

Appendix A

Title:-	Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy
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Designated Lead for the Policy	Ian Fitzpatrick, Senior Head Of Community

Eastbourne Borough Council

Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

1. Policy Statement

Eastbourne Borough Council works to ensure that all children, young people and vulnerable adults coming into contact with the Council and its employees are protected and treated with respect. At the same time Eastbourne Borough Council works to protect its employees from the risk of unfounded allegations.

1.1 This is done by: -

- Having a clear commitment to Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection principles throughout the organisation, from Members, Senior Management, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.
- Making sure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Ensuring that our Contractors who have regular and direct contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults have appropriate policies and procedures in place and require them to comply with the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures and the Sussex multi-agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.
- Giving parents, children, young people, vulnerable adults and workers information about what they can expect from us.
- Letting parents, children, young people and vulnerable adults know how to voice any concerns they may have.

- Ensuring that all organisations that apply for support for programmes which involve children, young people or vulnerable adults (funding or premises etc.) have an effective policy and procedures in place on child and vulnerable adult protection. This includes all those managing any of our buildings or with a licence to run services from any of our buildings.

1.2 It is essential that all staff working with children, young people and vulnerable adults read, understand and adhere to this policy.

2. Context

2.1 There are a minority of children, young people and vulnerable adults in our community who experience abuse of a physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, or financial nature or as a result of neglect.

2.2 It is known that some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with vulnerable people, particularly with children and young people, in order to harm and “control” them. People who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults in a voluntary capacity or as an employee, Contractor or other partner of the local authority have a role to play in protecting them from harm and safeguarding their welfare. This policy covers all children, young people and vulnerable adults.

2.3 The definition of vulnerable adult refers to any person of 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation which may be occasioned by actions or inactions of other people. ¹

2.4 It is also important to recognise additional vulnerability in terms of race, disability, religion, ethnicity or 1st language. Specific reference is made to these issues in Volume 2 of the “Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures” and in Chapter 6 of the “Sussex multi-agency policy and procedures

¹ Sussex Multi-agency Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, June 2007

² These can be found by following the links on the Intranet - see “Safeguarding Children Vulnerable Adults”

for safeguarding vulnerable adults”, and should be included in all training. 2

3. Recognition of Abuse

3.1 Abuse may be described as physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, or financial in nature or arise as a result of neglect. Examples of physical and behavioural indicators associated with each type of abuse are not included within this policy but can be found in “Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures” and “Sussex multi-agency policies and procedures for safeguarding vulnerable adults.”

3.2 It is not the policy of Eastbourne Borough Council to encourage staff to fully investigate suspicions or allegations but to make all appropriate staff aware of the issues surrounding child and vulnerable adult protection and to have clear procedures in place to ensure that staff are aware of how and to whom any concerns should be reported.

4 Employment Issues

4.1 Recruitment and selection

- Eastbourne Borough Council takes all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. These procedures are deployed consistently for all staff – whether in full time, part time employment and whether paid or voluntary staff.
- All staff (or volunteers) working with children, young people *or* vulnerable adults complete an application form. These forms provide information about applicants’ pasts, including any gaps in employment history.
- At least two references should be taken up (in writing), including at least one assessing applicants’ previous work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and their suitability for working with them. References should cover at least the past three years. For student leavers, appropriate references from Principal, Head Teacher, Head of PE would be acceptable.
- Consent should be obtained from applicants for appropriate levels of Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure to be sought, using the form provided. Where disclosure is needed for a specific role with children, young people and/or

vulnerable adults it must be obtained prior to commencement of work with them.

- All candidates should demonstrate a willingness to undertake training relating specifically to protection issues relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Managers must comply with corporate policies on the security of DBS Records and on the Rehabilitation of Offenders to ensure the confidentiality of information received in relation to applicants.

4.2 Policy and Procedures

Eastbourne Borough Council works to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm. All staff involved in the provision of services to children, young people and vulnerable adults should know what to do if there are any concerns about abuse and what procedures / guidelines they should follow.

4.3 Training

All staff who regularly have direct contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should receive training annually to raise their awareness of children, young people and vulnerable adult protection issues. They should also receive clear instructions on how to report concerns or suspicions, and training in Good Practice methods of working to ensure children, young people and vulnerable adults' welfare, safety and protection and minimise the risk of unfounded allegations being made.

4.4 Supervision

Managers should be sensitive to any concerns about child and/or vulnerable adult protection and act on them in an appropriate and timely way **within 24 hours**. They should also offer appropriate support for those who report concerns. To assist managers in this role training will be undertaken consistent with the recommendations of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

5. It is the responsibility of all those working within EBC or on behalf of EBC to report accidents and alleged or suspected incidents of child, young person and/or vulnerable adult abuse

5.1 When to take action

It is possible that staff, Members, volunteers and contractors may have cause for concern and wish to take action as a result of:

- A child / young person / vulnerable adult telling them something has happened, whether or not they want you to pass on the information.
- Observing physical or behavioural or any other indicators which cause you concern
- Someone else (adult, young person or child) telling you their concern.

5.2 5.2 Listening to the child / young / vulnerable person

Staff, Volunteers, Members and Contractors are not expected to investigate suspected incidents but to act promptly and effectively in communicating the issues to child and adult protection professionals. However, there may be instances when children, young people or vulnerable adults who are being abused will approach staff that they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what they say, Staff, Volunteers, Members and Contractors will be helping them.

5.3 Guidelines for listening to a child, young person or vulnerable adult who claims he or she has been abused: -

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Tell the child, young person or vulnerable adult they are not to blame and that they were right to tell.
- Take what the child, young person or vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising how difficult it was for them to confide in you.

- Always reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult but do not make promises of confidentiality.
- Make a full, detailed record of what has been said, heard and/or seen immediately afterwards.

5.4 The next steps – if there are concerns

- All staff must report any incidents or allegations to the designated person in charge of the area of work, or in their absence to a direct line manager. The person to report such incidents to will be identified to the member of staff at the start of their employment.

■ The manager will contact the relevant Duty and Assessment ■ of the East Sussex County Council Safeguarding Unit (if within office hours or the Emergency Duty Team if outside of office hours ■)

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■

The Senior Head of Community and Service Head should also be informed of such reports

- **(Note: if preferred the concerns can be referred to the Senior Head of Community or Head of Audit as a whistle-blowing matter in order to protect confidentiality.)** All contact details are available at via Intranet (Safeguarding Children page)

6 Recording Information

- 6.1** Recording information early and accurately is very important and should be done without delay.
- 6.2** Do not delay reporting by attempts to gain more information and remember to make a note of the person you report to in Social Services and follow up in writing within 24 hours (responsible person only). Remember your first port of call in all situations is your manager.
- 6.3** Information to be contained within a report for Children's Services Social Care or the Police should include the following. However, **it is not expected that staff will attempt to get this information from any child or vulnerable adult other than that which is volunteered:**

- The nature of the allegation
- A description or name of child and alleged abuser's name
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The child or vulnerable adult's account, if he/she can give one, of what happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Any times, dates, or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

6.4 Important:

- Reporting the matter to the Police or Social Services Department should NOT be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.
- Wherever possible telephone referrals to Social Services Departments should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. It is useful to keep a record of the name and designation of the person telephone messages were given to.
- Records must be securely maintained and only viewed by appropriate personnel, Social Services or the Police.

These records will be kept securely by the Heads of Service and forwarded immediately to the Senior Head of Community. This information will be held centrally

7. Allegations Against Staff/ Volunteers

7.1 This may include anyone directly employed by Eastbourne Borough Council in a paid or voluntary capacity working with children and young people or vulnerable adults.

7.2 However, it may be difficult for the person in charge to distinguish whether an allegation against a member of staff is due to poor working practices or abuse. However concerns **must always** be reported to the line manager or Human Resources. It may be one of a series of instances which, when put together, can cause concern.

- 7.3** It should be acknowledged that an allegation against any member of staff will generate concern amongst other staff. There may be difficulties in reporting colleagues but the way in which they are dealt with should be professional and fair and, above all, protect the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- 7.4** Staff will need reassurance that they will be supported if they disclose information about a colleague.
- 7.5** In the case of an investigation of abuse against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation:
- Criminal
 - Child/ adult protection
 - Disciplinary or misconduct

8. What Happens Now?

- 8.1** In the case of a child or vulnerable adult protection / criminal event an investigation will be led by Social Services, the Police and involve any relevant member of staff. Again, the main concern would always be for the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult involved.
- 8.2** The Council will implement procedures to deal with the outcome of any investigation including:
- Advice and reassurance to the public
 - Media attention
 - Dealing with staff in the event of allegations being unfounded
 - Dealing with staff should an allegation about a staff member be proven

9. Conclusion

- 9.1** There are many difficult and sensitive issues involved. By following these guidelines, both children and vulnerable adult and staff are protected and incidents should be minimised. Should incidents occur, staff involved will be better placed to deal with events more competently and sensitively.

9.2 Remember the basic principles in dealing with children and vulnerable adults in potential abuse situation are:

- Listening
- Believing
- Reassuring
- Explaining
- Reporting -Acting immediately
- Recording
- Getting support.

10. Appendices

10.1 The following appendices give further guidance on the application of the Child Protection Policy and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy in practice:

APPENDIX 1 – Guidance for Managers Protecting children and workers

APPENDIX 2 – Guidance for Managers Supervision of Children

APPENDIX 3 – Roles and Responsibilities

APPENDIX 4 – Risk Assessment

11. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually to coincide with Service And Financial Planning processes.

Next review November 2014