

East Devon District Council

Safeguarding Children Policy

Appendix A

Reviewed

April 2006

Policy Number

?

Policy Approval

June 2006

Policy Statement

East Devon District Council takes seriously the issue of safeguarding children and young people. Within the course of providing our services, or contacting local residents, we have the opportunity to make positive impacts in improving children's lives and protecting them from injury and abuse. The Victoria Climbié case highlighted the necessity for all agencies to be vigilant for child abuse, to recognise their duty of care, and to ensure that any concerns are acted upon, recorded and followed through.

The Council's Commitments

We will seek to tackle the following responsibilities:-

- Our role as a 'duty to co-operate partner' under the Children Act
- We can influence other organisations to improving children's lives
- We might inadvertently employ people who are a risk to children
- We provide some services which could aggravate or resolve child safety issues
- We have some opportunities to identify potential risks to children, and to directly influence children's lives through the services the Council provides
- High profile cases (including that of Victoria Climbié) have implicated District Councils. We need to ensure that we learn from these lessons
- Our officers or members could be placed in situations where they may be accused of inappropriate behaviour towards children
- Our officers or members could potentially misuse Council facilities for accessing child pornography
- We need to ensure that our concerns and warnings to other agencies do not go unheeded

How will we go about it?

- Have clear Child Protection policies and procedures for employees and Members
- Ensure that other Council policies reflect processes and sanctions related to child abuse
- Have (and promote to staff and Members) clear communication channels in case of suspicions about child abuse, or other risks
- Appreciate and advise officers and Members that we can be held to account for Child Safety issues
- Appreciate and advise that we will have a role in preparation of Serious Case Reports if we have been involved with the child concerned
- Appreciate that we may be involved in Joint Area Reviews (J.A.R.s) of Children's' services

- Engage with the issue, and also engage with local/County arrangements (eg Local Safeguarding Children Board, Children's Trust, Children's Centres)
- Reflect Child Protection issues in our Risk Management approaches
- Have a formal process for notifying and recording warnings to other agencies about potential child abuse

How might EDDC become involved in children's issues?

- Providing homes (eg Housing provision, adaptation and allocation)
- Running services that assist or intervene in family matters (eg Benefits, Environmental Health, Housing allocations)
- Letting or operating public venues where children will visit (eg leisure venues and museums)
- Providing specific childrens' services or facilities (eg playschemes, crèches, play parks)
- Running Council services that children may need to use (either on their own behalf or on behalf of parents, guardians or siblings – NB children as carers)
- Officers or Members visiting homes under any circumstances (eg Planning enforcement, Environmental Health, waste collection, rent collection, housing repairs, canvassing, responding to complaints, conducting surveys or inspections)
- Inspecting, Licensing or auditing other agencies who may come into contact with children (eg Environmental Health, Building Control, Safety Officer, Contract Managers, Licensing)
- Monitoring Officer roles, Disciplinary or Grievance roles, legal reviews
- Council IT systems and child pornography risks
- Misuse of film or photography of children

What is the legal and national guidance framework?

- Chief Inspectors Reports on arrangements to Safeguard Children (2002 and 2005)
- Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report
- Every Child Matters
- 2004 Children Act
- National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services
- UN convention of the Rights of the Child

Who are we safeguarding and what are we safeguarding against?

Who

- Anyone under the age of 18
- Young adults over the age of 18 who cannot protect themselves against harm or exploitation

Against What

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse (by adults or other children)
- Neglect
- Bullying (including psychological abuse)
- Risk of injury

Steps for officers and Members to follow to avoid putting themselves or children at risk

We must

- Ensure that all officers who may deal with children and young people in any capacity are CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked.
- Either avoid working or being alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult in a private or unobserved situation or if this is unavoidable ensure that the line manager is informed.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Protect information on, and images of, children being misused.

Advice on avoiding problems

- Do not use verbal or physical chastisement that could be classified as abuse, (including shaking, hitting, shouting, swearing, or humiliating behaviour).
- Do not enter any premises at the invitation, or with the acquiescence, of a child or young person unless an adult householder is also present
- Maintain a safe and appropriate physical distance.
- Do not allow a child, young person or vulnerable adult to make close physical contact with you.
- Ensure that if any form of a manual/physical support is required it should only be provided when absolutely necessary in relation to the activity.
- Do not take a child to their home or in a vehicle without the child or their carer's specific agreement and without informing the appropriate line manager.
- Do not film or photograph children or young people, or allow others to do so, or use the images without expressed and recorded permission from their parent or guardian (sample form at Appendix 1).
- Do not use general photographs of children unless they are appropriately dressed. (It is also preferable that they are in groups and engaged in an activity).
- Do not do things of a personal nature that the child, young person or vulnerable adult is able to do themselves.
- Ensure that services for children are provided in areas where children cannot be taken away, where adults are in sight of other adults, (and you should encourage children to report concerns).
- Do not use physical restraint except as a last resort to prevent the child, young person or vulnerable adult causing damage or injury to themselves or another person.
- Do not publish information about children that could lead to them being identified or traced.

Action to be taken by employees if they feel that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk

- In most working circumstances within the Council it is unlikely that employees will be in a position to assess whether or not a child has been abused. However in certain areas, there is closer working with children and it is possible that abuse may be suspected. In general terms employees should be alert to any suspicion of abuse and raise concerns with their line manager.
- Members and Line Managers should liaise with the Corporate Director – Communities or Head of Housing and Social Inclusion (or in their absence their secretaries) if there is

suspicion of child abuse. These officers have proper recording forms (sample attached Appendix 2) and points of communication and escalation procedures with Social Services and the Police.

- If an employee or Member suspects another employee or Member of inappropriate behaviour towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult, it should be reported immediately to the line manager (employees), Chief Executive and or Deputy Chief Executive (Members). The Council has 'whistleblowing' arrangements in place.

Providing services for children

Where we provide services that support children, young people, vulnerable adults or families we will comply with our legal requirements but also will co-operate, so far as is reasonable, with other partners to help them to discharge their duties.

Risk Assessment

Wherever an event or service is proposed for children, young people or vulnerable adults, the risks must be assessed in advance, and "safeguarding" issues and relevant matters addressed. Consent may also be required (sample form at Appendix 3) for children to take part.

We need to ensure correct adult/children ratios (see NSPC guidance) at events, and that suitable safety, security and sanitary facilities etc are available.

All Council initiatives and facilities shall be designed and risk assessed to ensure low risk of injury to children.

Inspecting and Auditing other agencies who will deal with children, young people and vulnerable adults

Where the Council audits, inspects or contract manages others, we should, where appropriate, ensure that their safeguarding children policies are robust, as their future activities may also reflect on the Council.

EDDC's Safeguarding Children Policy may be used as a basis unless their work involves, or could involve close physical contact (eg sports training and management, housing scheme managers).

Support for Employees and Members

All employees will receive familiarization training with the corporate child protection policy as part of induction and as part of the corporate customer care training. Employees working closely with children, young people or vulnerable adults will receive more detailed training as part of their service induction process.

Employees who have occasion to deal with incidents of abuse will be offered access to the counselling service.

Member induction training will include child safety issues

Allegations against Employees or Members

If there is an allegation that an employee or Member has not followed this policy it will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedure, or code of conduct procedure for Members.

If there is an allegation that an employee or Member has abused a child, young person or vulnerable adult in the course of their employment the employee will be suspended immediately from activities involving children while an investigation takes place. There may be three types of investigation carried out:

- Criminal Investigation
- Child Protection Investigation

- Disciplinary Investigation (Code of Conduct procedure for Members)

If following any disciplinary action, the Council has a reasonable belief that an employee did abuse a child, young person or vulnerable adult then this will be regarded as gross misconduct.

Outcomes

- Safer, assured working for Council officers and Members
- Clarity of approach and procedures
- Improved, and sensitive, service delivery
- Improved outcomes for children at risk
- A further line of defence against child abuse being perpetuated

Who is responsible for delivery?

- All officers
- All Members
- A particular role for line managers (induction and providing a communication channel)
- A particular communication role for 'Head of Housing & Social Inclusion', and a particular communication role for 'Corporate Director – Communities'
- A particular role for 'Head of Organisational Development' (allegations against staff)
- A particular role for the Deputy Chief Executive (allegations against Members)

Performance Monitoring

- The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through the formal Joint Area review process and Local Safeguarding Children Board evaluation.

Policy Consultation

This policy has been reviewed with the help of staff, Members and the Children's Services Directorate of Devon County Council.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years by the Corporate Director – Communities

Related Policies and Strategies

Acceptable behaviour policy.



Consent Form for the use of Cameras and other Image Recorders

Venue/Area:.....	Ref No:.....
Description of Equipment:.....	
Surname:.....For names:.....	
Address:.....Postcode:.....	
Telephone No:.....	Mobile Telephone No:.....
Fax No:.....	Email Address:.....
Name(s) of the subject(s)	
1.....	5.....
2.....	6.....
3.....	7.....
4.....	8.....
Relationship of the photographer and subject (s).....	
Reason for taking photographs and/or uses the images are being, or are intended to be put to (i.e. family record/advertising etc)	
I declare that the information provided is true and correct and that the images will only be used for the purposes stated.	
Signed:.....	Date:.....
Authorised by:.....	Date:.....
Position held:.....	
Under the Data Protection Act 1998 the information that you have provided will be used only for the purposes monitoring camera and image recorder use and will be destroyed at the end of a year.	



Child Protection Incident Reporting Form

All information will be treated in strict confidence

Date: _____ Time: _____ Venue: _____

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Next of Kin: _____

Address (if different from above): _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone Number (if different from above): _____

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of someone else? Give details:

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?

Have you spoken to the parent(s)? If so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details?

Have you consulted anybody? Give details

Your name: _____
Position: _____

To whom reported: _____ Date of reporting: _____

Signature: _____
Date: _____

This form should now be given to a Service Designated Person or Corporate Child Protection Officer by hand in a sealed envelope marked confidential.



Example Consent Form

All information will be treated in strict confidence

Please use block capitals and print clearly

Event/Activity: _____

Date: _____

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Home Address _____

Postcode _____

Home Telephone Number: _____ Mobile Telephone Number: _____

Medical Conditions: (if any) e.g. asthma, diabetes, allergies: _____

I confirm that my son/daughter is in good health and I give consent for my son/daughter to participate in the above event/activity.

I consent to any emergency treatment required by my son/daughter during the course of the event/activity

I give consent for my son/daughter to be photographed during the course of the above event/activity and I consent to the photographs being used by East Devon District Council for bona fide promotional purposes. This also includes the use on the World Wide Web (internet).

The information you provide will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, to ensure the safety of all participants and may be shared with other people/organisations involved in the delivery of the above event/activity, if appropriate. By signing this form you are consenting to the Council using the information, which you have supplied in the manner stated above.

Name of
Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____