



Together we will make Cheshire East a great place to be young

**Start for Life, Family Help
and the Youth Support Service**

Safeguarding Policy

January 2024



Policy Information Sheet	
Service Area	Start for Life, Family Help and the Youth Support Service
Date effective from	January 2024
Responsible Officer	Start for Life Family Hub Leads
Date for Review	January 2025
Status	Mandatory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory (all staff name must adhere to guidance) • Optional (Procedures and practice can vary between teams) 	
Target Audience	Start for Life, Family Help and the Youth Support Service
Related Document(s)	Cheshire East Children and Families - Children and Families documents – Start for Life, Family Help & Youth Support Service (sharepoint.com) Procedures and guidance (cescp.org.uk)
Superseded Documents	Preventative Service Safeguarding Policy 2019
Date of Approval	January 2024

Type of Document	Policy	X	Standard Operating Procedure		Guideline	
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Document control

Version no	Type of change	Date	Description of change

If you have any comments or views on this document, please contact us at childrensdevelopmentandpartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

“Safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility”

- 1.1 All children, regardless of their age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all forms of abuse.
- 1.2 This policy document exists to ensure that managers and our staff members are clear about their responsibilities and the actions necessary to ensure that the safety of children we are working with is promoted. Whatever else we do, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is our primary responsibility.
- 1.3 We wish to ensure that all practitioners fully understand their duties and their responsibilities.
- 1.4 The policy reflects issues and recommendations highlighted in recent national Serious Case reviews.
- 1.5 The policy will detail the safeguarding processes and procedures relating to the safe operation of all of our services, which will operate to a common service standard.
- 1.6 Additionally, the policy will explain the steps that are required to be taken if abuse or neglect is suspected and the responsibilities of staff and managers, those of other local authority teams and services (e.g., the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Children’s Social Care) and those of nursery or crèche providers operating on our sites.
- 1.7 Within the service, the Director, Head of Service, Leadership Team and all managers have responsibilities to oversee safeguarding standards. This includes supervisory tasks, policy review and case audit activity. However, safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, and this policy must be applied at all times by paid employees, students and volunteers within Cheshire East.

2. National guidelines

- 2.1 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
 - A clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
 - a senior board level lead with the required knowledge, skills and expertise or sufficiently qualified and experienced to take leadership responsibility for the organisation’s/agency’s safeguarding arrangements

- A culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual sessions and the development of services
- clear whistleblowing procedures, which reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis' Freedom to Speak Up Review and are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed.
- Arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Board;
- A designated professional lead...for safeguarding. Their role is to support other professionals in their organisations and agencies to recognise the needs of children, including protection from possible abuse or neglect. Designated practitioner roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Practitioners should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively
- safe recruitment practices and ongoing safe working practices for individuals whom the organisation or agency permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check
- Appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training:
 - a. Employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
 - b. Staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare; and
 - c. All professionals should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time
- Clear policies in line with those from the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Partnership (CESCP) for dealing with allegations against people who work with children

3. General responsibilities

- 3.1 Each establishment or team within the service will have a named child safeguarding lead for their establishment or team. These are set out in Appendix 1. Where there are two or more managers based at the same establishment, one manager will have named lead responsibility, the other will deputise.
- 3.2 The [Cheshire East Safer Recruitment Policy](#) is applied to the recruitment of the children's services workforce. The level of checks will be determined for each job role or volunteering position based on the child workforce Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criteria. All staff members who meet the criteria for a DBS check have a duty to report anything that could affect their continued suitability as it arises and will be required to sign an annual declaration.
- 3.3 In the service, there shall be a named "designated manager for safeguarding". Team managers will be responsible for the creation and maintenance of a "Single Central Record" of all staff members employed by the service and those volunteers operating at the establishment. This record will contain and detail:
 - work entitlement via passport details loaded on Unit 4
 - the level of DBS check, date of issue and number of all staff members and current volunteers who meet the eligibility requirements
 - checks on any compulsory qualifications for the job role.
- 3.4 The individual staff member/volunteer's supervision files shall contain:
 - copies of the compulsory qualification certificates
 - a list of training and learning undertaken
- 3.5 The designated manager shall have systems in place to remind staff members and volunteers in good time that a DBS annual declaration is needed and update the single central record with the latest declaration date. Previous versions to be retained on the employee's file.
- 3.6 Agencies that are regular partners and utilise our establishments and facilities for their work with children and families shall provide a letter of assurance confirming their safer recruitment policies and DBS eligibility for their staff. Those letters shall be stored in the single central record file at each Hub.
- 3.7 All our establishments shall prominently display the Safeguarding Policy and a Safeguarding Statement in an area that is utilised by children and their families / carers.
- 3.8 This Safeguarding Policy shall be available to all staff members, and it should be recorded in the induction checklist for new starters that the staff member has received a copy.
- 3.9 All staff members with ICT access should have a shortcut or hyperlink to the [CESCP's procedures](#) on their laptop or desk top computer. They should be familiar with the procedures of the CESCP.

- 3.10 Additionally, operational staff members and managers shall have access to and read ***Working Together to Safeguard Children***.
- 3.11 Relevant heads of service should have access to and conduct checks at least annually on the single central records held by their team managers.
- 3.12 Induction of new employees, students and volunteers:
- The corporate induction standards shall be adhered to with new starters. Arrangements shall be made for all staff members, including Family Advisors and site maintenance staff, to undertake basic Child Protection and Level One Domestic Abuse training programmes. See the [Induction Checklist for all Employees \(sharepoint.com\)](#).
 - As a standard component of the induction process, all new starters shall read and abide by the following safer working practices.
 - a. [Cheshire East Council Code of Conduct for Employees](#)
 - b. [Cheshire East Council Whistle Blowing Protocol](#)
 - c. [Cheshire East Council ICT Acceptable Use Policy](#)
 - d. [Cheshire East Council ICT Code of Practice](#)

4. Supervision of staff members and volunteers

- 4.1 The service will set out expectations and standards relating to the supervision of all staff members. This will be made available to all employees and posted on the intranet. It will be a part of the induction process for new staff members.
- 4.2 Reflective discussion and challenge on cases where child protection may be an issue is a critical component of good supervision practice; opportunities for reflective discussion must be afforded supervisees.
- 4.3 Supervision and case audit practice should have a focus on the voice of the child, ensuring this has been obtained, considered and acted upon where appropriate and relevant.
- 4.4 Each staff member should be afforded an annual Performance and Development Review (PDR).
- 4.5 Volunteers should have a named manager or suitably experienced worker who will afford them supervision on an agreed periodic basis, this may be 1:1 or group based. A simple record shall be kept of the supervision session and the volunteer given a copy.
- 4.6 Should staff or a volunteer feel unhappy with the advice from their safeguarding lead or feel that action has not been taken they should speak to a manager.

5. Training and development

- 5.1 All staff members and volunteers are able to take part in the training programmes offered by the CЕСCP. Additionally, there are a range of in house and corporate training programmes available to staff members. These are available through the [Learning Lounge](#).
- 5.2 Each staff member shall have a completed PDR, which shall detail and review the staff member's learning and developmental needs as well as setting out performance objectives.
- 5.3 All children's services staff members who have contact with children, including Family Advisors and site maintenance staff, shall undertake Safeguarding training.
- 5.4 Front line staff members who work directly with children and managers shall complete a further intermediate, e-learning or advanced child protection training module at least every two years – find training here: [Learning and Improvement \(cescp.org.uk\)](http://cescp.org.uk).
- 5.5 Managers shall compile an annual training needs analysis record for their teams each spring. This will be stored in sharepoint - O:\East\Children and Families\Annual Training Analysis.

6. Parents and Carers responsibilities

- 6.1 Parents and carers attending our establishments or activities should be reminded that their children are their responsibility to manage and care for whilst utilising our services. All establishments should have notices displayed to this effect.
- 6.2 Parents and carers should be aware of the service's Safeguarding Policy and the role and responsibilities staff members at the hub have and will take if they have concerns.
- 6.3 A Safeguarding Statement shall be prominently displayed at each hub, this is intended to raise parent and visitor awareness of our collective safeguarding responsibilities.
- 6.4 Staff members should challenge inappropriate behaviours such as smacking or verbal outbursts appropriately and sensitively in a suitable setting. Parents should be offered advice and support to manage their actions and responses.

7. Dealing with allegations of abuse (not an allegation against a professional)

- 7.1 Staff members must speak with their manager (or a manager at another centre if their manager is absent) as soon as practicable about any concerns they may have concerning a potential child abuse or neglect issue.

- 7.2 The manager will make the decision to report the allegation or concern to the child's allocated social worker or their team leader / service manager where the child is an open case to children's social care.
- 7.3 Where the case is not open to children's social care, the manager will ensure that a report to Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) is made.
- 7.4 In either eventuality above, on currently open cases, the manager will ensure that a supervision record be entered onto Liquid Logic at the earliest opportunity of the concerns, decisions and actions taken. If the case is not open, a report should be made, detailing the allegation or concern, the decisions and actions taken.
- 7.5 The manager shall ensure that the child is safe from further immediate harm and reassured.
- 7.6 If urgent medical treatment is required, then this shall be arranged, and ChECS / the social work manager informed as to this necessity.
- 7.7 Where a child makes an allegation to a staff member, the staff member will:
- Offer reassurance to the child
 - Listen to the child
 - Give reassurance that action will be taken
 - Not promise to keep it confidential
- 7.8 Where concerns or allegations arise, these should be discussed with the parent / carer, unless to do so may place the child at further risk. Consent should be obtained to discuss the allegations with ChECS. Allegations concerning sexual abuse should not be discussed with the parent at this stage.

8. Dealing with allegations or concerns of abuse against a professional

- 8.1 Any staff member having concerns about the conduct of a volunteer, a colleague, professional or a commissioned service worker shall make them immediately known to their manager, or a colleague manager in their absence.
- 8.2 The manager shall inform their senior manager or the Head of Service in their absence at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.3 The senior manager shall discuss the incident or concern with the line manager and assess the facts presented to decide if the threshold for a LADO referral has been met. Where the threshold has been met a referral will be made. Information and the referral form can be found here: [Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/childrens-safeguarding-and-quality-assurance-unit). Where there is uncertainty about the threshold the manager will request a consultation and this is done by completing the [online consultation/referral form](#).

- 8.4 The LADO will have responsibility to inform ChECS, Ofsted, other agencies and the police, as is deemed appropriate by them.
- 8.5 The line manager will act on the advice of their senior manager and of the LADO in any particular case.
- 8.6 Where a child makes an allegation to a staff member, the staff member must:
- Offer reassurance to the child
 - Listen to the child
 - Give reassurance that action will be taken
 - Not promise to keep it confidential
- 8.7 Where concerns or allegations arise, these should be discussed with the parent / carer, unless to do so may place the child at further risk. Consent should be obtained to discuss the allegations with ChECS. Allegations concerning sexual abuse should not be discussed with the parent / carer at this stage.

9. Out Of Hours

- 9.1 Staff members working out of normal office hours will have a named manager within their service to contact and report to in the case of safeguarding concerns or allegations.
- 9.2 The Out of Hours service is additionally available for workers to report to should a named manager be not contactable for any reason.

10. Confidentiality

- 10.1 All staff shall be aware that they have a professional responsibility and a duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard and protect children.
- 10.2 In cases concerning allegations of child protection, information will be shared with children's social care through ChECS.
- 10.3 Further detailed, advice and guidance on information sharing is contained within the procedures of the CЕСSР.
- 10.4 Staff members shall be aware that sharing confidential information in circumstances other than child protection allegations with other persons requires the consent of the adults with parental responsibility.

11. Children with Additional Vulnerability

- 11.1 Managers and staff members should have specific regard for groups of children who may have additional vulnerability; the list below is not exclusive.

- Sexually exploited children, including those at risk of sexual exploitation
- Children with disabilities or additional needs
- Children missing from home or from care
- Children who experience domestic abuse
- Children who are victims of bullying
- Asylum seeking children

12. Other Teams and Services

- 12.1 As our services become more integrated and multi-professional in their nature, it is increasingly the case that staff members from other agencies (commissioned services, health departments, the voluntary and faith sector) will be based or co-located in establishments and teams.
- 12.2 This safeguarding policy shall apply to all such staff members who are based, co-located or visiting establishments, no matter their employing agency.
- 12.3 If any such staff member becomes aware of a safeguarding concern at an establishment, it should be reported immediately to the designated manager listed in appendix one of this policy.
- 12.4 Agency staff members should then follow their own agency's Safeguarding Policy.

13. Review of this policy

- 13.1 This policy shall be reviewed annually each year.
- 13.2 Changes and updates to the policy shall be agreed by the Leadership Team.

14. Key contacts / information

Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) 0300 123 5012
 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 01606 288931 / 01270 685904
 Emergency Duty Team Service 0300 123 5022

Appendix 1 Staying Safe Information Sheet

This poster must be completed and displayed at all establishments in reception and team office areas: [Staying Safe poster 2023 06 06](#).