



Safeguarding Children and Young Adults
Policy and Procedure

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1 Policy

1.1 Introduction

This policy has been devised by Action East Devon (AED) to comply with legal requirements for the protection and safety of young people under the age of 26.

We follow the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Ref. 5) and Working together to Safeguard Children, 2023 (Ref. 9) and recognise our responsibility under the Children's Act 1989 (Ref. 8) and section 175 of the Education Act, 2002 (Ref. 2), to have due regard to our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.

1.2 We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount;
- All children, regardless of age disability gender racial heritage religious belief, sexual orientation, identity, living situation, culture, language or economic circumstances have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- Working in partnership with children, young people and their parents, carers and agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

1.3 The key objectives of this policy and procedure are:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive AED services, including the children of adult members or users;
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm;

The policy and procedure applies to all employees, trustees, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students, and anyone else working on behalf of AED.

1.4 We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them,
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers,
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made,
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers,
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately,
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

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2 Procedures

2.1 Introduction

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child or young adult who accesses services provided by AED. As a service we recognise that all children have the right to be protected from abuse.

The procedures recognise that child protection can be a very difficult subject for workers to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with. AED is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all workers and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly.

AED recognises the role and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding children and young adults and is committed to complying with the procedures of Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP).

2.2 Legislation

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within the UK legislation and Government guidance and have been developed to complement the DSCP Procedures. They take the following into consideration:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Children's Act (1989 & 2004)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005 & 2019)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- The Data Protection Act (1998 & 2018)
- The Care Act (2014)
- The Prevent Duty (2015)

3 Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

AED will ensure that identified staff members whether paid or unpaid, undertake appropriate training dependent upon their role to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of child abuse (see Appendix A for definitions of abuse) and recognises how concerns about a child or young person's safety can come to light. For example:

- a child or young person alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe,
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received,
- a child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect,
- a child or young person reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago,

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- A report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or young person.

4 Guidance on how to respond to a person disclosing abuse

DOs:

- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child as if you believe what they are saying,
- Do tell the child they are right to tell you,
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame,
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why,
- Do tell the child what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening,
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately,
- Do write down everything said and what was done.

DON'Ts:

- Don't make promises you can't keep,
- Don't interrogate the child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this,
- Don't cast doubt on what the child has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject,
- Don't say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse,
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

5 Process for Disclosure

How to respond if you receive an allegation or disclosure:

REACT

- If you have a suspicion of neglect or abuse or if a young person or volunteer makes a disclosure or allegation you have a duty to react. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

RESPOND

- Your first duty is to assess if the individual is at immediate risk of harm. If they are injured or at risk of immediate harm, phone 999 and request the relevant service.
- You also have a duty to maintain your own safety.
- When a child or young adult presents a disclosure or allegation remember it takes a great deal of courage to disclose abuse.
- Reassure the person concerned.
- Never make promises of confidentiality. Remind them that you have to report their disclosure.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.

RECORD

- As soon as practicable, make a note of what the person has said using their own words in the disclosure form.
- Do not ask investigative questions. Use phrases like "tell me... explain.... describe..." In the notes, describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.

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- Use an injury map if necessary.
- Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate.
- Tell the child or young person what will happen next.
- Make sure you include any nonverbal signs or indicators in your report.
- Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times. Information must only be shared with your line manager and the DSL.

REPORT

- Complete an Incident Form and submit to the safeguarding lead as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
- When submitting the form, you must password protect the document and send to molly.mayfield@actioneastdevon.org.uk. Remember to send the password in a separate email or text message.

REVIEW

- All situations of abuse or alleged abuse will be discussed with the DSL.
- If a trustee, staff member or volunteer feels unable to raise this concern with the DSL then concerns can be raised directly with MASH (DSCP)
- If in doubt, or if you have an urgent child protection enquiry, please ring the MASH consultation line on [0345 155 1071](tel:03451551071).

6 Managing allegations made against a member of staff / volunteer

AED will ensure that any allegations made against members or a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker must ensure that that the child is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made,
- The DSL should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving the named person, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by an independent person,
- The named person should contact the local authority designated officer (**LADO**) on **01392 386013** or email ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk for a notification form for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the **Emergency Duty Team (0345 6000388)** can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the police.
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The named person (if appropriate) can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or M.A.S.H.
- Regardless of whether an investigation follows, AED will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal dependant on the nature of the incident.

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7 Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers will be given details of this policy as part of their induction as well as the health and safety procedures. All new staff and volunteers should be adequately supervised and their progress reviewed on a regular basis. AED will identify which staff and volunteers are required to participate in the relevant Child Protection training courses and be responsible for arranging this training and ensuring relevant updating takes place. From this training those staff and volunteers should be able to recognise signs of abuse and know the appropriate reporting systems for this. Information regarding the policy should be disseminated to all involved in the group – young people, parents and carers knowing there is a policy in place and how to utilise this. It should be the role of staff and volunteers to ensure this happens.

8 Photography & Filming

We will not permit photographs, video or other images of children or young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children. Should (AED) require photographs, video or other images of children or young people for our own promotional purposes (AED) will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform AED immediately.

9 A named person for Child Protection

AED will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be appointed in their absence. The names of the DSL and DDSL are:

DSL

Molly Mayfield

Telephone: 01404 549045

Email: molly.mayfield@actioneastdevon.org.uk

Deputy DSL

Chris Botham

Telephone: 07881 787072

Email: chris.botham@actioneastdevon.org.uk

The roles and responsibilities of the DSL:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The Named Person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

10 Recording and Managing Confidential Information

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If AED becomes concerned that a child/young person may be at risk of significant harm, then the organisation has a duty to refer their concerns to the relevant agencies / Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. Where possible this should be done with the child's/young person's consent, but, if necessary, such consent should be set aside in the interests of the child/young person concerned.

Staff (paid / unpaid) will be responsible for completing the incident report form (in Appendix 3). This is for recording concerns / allegations of abuse, harm and neglect and the person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete the pro-forma.

Access to those records needs to be limited to people in named roles who either need to know about the information in those records and/or who manage the records/files.

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11 Safeguarding Children and Young People

11.1 What happens next?

Once a disclosure form has been received, the DSL will contact the relevant members of AED staff and decide on actions to be taken. If further support is needed from MASH or DSCP then the procedure set out in [Working together to Safeguard Children \(DCSP\)](#) will be followed.

AED recognises that for staff or volunteers receiving or recording a young person's disclosure, the experience can be stressful and upsetting. We will endeavour to support staff and volunteers by taking time to listen to concerns and providing support and counselling where required.

After a disclosure is made, every effort will be taken to support the child/young person's continued involvement. Action plans and risk assessments for inclusion will be undertaken where appropriate.

Staff and volunteers must cooperate fully with any external support agencies.

12 Managing allegations made against members of staff or volunteers

AED will ensure that any allegations made against a member of staff/volunteer will be dealt with swiftly. Where a member of staff/volunteer is thought to have committed a criminal offence the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately. Any staff/volunteers who have allegations made against them will be suspended from work with pay whilst an investigation takes place. Suspension does not imply guilt. It is used to protect everyone concerned in a non-judgmental way.

Should the Police (or other authorities) initiate an investigation into the allegations, AED will delay internal investigation until external investigations have been concluded. The staff member/volunteer will remain suspended from duty during this time.

13 Disseminating Policy and Procedures

This Safeguarding Children and Young Adults Policy and Procedure will be clearly communicated to staff, trustees, volunteers, service users, parents and carers, contractors, and anyone working on behalf of AED. The DSL will be responsible for ensuring that this is done.

14 Policy Review

The Safeguarding Children and Young Adults Policy and Procedure will be reviewed annually by the DSL and the Board of Trustees. Any changes will be clearly communicated to all staff/volunteers by the DSL. In addition to an annual review of the policy and procedure, the Trustees will have Safeguarding as a standard agenda item for each Board meeting.

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Appendix A

Types of Abuse and Neglect

There are different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and different circumstances in which they may take place. The Care Act 2014 (Ref. 7) identifies the following as an illustrative but not exhaustive list as to the type of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern. AED recognises that abuse, neglect, or safeguarding concerns are rarely standalone incidents that can be defined by one term or label but rather overlap with each other.

Physical Abuse

Including hitting, slapping, and pushing, kicking, burning or poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also occur when a parent or carer fabricates a child's symptoms, misuses medication or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. This also includes bullying or cyberbullying and the exploitation of children. It may include non-developmentally appropriate expectations being imposed upon a child including overprotection, deliberate limitation of a child's capacity to learn or explore or prevention of a child's normal social interactions. Emotional abuse also takes place when a child is forced to watch or participate in the abuse of others.

Sexual Abuse

Forcing a child or young adult to participate in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of the activity or not. including rape, indecent exposure, inappropriate looking or touching (including kissing), sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts. Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The manipulation of a child or young adult by individuals or groups into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim wants or increase in the perpetrator's wealth or status. exploitation may happen via technology and may occur even when the act appears consensual. A common feature of the coercive nature of CSE is that children and young adults do not see themselves as a victim. All staff will be given training in the signs of CSE and must report any concern to the DSL as soon as possible. CSE is a serious crime which may have links to child trafficking.

Neglect

Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Neglect may start in pregnancy through maternal substance misuse. Once born neglect can result in serious harm through the failure to provide for the child's basic needs, abandonment or the use of improper care givers.

Children with sexually harmful behaviour (peer on peer abuse)

Children and young people may be harmed by other children. The management of children with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and AED will work closely with relevant agencies to ensure the safety of all service users and staff. Any staff, volunteers or trustees with concerns over a child's sexual

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behaviour, including known online behaviour, must contact the DSL.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This is a collective term covering a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It has no health benefits and can be hugely harmful to children and women. In the UK it is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2003, (Ref. 4). If suspicion of FGM appears in a girl under 18 this MUST be reported to the DSL and the police.

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties' consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse. Force or coercion can take place in a variety of ways including financial, emotional, physical or sexual pressure and may include physical or sexual violence. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014 (Ref. 6) make it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

Honour based violence (HBV)

This is where acts of violence are committed in order to protect honour or moral code of the victim's family and/or community. This can include FGM, forced marriages, nonconsensual adult circumcision and breast ironing. All acts of HBV are abuse.

AED makes all staff aware of the 'one chance rule' in relation to HBV, FGM and forced marriage. They understand that staff may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim of abuse and only one chance to save a life.

Radicalisation (Prevent)

Under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015 (Ref. 1) AED has a duty to train staff and volunteers on how to recognise, refer, and support children and young people who may be at risk of radicalisation or extremism. Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to the fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and the tolerance of different faiths or beliefs.

Radicalisation is the action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues. This may be direct through a relationship or through social media.

Modern Slavery

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and 'slave masters' use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discrimination

Discrimination is abuse which centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act, 2010 (Ref. 3).

Organisational Abuse

Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

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Financial or Material Abuse

Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages, or uses online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating or isolating another person.

Mate Crime (cuckooing)

A 'mate crime' as defined by the Safety Net Project is 'when vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act but still has a negative effect on the individual.' Mate Crime is carried out by someone the person knows and often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of Serious Case Reviews relating to people with a learning disability who were murdered or seriously harmed by people who purported to be their friend.

Youth produced sexual imagery and sexting

The practice of making and sharing films or images through social media, messaging apps, text or email has become increasingly popular. The growth in popularity and ease of production has led to a growth in sexual image sharing and distribution. Any such image or film involving a person under the age of 18 is illegal.

Definitions

Child is anyone aged under 18.

Child at Risk is a person under 18 who:

- has needs for care and support, and is;
- experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and;
- as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting. Abusers maybe those known to the child or strangers (e.g., via the internet) They may be abused by an adult, adults, or a child or children.

Safeguarding is protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

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Appendix B

References

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- 2 (2002). Education Act. London: HM Government.
- 3 (2010). Equality Act. London: HM Government.
- 4 (2003). Female Genital Mutilation Act. London: HM Government.
- 5 (2023). Keeping Children Safe in Education. London: Department for Education.
- 6 (2014). The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act. London: HM Government.
- 7 (2014). The Care Act. London: HM Government.
- 8 (1989). The Children's Act. London: HM Government.
- 9 (2023). Working together to Safeguard Children . London: HM Government.

Useful Contacts & Support Organisations

[Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures](#)
[Working together to Safeguard Children](#)
[Information Sharing](#)
[Making a request for support - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

MASH

MASH consultation line on 0345 155 1071

LADO

Telephone: 01392 386013

email ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk for a notification form for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation.

Outside of working hours telephone the Emergency Duty Team 0345 6000388

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