

EXETER DISPENSARY CHARITY(EDC)

Child Protection & Vulnerable Persons Policy Statement & Procedures- 21 November 2023

EDC 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.

The purpose of the policy:

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

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 when appropriate
- 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.

Procedures

Introduction

These procedures have been designed to ensure that the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who accesses the services provided by **EDC**. Although EDC normally has no direct contact with children, a situation may arise where we become aware that a child/young person is being abused. The procedures recognise that child protection can be a very difficult subject for staff/ volunteers 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. EDC 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 staff/volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

EDC is committed to equal opportunities and cultural diversity. We promote relationships with our diverse partners. **EDC** does not tolerate discrimination for any reason including religion, background, gender, age, sexual orientation or race.

Procedures:

Section 1	Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse
Section 2	Guidance on how to respond to a person disclosing abuse
Section 3	Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff / Volunteer
Section 4	Safe recruitment practices
Section 5	Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers
Section 6	Internet, Social Media and Mobile Phone acceptable use
Section 7	Named Persons for Child Protection
Section 8	Recording and managing confidential information
Section 9	Whistle Blowing Procedure
Section 10	Disseminating/Reviewing Policies and Procedures
Appendix 1	Definitions of Abuse
Appendix 2	Useful Contacts/Support Organisations
Appendix 3	Incident Report Form

Section 1 - Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

EDC will ensure that volunteers and trustees, whether paid or unpaid, are aware of the Child Protection Policy which includes definitions of abuse and the signs and 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.

Also see Appendix 1 for Definitions of Abuse

Section 2 Guidance on how to respond to a person disclosing abuse

DO's:

- 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'T's:

- 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.

Section 3 Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff / Volunteer

EDC will ensure that any allegations made against a member of staff/Volunteer will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- ∅ The Designated Person for child protection 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** for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the **Emergency Duty Team (0845 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. (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)**
- ∅ Regardless of whether an investigation follows, **EDC** will ensure that an internal investigation takes place. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal dependant on the nature of the incident.

Section 4 Safe recruitment practices

EDC will use the following checklist for safer recruitment:

1. Write a clear job/role description (what tasks the applicant will do) and a role profile (what skills the person will be expected to have).
2. Use application forms to assess the candidate's suitability if there is more than one applicant for the role. This makes it easier to compare the experience of candidates and helps you to get all of the important information you need to ask.
3. Make it clear that your organisation has a commitment to safeguarding and protecting children.
4. Where possible have a face-to-face interview with pre-planned and clear questions. Include a question about whether they have any criminal convictions, cautions, other legal restrictions or pending cases that might affect their suitability to work with children.
5. Check the candidate's identity by asking them to bring photographic ID.
6. Check the candidate actually holds any relevant qualifications they say they have.
7. Apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service check if appropriate to the individual's role.
8. Take up references. Ask specifically about an individual's suitability to work with children.
9. Provide a copy of your organisation's child protection policy and procedures.

Section 5 Induction 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. From this induction 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 – all trustees and volunteers, knowing there is a policy in place and how to utilise this. It should be the role of the Chair to make sure this happens.

Section 6 Internet, Social Media and Mobile Phone acceptable use

EDC understand the importance of emerging technologies for children's education and personal development but recognise that safeguards need to be in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times.

Use of the internet by hirers, employees, volunteers and management committee members of **EDC** is permitted and encouraged where its use supports the aims and objectives of the organisation.

In respect of use of ICT, social media and the internet **EDC** requires staff/volunteers and management committee members to:

- comply with current legislation ,
- use the internet in an acceptable way ,
- do not create unnecessary business risk to the **EDC** by their misuse of the internet .

Section 7 - A Named Person 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 have received training in child protection and their responsibilities clearly stated within your procedures. **EDC** has appointed individuals 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 **EDC** are:

Designated Person for Child Protection

Name: **Julia Wilson- Vice Chair**

Mobile number: 07914613249

If she is not contactable for any reason or consider she has a conflict of interest then the Chair will step into the role.

Name: Angus McNicol

Mobile number. 0798 0623659

The role and responsibilities of the named persons are:

- To ensure that all staff/volunteers 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 Persons 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 to **EDC**.

Section 8 - Recording and managing confidential information.

If **EDC** 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.

Section 9 Whistle Blowing Procedure (Procedures to deal with in house allegations against other workers/volunteers)

It can be very difficult to report concerns about a member of staff or volunteer but all staff and volunteers have a duty to do this. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from suspected abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately.

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with the Chair or Safeguarding Officer.

Should any uncertainty about how to proceed if there was a whistle blowing situation and you need immediate advice contact the Devon **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** on **0345 155 1071** or email mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

If you would like to know more about safeguarding procedures and the Devon Safeguarding Children Board visit <http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/>

Section 10 Disseminating/Reviewing Policies and Procedures

EDC will review this policy on an annual basis and this will be signed by Chair of Trustee or his/her deputy when the revised policy has been accepted. Any changes/amendments will be clarified and shared with staff and where significant changes appear these must be relayed to parents/carers.

Date that the policy was last amended / reviewed by the Trustee Board:

Signature of the Chair:

Angus McNicol

Dated 21 November 2023

Date of the next Review:

Appendix 1

Definitions of Abuse

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

Appendix 2

Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

If you have concern that a child is being harmed as a result 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:

- Devon M.A.S.H Contact Details

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (M.A.S.H)
PO Box 723
Exeter
EX1 9QS
Tel: 0345 155 1071
E-mail: mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk
Fax: 01392 448951

- Devon Early Help Team 0345 1551071
- Devon Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) 01392 384964
- Devon Emergency Duty Team 0345 6000388
- If you have reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of harm, ring the police on 999
- NSPCC 24-hour National Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Appendix 3

Initial Issue/Concern Reporting Form

Please provide information on this form, if you have a concern or an issue relating to someone or something at your charity.

Name of child/adult:	Male/Female Age/Date of Birth:
Address:	
What is the concern? (include details of the person whose behaviour has raised concerns)	
When and where did this concern/incident occur?	
Do you have any other comments?	
Your name:	EDC Role:
Address:	Email address: Mobile Phone No: