Exeter Community Initiatives

Child Protection Policy

Adopted by council: September 2014
Last review: May 2026
Next review: May 2027

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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Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction and safeguarding scope

ECI believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

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, or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types from harm or abuse,

• working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

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 ECI.

Safeguarding scope – ECI understands safeguarding as working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children and young people (anyone under 18). This includes:

- protecting children from maltreatment and impairment of health or development (including neglect and abuse);
- harm outside the home, including child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines and other group-based exploitation;
- online harms (for example grooming, coercion, and sexual abuse facilitated online);
- domestic abuse (including coercive control) and abusive behaviour in young people's own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse);
- child-on-child abuse (including harmful sexual behaviour);
- honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Working in school settings – When ECI staff/volunteers deliver activity on school premises or with school-commissioned cohorts, we will work in partnership with the school/college safeguarding arrangements. This means we will **always** share safeguarding concerns with the school's/college's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (in line with the setting's procedures) as well as following ECI's internal reporting route. Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, we will contact emergency services and/or children's social care without delay.

2. Purpose of the policy

To provide protection for the children and young people who receive ECI services, including the children of adult members or users,

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

ECI wishes to take every possible precaution to protect all children and young people with whom we work from the threat of child abuse. 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 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.

3. Responsibility and governance

The trustees of ECI are ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy is regularly reviewed and properly implemented.

The CEO and Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding concerns are dealt with properly and effectively, and that they maintain an appropriate level of knowledge and training.

It is the responsibility of every adult to protect children from harm. ECI will ensure that staff and volunteers working with children 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.

ECI will appoint a **Trustee Safeguarding Lead** (role-based) to provide oversight and challenge, ensure safeguarding is a standing agenda item, and assure themselves that safeguarding systems are effective.

The DSL will provide regular safeguarding reporting to the CEO and Trustees (appropriately anonymised), including themes, learning, training compliance, and any partnership issues with schools/children's services.

The Trustees are responsible for deciding whether a safeguarding matter is **serious and reportable to the Charity Commission** (Serious Incident Reporting) and for

ensuring appropriate reports are made promptly, alongside any referrals to statutory agencies.

ECI will review safeguarding practice after significant incidents or learning is published by safeguarding partners (for example safeguarding practice reviews), and will update procedures, training and risk assessments accordingly.

4. Child Protection Procedures

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who accesses the services provided by ECI. ECI is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility. The procedures recognise that child protection can be a very difficult subject for workers to deal with. The aim of this policy is to provide guidelines to enable all workers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a young person.

- 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 Child Protection
- Section 6 Recording and managing confidential information

- Appendix 1 Definitions of Abuse
- Appendix 2 Useful Contacts/Support Organisations
- Appendix 3 Incident Report Form

The Following procedures are covered in other ECI policies, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers
- Professional Boundaries Policy
- Communication and Media Policy
- IT Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

Section 1 - Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

ECI 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 and recognise 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,

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

See Appendix 1 for Definitions of Abuse

Section 2 - How to respond to a person disclosing abuse

Questions are sometimes necessary to clarify safeguarding concerns. If you need to ask questions ensure to:

- Ask open questions such as 'what', 'where' 'who' and 'how'.
- Remember TED: Tell, Explain and Describe
- Avoid closed questions that elicit 'yes' or 'no' responses
- Avoid 'why' questions
- Avoid multiple questions in one sentence
- Avoid leading or probing questions

DO:

- Do always treat any allegations extremely seriously and act 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 must 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 able to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately
- Do write down everything said and what was done

DON'T:

- Don't make promises you can't keep, and never promise to keep information confidential between you
- 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

Section 3 - Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

1. Contact Designated SG Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated SG Lead (DDSL) who are named below
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 ensure full records are kept on the Safeguarding Concern Form on MyECI.

Designated Child Safeguarding Lead: Daisy Binnie / 07842 019431

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ellie Taylor / 07599 907020

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

Escalation and out-of-hours guidance: If you cannot reach the ECI DSL/DDSL and you believe a child is at risk of harm, you must not delay. In school settings, inform the school/college DSL as soon as possible (in line with the setting's procedures). Where there is immediate danger, call **999**. Where urgent safeguarding advice is required outside office hours, use the local authority Emergency Duty Team (see Appendix 2) or police as appropriate, and then update the ECI DSL at the earliest opportunity.

See Appendix 2 - Useful Contacts/Support Organisations for other contact info.

For Adult Safeguarding Concerns, please refer to the Adult Safeguarding Policy. This applies to any person from the day of their 18th Birthday.

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 child 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 DSL or CEO, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by an independent person. See the ECI Whistleblowing policy for further guidance.
3. The DSL should contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) at: LADO contact form or email childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team (0345 6000388) can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency arising, the police.
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 on the ECI Safeguarding Log: Safeguarding Concern Log – Fill in form It is important that the report is an accurate description. The DSL (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 Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

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 dependant on the nature of the incident.

Section 5 - A Named Person(s) for Child Protection

Every organisation that works with children or young people should have in place a named person who is responsible for dealing with child protection issues that may arise. A deputy must be made available in their absence. These individuals must be trained in child protection and their responsibilities clearly stated within your procedures.

ECI has an appointed individual(s) who are responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers to consult with. The named persons for Child Protection within ECI are:

Designated Child Safeguarding Lead: Daisy Binnie / 07842 019431

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ellie Taylor / 07599 907020

The role and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:

- 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.

Section 6 - Recording and managing confidential information.

If ECI 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 (MASH). Where appropriate, we will be transparent with children and families about what information we are sharing and why. We will seek consent where it is safe and appropriate to do so; however, **consent is not required** where seeking consent would place a child at increased risk, undermine the prevention/detection of crime, or where there is another lawful basis to share information to safeguard a child. Protecting a child from harm takes priority over privacy where necessary.

Information sharing: Staff and volunteers should share information in a timely way with the right people, recording the rationale for decisions. Information shared should be necessary, proportionate, accurate, relevant, timely and secure. If you are unsure whether to share information, seek advice from the DSL/DDSL; in urgent situations, act to protect the child and seek advice afterwards.

Staff (paid / unpaid) will be responsible for completing the ECI Safeguarding Concern Log. Link here: Safeguarding Concern Log – Fill in 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 form.

Access to those records is limited to the Designated Safeguarding Leads who need to know about the information in those records and who manage the records.

5. Further Guidance

Prevent Duty Guidance

ECI will adhere to the Prevent Duty Guidance specified in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015. This will include:

- Safeguarding children at risk of being drawn into, or harmed by extremism or terrorism;
- Supervision of visitors;
- Promotion of fundamental British values;
- Staff training to enable them to identify children at risk and to challenge extremists, including when to refer to other authorities.
- https://www.devon.gov.uk/support-schools-settings/safeguarding/guidance-policy-and-tools-2/safeguarding-one-minute-guides/safeguarding-no-10-prevent/

Recommendations by Department of Education

The Prevent Duty guidance from the Department of Education (June 2015) highlights four principle areas for action and ECI will follow these in implementing the guidance within the organisation. These are:

- **Risk Assessment** – further guidance can be found in the statutory guidance - Working together to safeguard children and Keeping children safe in education; www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2
- **Working in Partnership** - further guidance can be sought from Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) www.devonscp.org.uk/
- **Staff Training** – further guidance can be found from The Home Office, which has developed a core training product for this purpose – Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) www.educateagainsthate.com/prevent-training/
- **IT Policies** - further guidance on internet safety can be found from UK Safer Internet Centre website. https://saferinternet.org.uk/

Modern Slavery Act 2015/ Protecting Children from Criminal Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery 2018

ECI will adhere to the recommendations specified in the Modern Slavery Act addendum Protecting Children from Criminal Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery 2018, namely:

- Using the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) system to report incidence of modern slavery victims;
- Raising awareness, including the understanding that all children are vulnerable to exploitation;
- Staying with children who do not want to engage;

- Creating consistency, stability and respectful communication with children who have been exploited, as this has the most impact in supporting effective interventions;
- Working together with other local partners to understand and manage CCE risk
- Further information can be found here: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-trafficking-and-modern-slavery

Appendix 1 - Definitions of Abuse

Neglect: Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional Abuse: Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Physical Abuse: May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. In each UK nation, the age at which people can legally consent to sexual activity (also known as the age of consent) is 16-years-old.

Appendix 2 - Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

If you have concerns that a child is being harmed because of abuse or neglect, you must not keep these concerns to yourself. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

You need to ensure that you either speak to your own organisations 'Designated Safeguarding Officer' or the Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) both of whom can listen to and record your concern, and then take appropriate action.

In Devon, these are the numbers that you can ring for advice and to make a referral:

ECI Designated Child Safeguarding Lead	Daisy Binnie / 07842 019431
ECI Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ellie Taylor / 07599 907020
Devon Front Door – MASH and Early Help	https://www.devonscp.org.uk/training-and-resources/making-a-mash-contact/mash-contact-tips/ If the child already has an allocated social worker or early help practitioner you should contact them directly in the first instance before submitting a request. If you are unsure as to the name or contact details, please call the Customer Service Centre on 0345 144 1078. You can also call this number for advice on what to do.
Devon Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)	If you want to contact the LADO, please complete the LADO contact form or email childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
Devon Emergency Duty Team	Front Door on 0345 155 1071 Out of hours contact number: 0345 6000 388
NSPCC 24 hour National Child Protection Helpline	You can contact our Helpline by calling 0808 800 5000 between 10am–4pm Monday to Friday or emailing help@NSPCC.org.uk any time for free. You have the option to remain anonymous.

If you have reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of harm, ring the police on 999.