



# **Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy**

**Adopted by council: November 2013**

**Last review: May 2025**

**Next review: May 2026**

**The Trustees in adopting this policy fully understand their legal obligations and the importance of monitoring and implementing the policy within ECI.**

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## **1. Introduction**

ECl recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all adults at risk, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

[Under the Care Act \(2014\)](#), an adult at risk is someone over 18 years old who:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service, they may still be an adult at risk.

An adult at risk may be a person who:

- is old and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long term illness/condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is a carer such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse
- is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support

Although, anyone can be at risk of abuse or exploitation.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of ECl.

## **2. Purpose**

To provide protection for the Adults at Risk who receive ECl services.

To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a Adult at Risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

ECI wishes to take every possible precaution to protect all Adults at Risk with whom we work from the threat of abuse and/or exploitation. Any suspicion of harm will be responded to promptly and appropriately in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

We will seek to safeguard adults at risk by:

- valuing them, listening to, and respecting them,
- adopting adult safeguarding 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 Adult Safeguarding and good practice with staff, and volunteers,
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving Adults at Risk 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.

### **3. Responsibility**

- 3.1 The trustees of ECI are ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy is regularly reviewed and properly implemented.
- 3.2 The General Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding concerns are dealt with properly and effectively, and to maintain an appropriate level of knowledge and training.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of every adult to protect adults at risk from harm. The organisation will ensure that **staff and volunteers working with adults at risk** realise it is their responsibility to act on their concerns. The organisation will provide them with the support needed to follow through the process of raising concerns.

### **4. Safeguarding Adults at Risk Procedures**

All staff will know and understand ECI's Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure and will confirm their understanding and compliance with the policy upon induction and annually thereafter that they have reviewed and understand the Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and their responsibilities within this.

- Section 1      Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse
  - Section 2      How to respond to a person disclosing abuse
  - Section 3      Reporting a Safeguarding Concern
  - Section 4      Managing Allegations made against Staff / Volunteer
  - Section 5      A Named Person(s) for Safeguarding Adults at Risk
  - Section 6      Recording and managing confidential information
- 
- Appendix 1    Definitions of Abuse
  - Appendix 2    Detailed guidance on receiving an Adult Safeguarding Disclosure
  - Appendix 3    Report a concern flowchart
  - Appendix 4    Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

The Following procedures are covered in other ECI policies:

- Safe recruitment practices
- Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers
- Photography & Filming
- Internet, Social Media and Mobile Phone acceptable use
- Whistle Blowing Procedure
- Disseminating/Reviewing Policies and Procedures

## **Section 1 – Recognising the Signs & Symptoms of Abuse**

Abuse is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by any other person(s).

Abuse can consist of a single or repeated act(s). It may be physical, verbal or psychological. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent.

Exploitation is the deliberate manipulation or abuse of power used to have control over another person, usually for some form of gain. This can be for a range of reasons including personal, financial or sexual.

Abuse and exploitation can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to the person subjected to it.

See Appendix 1 for Definitions of Abuse

## **Section 2 – How to respond a person disclosing abuse**

DO'S:

- Do always treat any allegations extremely seriously and act towards the person as if you believe what they are saying,
- Do tell the person they are right to tell you,
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame,
- Do be honest about your own position, who you must tell and why,
- Do tell the person 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 able to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately,
- Do write down everything said and what was done.

#### DON'T'S:

- Don't make promises you can't keep,
- Don't interrogate the person – 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 person has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject,
- Don't say anything that makes the person 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.
- Don't put yourself at risk.

See Appendix 2 – Detailed guidance on receiving an Adult Safeguarding Disclosure

### Section 3 – Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

1. Contact Designated SG Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated SG Lead (DDSL)
2. Fill in the Safeguarding Concern Form: <https://forms.office.com/e/mH574rns35>
3. DSL will offer guidance and assistance in taking necessary steps
4. DSL will ensure full details are recorded on the confidential record for that client (Lamplight or Beacon). If we do not hold records for them on Lamplight or Beacon, then record information in Safeguarding Folder on MyECI.

See Appendix 3 – ECI guidance on responding to and reporting an adult safeguarding concern (Flow Chart)

**Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead:** Hannah Hulin / 07841530629

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Sarah Berry / 07531870203

*Please note that the ECI safeguarding team are available Monday-Friday during office hours.*

See Appendix 4 - Useful Contacts/Support Organisations for other contact info.

For Child Safeguarding Concerns, please refer to the [Child Safeguarding Policy](#).

#### **Section 4 - Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff / Volunteer**

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

1. The worker must ensure that the adult at risk is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
2. The DSL and CEO should be informed immediately. If the allegation relates to the CEO or DSL, the Chair of the Trustees should be notified instead. 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. See Whistleblowing policy for further guidance.
3. The DSL should contact Care Direct to discuss concerns.
4. 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 DLS (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 agencies.

Regardless of whether an investigation follows, ECI will conduct an internal investigation and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal, dependent on the nature of the incident.

#### **Section 5      A Named Person(s) for Safeguarding Adults at Risk**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be contacted for support and advice on implementing this policy and associated procedures. Should the DSL and Deputy DSL be unavailable then people should contact Care Direct directly for advice.

The roles and responsibilities of the DLS are to:

- ensure that all staff and volunteers working with adults at risk are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that an adult at risk may be experiencing, or has experienced abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred to Care Direct or to the allocated social worker/care manager where necessary;
- follow up any safeguarding adults' referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed;
- manage and have oversight over individual complex cases involving allegations against an employee, volunteer, or student, paid or unpaid;
- consider any recommendations from the safeguarding adult's process;

- Re-enforce the utmost need for confidentiality and to ensure that staff and volunteers are adhering to good practice regarding confidentiality and security;
- ensure that staff and volunteers working directly with service users who have experienced abuse or exploitation, or who are experiencing abuse or exploitation, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision;

## **Section 6 - Recording and managing confidential information.**

If ECI becomes concerned that an adult may be at risk of significant harm, then the organisation has a duty to refer their concerns to the relevant agencies (where the person is receiving care or support from a health or care service). Where possible this should be done with the person's consent, but, if necessary, such consent should be set aside in the interests of the adult at risk concerned. For example if the adult lacks capacity. Please see section 5 for more info on mental capacity.

Staff (paid / unpaid) will be responsible for completing the Initial Safeguarding Concern Form. 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 report a concern form: <https://forms.office.com/e/mH574ms35>

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.

## **Appendix 1 - Types of Abuse and Exploitation**

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is deliberately hurting or injuring an individual/s. This could include assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, and misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse, also referred to as psychological abuse, is the attempt to scare, control or isolate an individual by intimidation or fear. This can include threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber-bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

### **Self-neglect**

Self-neglect is when a person is unable, or unwilling, to care for their own essential needs necessary to maintain their physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing and general safety. It can cover a wide range of behaviour including neglecting personal hygiene, health or surroundings, refusal of necessary support and obsessive hoarding.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves a person being made to take part in sexual activity when they do not, or cannot, give consent. It may not involve physical contact and can also take place online. It can include sexual touching and all penetrative sex, but also things like indecent exposure and sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts to which the adult has not consented

#### Online Abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, for example through social media, or mobile phones. Online abuse covers a wide range of behaviours and technologies. It can include trolling, stealing someone else's identity, cyber-stalking and cyberbullying.

#### Neglect and acts of omission

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet an individual's basic and essential needs, either deliberately, or by failing to understand these. It includes ignoring a person's needs, or withholding essentials to meet needs, such as medication, food, water, shelter and warmth. Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to access appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

#### Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a personal or family relationship. The most prevalent type of domestic abuse occurs in personal relationships, but the definition of domestic abuse also covers abuse between family members, such as adolescent to parent violence and abuse.

It can include aspects of physical, sexual, emotional, financial, and psychological abuse to maintain power and control over another person. Coercive control is a type of domestic abuse that doesn't necessarily result in physical violence and is recognised as a criminal offence. Abusive behaviour can occur even after a relationship has ended.

#### Organisational (sometimes referred to as institutional) abuse

Organisational abuse is the inability to provide a good level of care to an individual or group of people in a care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in a person's own home if they receive care assistance there. It may be a one-off incident, repeated incidents or 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.

#### Stalking

Stalking can be defined as persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered and harassed. It includes behaviour that happens twice or more, directed at or towards you by another person, which causes you to feel alarmed or distressed or to fear that violence might be used against you.

#### Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory abuse is unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation. It can include insulting language, harassment, and denial of access to services or ill-treatment due to these personal characteristics.

#### Financial or material abuse

Financial abuse can involve theft, fraud and exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

#### Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is when a woman or girl's genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed for no medical reason. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting. It is usually carried out on young girls but can also happen to adult women.

#### Up Skirting

Up Skirting is a criminal offence under The Voyeurism (offences) Act 2019 and is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and/or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation distress or alarm. A person of any gender can be a victim.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

#### Types of Exploitation:

##### Sexual Exploitation

Adult Sexual Exploitation (ASE) is a form of sexual abuse that involves someone taking advantage of an adult, sexually, for their own benefit through threats, bribes, and violence. Adults can be exploited in many ways and anybody can be a victim of sexual exploitation, including men.

##### Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process through which people come to support increasingly extreme political, religious or other ideals. This can lead them to support violent extremism and terrorism. It may be particularly appealing to someone who is experiencing difficulties and challenges in their life.

##### Modern slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is the act of exercising control or ownership over another person and using this power to exploit them. It can take many forms including human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, debt bondage 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.

### County Lines

County lines is when criminals from larger cities expand their drug networks to other areas of the country - usually rural and suburban areas. Adults at risk of harm are often exploited to move and store drugs and money and regularly use coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons.

### Mate Crime

Mate crime is when a person is harmed or taken advantage of by someone, they thought was their friend. This can include a friend asking for money and refusing to give it back or emotional or physical abuse by a person who was thought to be a friend.

### Scamming

Scamming is when someone misleads or deceives you through unsolicited or uninvited contact in order to obtain money. This could be by letter, email, phone or through advertising. Victims may also be targeted at home, also known as 'doorstep scamming'.

### Blackmail

Blackmail is a form of exploitation. It is an act of coercion, often criminal, using the threat of revealing or publicising either substantially true or false, and often damaging, information about a person, to the public, family members, or associates unless certain demands are met.

### Fraud

Fraud is when someone tricks or deceives you to gain a dishonest advantage – usually money, goods, services or property. Everyone is susceptible to fraud, and every day criminals invent new ways of taking money from innocent people.

## **Appendix 2 – Detailed guidance on receiving an Adult Safeguarding Disclosure**

If an adult indicates that they are being harmed or abused, or information is received which gives rise to concern, the person receiving the information should:

- Take it seriously.
- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said, allowing the adult to continue at their own pace,
- Be sensitive.
- Keep questions to a minimum, only ask questions if you need to identify/ clarify what the person is telling you.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information.
- Ask them what they would like to happen next.
- Explain what you would like to do next.
- Explain that you will have to share the information with the ECI Safeguarding Lead
- Ask for their consent for the information to be shared outside the organisation.

- Make an arrangement as to how you/the Safeguarding Lead can contact them safely.
- Help them to contact other organisations for advice and support (e.g. Police, Domestic Abuse helpline, Victim Support).
- Act swiftly to report and carry out any relevant actions.
- Record in writing what was said using the adult's own words as soon as possible.

It is important not to:

- Dismiss or ignore the concern.
- Panic or allow shock or distaste to show.
- Make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Make assumptions or speculate.
- Come to your own conclusions.
- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Promise to keep the information secret.
- Make promises that cannot be kept.
- Conduct an investigation of the case.
- Confront the person thought to be causing harm.
- Take sole responsibility.
- Tell everyone.

You must:

- Make a note of what the person said, using his or her own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstance in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- When there are cuts, bruises or other marks on the skin use a body map to indicate their location, noting the colour of any bruising.
- Make sure the information you write is factual. You may wish to indicate your own opinion or a third party's information. If you do, ensure the separation is made very clear.
- Sign and date the report, noting the time and location. Be aware that your report may be needed later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

What might you notice if someone is being abused or exploited?

These are only a few examples of possible signs, none being conclusive on their own.

- Injuries – such as unexplained or frequent bruises;
- Being involved in a sexual act they don't want or didn't agree to like watching pornography
- Weight loss
- Dehydration
- Lack of personal care
- Bills not being paid
- An overly critical or disrespectful carer who may for example bully, undermine, say that a person is worthless
- Sudden loss of assets, someone may threaten the person to gain access to their money, get them to change their will for example

- Not getting to medical appointments
- Deference or submission to a suspected abuser
- Change in behaviour or mood
- Isolation from usual networks of friends/family/community
- Where a carer looks after the person in a way that is convenient to them, not what is needed, and this results in their health being affected

Incidents of abuse and exploitation may be multiple, either to one person in a continuing relationship or service context, or to more than one person at a time. This makes it important to look beyond a single incident or breach of standards to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Some instances of abuse will constitute a criminal offence. In this respect, vulnerable adults are entitled to the protection of the law in the same way as any other member of the public. When complaints about alleged abuse suggest that a criminal offence may have been committed, it is imperative that reference should be made to the Police as a matter of urgency. Criminal investigation by the Police takes priority over all other lines of enquiry.

Who can be the abuser?

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

## Appendix 4 – Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

|                                                               |                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ECI Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead                        | Hannah Hulin / 07841530629                                                 |
| ECI Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead                       | Sarah Berry / 07531870203                                                  |
| Devon County Council SG Adults Team                           | 01392 381208                                                               |
| Care Direct                                                   | 0345 1551 007 (8am-8pm Mon-Fri/9am-1pm Sat)<br>csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk |
| Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) (for urgent care concerns) | 0845 600 388                                                               |

## 5. Further Guidance

### Health and Wellbeing

Good physical and emotional health is key to living a fulfilled life. When someone is struggling to cope, either physically or mentally, it can lead to more serious issues and have a negative impact on their life.

#### Self-Harm Awareness

Self-harm is when someone deliberately hurts themselves. It can include cutting, burning, hitting or bruising, poisoning, scratching, hair-pulling or overdosing.

Adults who self-harm aren't usually trying to commit suicide or looking for attention (although self-harming can result in accidental death). Often, it is a way for the person to deal with overwhelming or distressing feelings and emotions. It's a way of coping. It is often a sign that there is an underlying problem.

Self-harm can be hard to understand but it is a lot more common than some people think.

The best thing to do is for the person to get help to deal with the underlying issues. Getting the right help is often the key to overcoming or managing self-harm.

#### Suicide Awareness

Each day around 16 people take their life in England and the UK. This link has information on how to respond if someone tells you they are feeling suicidal.

#### Mental Capacity, Decision Making and the Mental Capacity Act

We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted. The Law says that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information

- Communicate our decision
- Mental capacity is our ability to make decisions about all aspects of our lives. This could be affected permanently or temporarily by an injury, a serious illness or a disability. The following link has more information.

### **Person Centred Safeguarding/ Making Safeguarding Personal**

The legislation also recognises that adults make choices that may mean that one part of our well-being suffers at the expense of another – for example we move away from friends and family to take a better job. Similarly, adults can choose to risk their personal safety; for example, to provide care to a partner with dementia who becomes abusive when they are disorientated and anxious.

None of us can make these choices for another adult. If we are supporting someone to make choices about their own safety we need to understand 'What matters' to them and what outcomes they want to achieve from any actions agencies take to help them to protect themselves.

The concept of 'Person Centred Safeguarding'/'Making Safeguarding Personal' means engaging the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their situation in a way that enhances their involvement, choice and control, as well as improving their quality of life, well-being and safety. Organisations work to support adults to achieve the outcomes they want for themselves. The adult's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs must be taken into account when decisions are made about how to support them to be safe. There may be many different ways to prevent further harm. Working with the person will mean that actions taken help them to find the solution that is right for them. Treating people with respect, enhancing their dignity and supporting their ability to make decisions also helps promote people's sense of self-worth and supports recovery from abuse.

If someone has difficulty making their views and wishes known, then they can be supported or represented by an advocate. This might be a safe family member or friend of their choice or a professional advocate (usually from a third sector organisation).

#### **The Care Act's principles are:**

- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Where can you find more information?

This policy has been developed in accordance with the information developed by Torbay & Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership. For more information visit:  
<https://www.devonsafeguardingadultspartnership.org.uk/>

Department of Health:

'No secrets: guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse'

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4008486](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4008486)

Local Government Association:

Making Safeguarding Personal

<https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/social-care-health-and-integration/adult-social-care/making-safeguarding-personal>

## Policy Version History

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|                                 |          |

**Exeter Community Initiatives Guidance for responding to and reporting an adult safeguarding concern**



