

# Safeguarding Policy

Essex 4x4 Response

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## Purpose of the Policy

- To raise the awareness of all members of the importance of safeguarding vulnerable individuals and of their responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse.
- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive Essex 4x4 Response's services.
- To provide members with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.
- To recognise that the welfare and interests of children, young people and vulnerable individuals are paramount in all circumstances.

Essex 4x4 Response members are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen' as far as safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of an individual, members should always act in the best interest of that individual so far as possible. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all members.

## Safeguarding

The purpose of Safeguarding is to protect those from harm or damage with an appropriate measure who may be unable to protect themselves, unaware of potential abuse or unwilling to take action through no fault of their own.

The Six Key Principles are:

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

The Organisation recognises that the Children and Vulnerable Adults using our services are vulnerable to abuse. In order to minimise risk, we will ensure:

- That all members should be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and take appropriate action.
- That all members have a clear policy and procedure to refer to.
- We recognise that our members are vulnerable to false and or malicious allegations of abuse against them due to the type of work they are undertaking. We will ensure that we are minimising the risk to members of such allegations and that support is immediately available.

# Child Protection

## What is Child Protection?

Child Protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm. Safeguarding, in addition to child protection, encompasses issues such as a child's health and safety, bullying/cyber-bullying and appropriate medical provision.

## What is Significant Harm?

The Children's Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and require discussion with the statutory agencies.

## Responsibilities

The responsibility for child safeguarding falls on everybody who is involved with the organisation. All Essex 4x4 Response members are expected to support the Safeguarding Policy and have a statutory obligation to report to the Safeguarding Officer if there is suspicion of abuse/neglect of a child or if a child discloses abuse or allegations of abuse.

We will follow the child protection procedures set out by the local authorities in the regions we operate and will have regard to relevant statutory guidance.

The **Safeguarding Officer** is the designated person to take lead responsibility for:

- Managing all child protection issues
- Writing and managing records and reports
- Reviewing and revising safeguarding policy and procedures
- Providing advice, information and support to other members on safeguarding issues
- Liaising with the relevant local authority and local safeguarding board (when required)
- Ensure a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes

## Statement

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

#### **The applicable legal framework is:**

- The Children Act 1989 – specifically 47
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The European General Data Protection Regulation
- The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2015
- Equalities Act 2010
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2018
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

## **Protection of Vulnerable Adults**

The broad definition of a vulnerable adult is:

‘A person who is 18 years of age or over, and who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation.’

An Adult considered to be particularly ‘At Risk’ is someone who is:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- As a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse.

# Types of Abuse

The different types of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

This is a non-exhaustive list of common forms of these types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** – *hitting, slapping, biting, scalding, inappropriate restraint, misuse of medication, forcible feeding.*
- **Domestic violence or abuse** – *psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional*
- **Sexual abuse** – *rape, sexual assault, inappropriate touching, sexual harassment, innuendo, sexual photography, indecent exposure*
- **Psychological or emotional abuse** – *threats of harm, intimidation, coercion, harassment, bullying, failure to respect privacy, preventing choice and opinion, enforced social isolation.*
- **Financial or material abuse** – *theft of money or possessions, fraud/scamming, preventing access to money, misuse of benefits, exploitation of assets.*
- **Modern slavery** – *human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation.*
- **Discriminatory abuse** – *unequal treatment based on protective characteristics, verbal abuse, derogatory remarks, harassment.*
- **Organisational or institutional abuse** - *run down or overcrowded establishment, lack of leadership and supervision, not providing adequate food and drink, failure to respond to complaints.*
- **Neglect or acts of omission** - *failure to provide access to food, shelter, clothing, heating medication. Isolating or ignoring an individual.*
- **Self-neglect** – *lack of self-care, neglecting one's personal hygiene, health and surroundings.*

The Organisation will endeavour to identify and act upon any forms of abuse according to our procedures.

**In the event of any concerns all members must report them to the Safeguarding Officer immediately.**

# Responding to Disclosures

Where an individual makes comments to a member that give cause for concern (a disclosure), or a member observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour, deterioration in general well-being (such as unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect) that member will offer reassurance and give assurance that they will take action but makes sure not to question the individual or suspected abuser.

If an individual wishes to confide in you the following guidelines should be adhered to:

## **Create a safe environment**

- Stay calm
- Reassure the individual and stress that they are not to blame
- Tell the individual that you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you
- Listen to the individual and tell them that you believe them and are taking what is being said seriously
- Tell the individual what you are going to do next after the disclosure emphasising at all times that they have done the right thing, they will not get into trouble at all (as this is the common fear hiding the underlying problem) and that everything will be in strict confidence (in child friendly terms appropriate to the age of the individual).

## **Be honest**

- Do not make promises that you cannot keep
- Explain that you are likely to have to tell someone in order to stop what is happening and that they are doing the right thing and should be proud.

## **Record exactly what the individual has said to you as soon as possible and include as much of the following as possible:**

- Name, address, date of birth
- Date and time of any incident
- What the individual said and what you said
- Your observations g. behaviour and emotional state. This must be noted objectively.

## **Be clear about what the individual says and what you say**

- Do not interview the individual, asking only questions that are necessary and keep questions to a minimum.
- Encourage the individual to use their own words and do not try to lead them into giving particular answers.

## **Maintain confidentiality**

- Only tell those people that it is necessary to inform
- Do not use public / social media platforms
- Any reports/disclosures should be submitted to the Safeguarding Officer ([safeguarding@elrc.info](mailto:safeguarding@elrc.info)); the Safeguarding Officer should also be notified as soon as possible by phone.

#### **Do not take sole responsibility**

- Immediately consult the Safeguarding Officer so that any appropriate action can be taken to protect the individual if necessary
- The Safeguarding Officer will consider the information and decide on the next steps.

## **Reporting Concerns**

**If a young or vulnerable person is in any immediate danger, contact Essex Police on 999.**

All Safeguarding concerns should be reported directly to the Safeguarding Officer whereby they shall contact the relevant Safeguarding Board to report the concern. If the Safeguarding Officers is not contactable, then concerns may be reported by any member to the relevant Board.

**Essex Safeguarding Children Board (in hours) – 0345 603 7627**

**Essex Safeguarding Children Board (out of hours) – 0345 606 1212**

**Essex Safeguarding Adult Board (Essex) – 0345 603 7630**

**Essex Safeguarding Adult Board (Southend) – 01702 215008**

**Essex Safeguarding Adult Board (Thurrock) - 01375 511000**

If required, additional advice may be sought from the following:

**NSPCC – 0808 800 5000**

**Childline – 0800 1111**

## Managing Allegations Against Members

Any report of concern about the behaviour of a member, or allegation of abuse against a member must immediately be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. Any concern or allegation against the Safeguarding Officer will be reported to the Controller.

Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child or vulnerable adult and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation and will be done so with upmost confidentiality and anonymity as required.

The organisation will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

Malicious allegations against members will be investigated and dealt with in the first instance by the Safeguarding Officer and Controller.

## Photography

We take steps to ensure that there are effective procedures in place to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from the unacceptable use of mobile phones and cameras.

Members should not, under any circumstances, photograph children or vulnerable persons in our care or involved in an operation without express permission of the individuals' parent or carer and only when there is reasonable need to do so.