

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure

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Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure



Staffordshire
Safeguarding Children Board



Contents

Item	Description	Page
1	Section 1 - Policy	
1.1	Introduction	4
1.2	Policy Statement	4
1.3	Principles	5
2	Section 2 - Procedure Guide	
2.1	Introduction	5
2.2	Recognition of Abuse including Neglect and Bullying	5
2.3	Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations	5
2.4	Responding to Concerns	7
2.5	Consent	8
2.6	Responding to allegations against Staff and Volunteers	8

Section 1- Policy

1.1 Introduction

All children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity, and to be treated with dignity and respect.

East Staffordshire Borough Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care for children and adults across its services. The Council are committed to ensuring that all children and adults, at risk, are protected and kept safe from harm, whilst engaged in Council services.

The purpose of this policy and its associated procedures is to help protect all children and adults, that come into contact with the Council in East Staffordshire, as well as to protect staff, elected members and volunteers.

1.2 Policy Statement and Scope

East Staffordshire Borough Council has a legal responsibility to safeguard, promote wellbeing and protect children and adults.

This will be through:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and adults.
- Raising the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to children and adults throughout the Council.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and adults to protect them from harm.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all services, which protects all parties and reduces the risk of abuse or allegations of abuse.
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, elected members and volunteers.
- Adoption of safeguarding best practice to protect children and adults at risk from abuse, as well as minimising any risks to themselves.
- Responding promptly to any suspicions or allegations of misconduct/abuse of children/adults in line with the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership (SSAP) policies and procedures.
- Through staff, members and volunteers adopting and abiding by the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect Policy, codes of conduct and associated procedures.
- Reviewing and evaluating this policy on an annual basis or in line with best practice, changing legislation, organisational requirements and service delivery.
- Ensuring representatives (including partnerships with private, voluntary or contracted organisations) of **East Staffordshire Borough Council** who have contact with children, young people or adults are subject to safer recruitment procedures.

1.3 Principles

This policy and supporting procedures are based on the following principles

- The welfare of children and adults is the primary concern.
- All children and adults irrespective of their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/ or sexual orientation have the right to protection from abuse and harm.
- It is everyone's responsibility to act on any concerns about abuse in order that children and adults are appropriately safeguarded.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please refer to Appendix B

Section 2- Procedure Guide

2.1 Introduction

This set of procedures and guidelines sets out how **East Staffordshire Borough Council** will implement the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect Policy. It is to be used by all staff that come into direct contact with those who fall under the definition of the procedure, or those who are responsible for managing services that affect these individuals or groups.

The procedure guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the policy document, and other supporting individual service procedures. See appendices for detail.

2.2 Recognition of Abuse including Neglect and Bullying

Recognising abuse is not easy, and it is not the responsibility of Council staff, elected members or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if there is significant risk. The authority does, however, have a responsibility to act if abuse is suspected.

Abuse, including neglect is a form of maltreatment of a child or adult. Somebody may abuse a child or adult by inflicting harm, by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example via the internet. They may also be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children.

Types and Signs of Abuse- Please refer to Appendix C

2.3 Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Council employees/ elected members/ volunteers may come across cases of suspected abuse either through direct or indirect contact with children and adults, for example, running a holiday activity, or for peripatetic staff visiting homes as part of their day to day work. It is not an employee's/ elected members/ volunteer's

responsibility to decide whether or not a child or adult has been abused. Officers, members or volunteers that suspect abuse have a responsibility to act immediately and report their concerns, ensuring any relevant information is passed to the appropriate team. **See Appendix A**

Abused children and adults are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child or adult at risk is saying employees/ elected members/ volunteers are already helping.

The following points are a guide to help employees respond appropriately:

Dos and Don'ts	
Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • React calmly so as not to frighten them • Take what the person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is being said by a person who has for example a speech impairment and / or differences in language • Avoid asking leading or direct questions other than those seeking to clarify your understanding of what the person has said. They may be subsequently formally interviewed by the Police and/or Social Care Services and they should not have to repeat their account on several occasions. The first person told may become a witness at court if they have asked/gained direct relevant information. • Reassure the child or adult at risk that they are right to tell • Explain to them that concerns may have to be shared with someone who is in a position to act • Make a written record of what has been disclosed at the earliest opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismiss the concern • Panic • Allow your shock or distaste to show • Probe for more information than is offered • Speculate or make assumptions • Make negative comments about the alleged abuser • Make promises or agree to keep secrets • Ask the child, young person, adult at risk or any witnesses to sign your written information as this may be significantly detrimental to any subsequent police investigation • Do not take photographs of any alleged injuries. Any such recording must only be done by an approved medical or other practitioner, following referral.

2.4 Responding to concerns

Individual employees, elected members or volunteers have the responsibility to respond immediately to safeguarding concerns and to take action.

The employee, elected member or volunteer must make a record of the concern, using the initial concerns form **Appendix D** this should include:

- The date and time
- The child or adult's name, address and date of birth
- The nature of the allegation
- A description of any visible injuries
- Observations – e.g. a description of the child or adult's behaviour and physical and emotional state
- What the child or adult said and what was said in reply. Please record this as accurately as possible, using their choice of language
- Any action taken as a result of the concerns being raised e.g. who was spoken to and resulting actions. Include names, addresses and telephone numbers
- Sign and date what has been recorded
- Store the information in accordance with relevant procedures, e.g. Data Protection
- Report to and inform your line manager and/or the Council's Designated Safeguarding Lead Claire Bell

Actions to be taken by the Elected Member/ Employee/ Volunteer

- Where concerns relate to a child or young person contact Staffordshire Children's Social Care's First Response Team based at the MASH on **0800 1313126 (between 8.00 am and 5.30 pm and 4.30 pm on a Friday)** or via a brief e-mail firstr@staffordshire.gov.uk with your contact details (please note this should not include any confidential details about a child or young person) and explain the need for an urgent response due to a child protection concern.
- To make an Adult Protection referral advice should be sought from the Contact Centre **0845 604 2719**.
- **Outside of 8.00 am and 5.30 pm** any concerns relating to a child should be directed to Staffordshire County Council **Emergency Duty Service on 0845 6042886**.
- Alternatively you can contact Staffordshire Police Central Referral Unit on **101** or dial **999 in an emergency** where someone is at risk of immediate harm.

All reported concerns must be shared with the Designated Officer(s). If this person(s) is not available, either because they are on annual leave or off sick then any concerns should be discussed with your line manager who will take responsibility for safeguarding when the designated lead is unavailable. The Designated Officer/Line Manager should also ensure that the employee reporting the incident is reassured that they have access to staff support if needed.

2.5 Consent

Professionals should in general discuss any concerns with the child and family, and where possible seek their agreement to making referrals to Staffordshire Children's Social Care Services. This should only be done where such discussions and agreement-seeking will not place the child or others at increased risk of suffering significant harm. The Designated Officer/ Deputy will seek consent.

Consent is **not** required for child protection referrals; however you, as the referring professional, would need to inform parents or carers that you are making a referral as stated above, unless by alerting them you could be putting that child or others at risk.

Consent is not required for adult protection referrals; however it is good practice to gain consent if possible. If the adult lacks capacity to make a decision to share the information for themselves, a decision can be taken in their best interests about whether this is appropriate.

2.6 Responding to allegations against Staff and Volunteers

Detailed procedures and guidance relating to the management of allegations against people who work with children are contained within the following documents:

- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2015) Chapter 2
- SSCB Inter-Agency Procedures: Section 4H

It is essential that any concerns for the welfare of a child arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported **IMMEDIATELY** to the Designated Safeguarding Officer Claire Bell or your Line Manager and the Human Resources Manager (Linda McDonald).

If a child or children may have suffered or be at risk of suffering significant harm due to the alleged actions, or inactions, of a member of staff, elected member, or volunteer, an immediate referral will be made to the Staffordshire First Response Team. They will ensure that a safeguarding investigation is implemented in appropriate circumstances. The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) will also be informed and will contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Line Manager for an initial discussion in regards to the position of trust issues.

If the allegation is in respect of abuse or harassment of a Adult at Risk, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to Contact Centre 0845 604 2719.