them safe.



## Key Points:

- Keep yourself safe
- Take notice of information about health & safety provided to you, whether written, verbal or otherwise (inc. Policy)
- Do not take any unnecessary risks or be reckless with your safety or of others
- Do not interfere with any safety equipment provided
- Comply with training and procedures such as fire drills.
- To report any concerns or problems to your manager as soon as possible.

## First Aid

Any injury should be dealt with by one of our trained first aiders.

The names of first aiders are displayed clearly in each site or, if on an activity outside the premises, the staff member in charge will clarify who the named first aider is during the pre-session briefing.

If no first aider is available (or it is the first aider who is incapacitated) then you can administer first aid yourself - but only if you are confident in doing so and it is necessary.

If in doubt ring the NHS on 111 for advice or, if appropriate, call 999.

## Reporting Accidents and Near Misses

You should report any accident or near-miss, however minor, to a senior staff member.

They will ensure that it is recorded and that any hazard which may have caused the injury is dealt with.

You will need to give some details for the accident to be recorded.



## Moving and Handling

Consider what it is that needs moving (this should never include people, except in an emergency!).

Do you need to lift it? Can you get help? How can you assess how heavy it is?

If you have a history of back or joint problems, be extra careful.

Split large and heavy loads where possible. Avoid lifting large, awkward objects on your own; if you have assessed an object is safe to lift and move, keep the load close to your body, bend your knees and keep your back straight.

Do not lift above head height, and do not be afraid to say no to lifting or moving something – it is your responsibility to keep yourself safe.



# Safeguarding

## Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Please report any safeguarding concerns to the designated safeguarding officer at the appropriate site, or your line manager.

### Forms of abuse:

- Physical abuse—hitting, smacking, pinching, scalding, burning.
- Emotional abuse—excessive punishment, bullying, persistent ignoring.
- Sexual abuse—being coerced or forced into inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Neglect—persistently not having their needs met.
- Domestic abuse—any kind of abuse where the relationship between abuser and abused is domestic (i.e., parent/child, partners etc.)
- Sexual exploitation—sexual abuse with an organised element, often linked to extended grooming and criminal groups.

## Protecting Vulnerable Children & Adults

The Hamlet is committed to keeping the children and adults we work with safe from harm or abuse whilst in our care, and to report concerns we might have about a child whilst they are away from us.

- If you see or hear anything that makes you think someone:
- is being/has been/might become hurt
- is not being treated with dignity, respect and compassion
- is not having their needs met (food, protection, warmth, clothes, sanitation etc)
- is being bullied, abused, taken advantage of or ostracised • is very unhappy, lonely or depressed
- is behaving strangely or out of character

**Please report it to our safeguarding lead as soon as possible.**

## The Golden Rules of Safeguarding

- Go with your gut instinct – if something feels wrong, it probably is.
- Talk to the person; reassure them its ok to talk to you.
- If you are told something, reassure them it's a good thing to talk, and that you can help.
- NEVER promise to keep a secret; you might have to break that promise; in which case you will probably damage their trust in you.
- Don't share the information with anyone other than the person you are reporting to.
- Tell your / Line Manager/Safeguarding Lead as soon as you physically can. There may be a time-sensitive issue
- Take any advice you are given and act on it to the letter.
- Write down everything you have seen or heard. You will be given help with this
- Make sure someone, if not you, lets the young person/adult know what will happen next, and reassures them.
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If someone tells you something that makes you worried, don't agree to keep it a secret. Let them know that you might have to tell someone, and that you will ask the activity lead/supervisor/ safeguarding lead for advice.



## Social Networking

The Hamlet recognises that social networking can be a useful tool which has many benefits for our members / children / young adults and to us as an organisation – but there can be dangers & difficulties if it is not used appropriately and so we have a policy in place that we would like you to read.

You must put your phone in a secure place at the beginning of your session at Johnson Place or Ella Road. You cannot take photos with your phone while volunteering.

Follow guidelines for Out of Hours off site activities.



## Social Networking Guidelines

- Anyone under 18 is welcome to 'like' our Facebook page rather than become friends with a member of staff or volunteer.
- You should not be friends with anyone under 18 on Facebook at all, ever.
- If an adult member asks a volunteer if they would like to be 'friends', it is up to the volunteer if they wish to accept or not. This is open to scrutiny, and we request that you let a senior member of staff know if you accept a request.
- It is advisable to avoid this as much as possible.
- All staff and volunteers are expected to agree to our guidelines – found in our policy pack.



## Professional Boundaries

Employees and volunteers should understand the difference between befriending (a professional relationship made to meet the child / adults needs) and becoming a friend (a non-professional relationship which meets the needs of both people).

The relationship between an employee and an adult / child is not an equal one. Sometimes this may mean reminding children or adults of appropriate behaviour.

## Behaviour Management

### Norfolk Steps

All staff are trained in the 'Norfolk Steps' approach to behaviour management. Norfolk Steps is an approach that aims to reduce and manage conflict and build a positive school ethos. The training covers a range of areas, including conflict de-escalation, calm body language, debriefing and positive handling techniques.

Staff/Volunteers should always speak to children respectfully and calmly – reducing conflict and leading by example.

Staff's/Volunteer's job is to help children and always try to reduce conflict, not do anything that may escalate it

### Norfolk Steps Approach

Staff and volunteers will follow scripted phrases to support positive behaviour. A de-escalation script is a prepared script to be used when a child is trying to engage adults or others in conflict. It is important that all staff/volunteers use the same script or phrases.



## **Guiding and Escorting**

Sometimes it may be necessary to guide children. All staff/volunteers who have completed the Step On training have been trained how to do this in a way that does not harm the child or put anyone else at risk.

The most risk-free way is to form a 'mitten' shape with the fingers and thumb. Both guides and escorts should be performed by trained staff/volunteers if absolutely necessary and should be recorded on the appropriate form, along with an explanation of the reasons for it and what other strategies had been tried first.

## **Calm Stance**

When a child is in a state where conflict/distress is inevitable or already happening, adults must adopt an open body stance – 'side on' to the pupil and encourage the pupil to move by motioning with the hand which way to go.

Calm stance and escorting should usually be used in conjunction with the de-escalation script.

## **Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI)**

Very occasionally incidents may occur where a child needs to be positively handled to prevent themselves or others from serious harm. This is only ever justified in cases of actual harm (as opposed to potential harm).

Staff are trained in these interventions on a need only basis, and it is only these staff - as long as they have been authorised by Senior staff - who can perform such actions.

For staff who have not received this training, there may be occasions where they need to use restraint e.g. to stop a child running in front of a car, or other situations that involve immediate risk of harm. In all cases staff/volunteers must use their best judgment (dynamic risk assessment) and ensure that all actions are reasonable, proportionate and necessary.

Following the use of any intervention, relevant paperwork must be completed as near to the event as possible. The session leads will advise on the forms required and when appropriate to complete them.

## Confidentiality

All personal information, written, verbal or otherwise, should be treated as confidential.

All staff and volunteers must take all appropriate steps to keep personal information about our staff, volunteers and members confidential.

Personal information, however insignificant or small it may seem, should not be shared with anyone outside The Hamlet.

Gossip is strictly to be avoided; it serves no purpose and casts employees and volunteers in an unfavourable light.

It can hugely damage trust and render you untrustworthy by those around you. Be careful who may overhear your conversations and avoid leaving any written information unattended.

If a disclosure of abuse is made by a child or young person, it is important for everyone to understand that they must not promise to keep anything secret.

Decisions regarding how information should be shared will be made by a member of the management team. If you are asked to disclose information about one of our adults / children – don't. Pass this onto your line manager.



## Data Protection

You should not take home any information relating to any of our members.

You must return all information to your line manager at the end of the session and ensure no-one else has access to it.

The Hamlet Head Office, 221 St Leonards Road, NR1 4JN  
01603 765405

The Hamlet Children Services, Johnson Place, NR2 1SJ  
01603 766566

The Hamlet Adult Services, Ella Road, NR1 4BP  
01603 616094

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