



Safeguarding children and young adults policy and procedure

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1. Policy

1.1 Introduction

This policy has been devised by Action East Devon to comply with legal requirements for the protection and safety of young people under the age of 18.

We follow the statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (revised Jan 2021) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (revised December 2020) and recognise our responsibility under the Children's Act 1989 and section 175 of the Education Act 2002, to have due regard to our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.

All children have the right to protection from all forms of abuse including exploitation, neglect, physical and mental abuse regardless of (but not confined to): age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, faith, sexual orientation, living situation, economic circumstances.

In line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021', we believe that everyone has a responsibility to actively safeguard children and young people whatever their role. To this end we will ensure that all staff are trained in Safeguarding and Child Protection and in preventing radicalisation, in line with the statutory guidance in the Prevent Duty 2015.

The key objectives of this policy and procedure are:

- To explain the responsibilities Action East Devon (including employees, service users, Trustees, and volunteers) have in respect of child protection.
- To provide staff and volunteers with an overview of child protection.
- To provide a clear procedure to be implemented where child safeguarding issues arise.

The policy and procedure apply to all employees, trustees, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students, and anyone else working on behalf of Action East Devon.

1.2 Statement of Intent

To implement the policy Action East Devon will:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- Provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected and feel confident that any complaint, allegation or suspicion of abuse will be taken seriously.
- Ensure that there are robust processes and procedures to identify, assess, refer, and support young people who are suffering from

harm.

- Manage services in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse.
- Use safer recruitment processes to appoint staff, volunteers and trustees; ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Promote good practice and work in a way that prevents harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
- Ensure that individuals subject of allegations or who deal with disclosures of abuse are supported.
- Work in partnership with parents and other organisations (schools, colleges, police, health & social care).
- Ensure that all trustees, staff, volunteers, service users, and carers/families are familiar with this policy and procedures.
- Work with other agencies within the framework of the Devon Children and Families Partnership;
<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/south-west-child-protection-procedures/>;
- Pass information to the MASH team when more than one person is at risk. For example, if the concern relates to a worker, volunteer or organisation who provides a service to vulnerable adults or children;
<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/child-protection/making-a-mash-enquiry>;
- Inform parents/ carers that a MASH enquiry is being submitted and where possible will seek consent except when it is considered that seeking parental consent may increase a child's risk of harm.
- Keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and neglect.
- Ensure that the Designated Named Person understands his/her responsibility to refer incidents of abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Devon children and families partnership).
- Ensure service users have access to the policy and procedure and understand how to raise concerns or make a disclosure.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding and the implementation of this policy and procedure.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads in Action East

Devon are:

Ben Feasey, Safeguarding Lead and CEO

Telephone: 01404 549045

Email ben.feasey@actioneastdevon.org.uk

Chris Botham,
safeguarding lead for

trustees Telephone:
01404 549045.
Email chris.botham@actioneastdevon.org.uk

They should be contacted for support and advice on implementing this policy and procedures.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Devon Children and Families Partnership
Safeguarding Policy
<https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/devon/index.html>

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2020)
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working Together to Safeguard-Children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf)

Information Sharing
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information sharing advice practitioners safeguarding services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)

2. Procedures

2.1 Introduction

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child or young adult who accesses services provided by Action East Devon. As a service we recognise that all children have the right to be protected from abuse.

The procedures recognise that abuse can be a difficult subject for staff and volunteers to deal with. The organisation commits to ensuring that the rights, dignity and worth of children and young adults are respected.

Action East Devon is committed to the belief that the protection of children and young adults from harm and abuse is everybody's responsibility, and the aim of these procedures is to ensure that all managers, trustees, staff and volunteers act appropriately in response to any concern around abuse.

All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly.

Action East Devon recognises the role and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding children and young adults and is committed to complying with the procedures of Devon Children and Families Partnership.

2.2 Legislation

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within the UK legislation and Government Guidance and have been developed to complement the Devon children and young people's safeguarding policy and procedures. They take the following into consideration:

- The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (1998)
- Working Together to Safeguard children (2020)
- The Human rights act 1998
- The Children's Act 1989, 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 (currently under revision)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (currently under revision)
- The Data Protection Act 1998

2.3 Preventing abuse

Action East Devon is committed to putting in place safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within our services. In addition to safeguarding policies and procedures, the organisation has the following policies and procedures:

- Equality and Diversity
- Complaints
- Whistle Blowing
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Disciplinary
- Grievance policy
- Safer recruitment

3. Definitions

Child is anyone aged under 18.

Child at Risk is a person under 18 who:

- has needs for care and support, and is

- experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting. Abusers maybe those known to the child or strangers (e.g., via the internet) They may be abused by an adult, adults, or a child or children.

Safeguarding is protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

4. Types of Abuse and Neglect

There are different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and different circumstances in which they may take place. The Care Act 2014 identifies the following as an illustrative but not exhaustive list as to the type of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern. Action East Devon recognises that abuse, neglect, or safeguarding concerns are rarely standalone incidents that can be defined by one term or label but rather overlap with each other.

4.1 Physical Abuse

Including hitting, slapping, and pushing, kicking, burning or poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also occur when a parent or carer fabricates a child's symptoms, misuses medication or deliberately induces illness in a child.

4.2 Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. This also includes bullying or cyberbullying and the exploitation of children. It may include non-developmentally appropriate expectations being imposed upon a child including overprotection, deliberate limitation of a child's capacity to learn or explore or prevention of a child's normal social interactions. Emotional abuse also takes place when a child is forced to watch or participate in the abuse of others.

4.3 Sexual Abuse

Forcing a child or young adult to participate in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of the activity or not. including rape, indecent exposure, inappropriate looking or touching (including kissing), sexual teasing or

innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts. Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

4.4 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The manipulation of a child or young adult by individuals or groups into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim wants or increase in the perpetrator's wealth or status. exploitation may happen via technology and may occur even when the act appears consensual. A common feature of the coercive nature of CSE is that children and young adults do not see themselves as a victim. All staff will be given training in the signs of CSE and must report any concern to the DSL as soon as possible. CSE is a serious crime which may have links to child trafficking.

4.5 Neglect

Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Neglect may start in pregnancy through maternal substance misuse. Once born neglect can result in serious harm through the failure to provide for the child's basic needs, abandonment or the use of improper care givers.

4.6 Children with sexually harmful behaviour (peer on peer abuse)

Children and young people may be harmed by other children. The management of children with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and Action East Devon will work closely with relevant agencies to ensure the safety of all service users and staff. Any staff, volunteers or trustees with concerns over a child's sexual behaviour, including known online behaviour, must contact the DSL.

4.7 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This is a collective term covering a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the female genitalia for non-medical reasons It has no health benefits and can be hugely harmful to children and women. In the UK it is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003). If suspicion of FGM appears in a girl under 18 this MUST be reported to the DSL and the police.

4.8 Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties' consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse. Force or coercion can take place in a variety of ways including financial, emotional, physical or sexual pressure and may include physical or sexual violence, The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 make it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

4.9 Honour based violence (HBV)

This is where acts of violence are committed in order to protect honour or moral code of the victim's family and or community. This can include FGM, forced marriages, nonconsensual adult circumcision and breast ironing. All acts of HBV are abuse.

Action East Devon makes all staff aware of the 'one chance rule' in relation to HBV, FGM and forced marriage. They understand that staff may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim of abuse and only one chance to save a life.

4.10 Radicalisation (Prevent)

Under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015), Action East Devon has a duty to train staff and volunteers on how to recognise, refer, and support children and young people who may be at risk of radicalisation or extremism. Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to the fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and the tolerance of different faiths or beliefs.

Radicalisation is the action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues. This may be direct through a relationship or through social media.

4.11 Modern Slavery

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and 'slave masters' use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

4.12 Discrimination

Discrimination is abuse which centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act.

4.13 Organisational Abuse

Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

4.14 Financial or Material Abuse

Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

4.15 Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages, or uses online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating or isolating another person.

4.16 Mate Crime (cuckooing)

A 'mate crime' as defined by the Safety Net Project is 'when vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act but still has a negative effect on the individual.' Mate Crime is carried out by someone the person knows and often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of Serious Case Reviews relating to people with a learning disability who were murdered or seriously harmed by people who purported to be their friend.

4.17 Youth produced sexual imagery and sexting

The practice of making and sharing films or images through social media, messaging apps, text or email has become increasingly popular. The growth in popularity and ease of production has led to a growth in sexual image sharing and distribution. Any such image or film involving a person under the age of 18 is illegal.

5 Signs and indicators of abuse and neglect

Action East Devon is committed to ensuring that all staff, trustees and volunteers undertake training to gain a basic awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse.

Identifying signs of abuse and/or neglect is complex. Some signs may occur through natural development, accident or incident. Children or young people may often go to great length to hide signs and symptoms. For these reasons, it is vital that staff report any concerns to the DSL. It is also vital that staff are aware that they are not responsible for investigating concerns. Action East Devon will ensure that the Designated Named Person and other members of staff, trustees and volunteers have access to training around Safeguarding children and young adults.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts. People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse. It is important to remember that individual signs of abuse rarely happen in isolation. The DSL and safeguarding team will use the Devon threshold tool to enable them to decide when to make a MASH referral.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. These include (but are not limited to):

- unexplained bruises or injuries
- lack of medical attention when an injury is present
- showing signs of pain or discomfort
- person may keep limbs covered even in warm weather
- person has belongings or money going missing
- person is not attending/no longer enjoying activities
- someone losing or gaining weight
- an unkempt appearance
- difficulties in making or maintaining friendships
- change in the behaviour or confidence of a person
- self-harm.
- be reckless of their own or others safety
- be reluctant to return home from activities
- be involved in or have increased knowledge of drugs or alcohol
- be wary of physical contact
- receive gifts (e.g., mobile phones) from 'friends'
- they may have a fear of a particular group or individual
- they may tell you (disclose) they are being abused

6 Designated Named Person for safeguarding children and young people

6.1 Action East Devon has appointed a Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for dealing with any Safeguarding concerns. In their absence, the lead for trustees should be contacted to deal with safeguarding issues and concerns. The Designated Named Persons for safeguarding within Action East Devon are:

Ben Feasey - Safeguarding Lead and CEO Telephone: 01404 549045

Email: ben.feasey@actioneastdevon.org.uk

Chris Botham – Safeguarding lead for Trustees Telephone: 01404 549045

Email: chris.botham@actioneastdevon.org.uk

Should either be unavailable, trustees, staff or volunteers should contact the MASH team directly. See below for contact details.

6.2 The roles and responsibilities of the named persons are:

- to ensure that all staff including volunteers and trustees are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that a child or young adult may be experiencing or has experienced abuse or neglect.
- to encourage a culture where effective safeguarding is at the center of decision making

- to ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where necessary using the new 'request for support form'.
- to keep detailed records of all issues and concerns (including those where there is no need for immediate referral).
- to follow up any referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed.
- consider any recommendations from the safeguarding process.
- to reinforce the need for confidentiality and to ensure that staff and volunteers are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security.
- to ensure that all staff, volunteers are trained in safeguarding and that this training is regular and fit for purpose.
- to ensure that staff and volunteers working directly with service users who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision.
- if appropriate, staff or volunteers will be given support and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome
- to ensure all relevant policies are reviewed and updated regularly and any changes in legislation and guidance are included and implemented.
- to ensure that safer recruitment procedures are implemented and reviewed as appropriate.

7 Responding to people who have experienced or are experiencing abuse

7.1 Action East Devon recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that acting in cases of neglect or abuse can be difficult, emotional and challenging.

There may be situations when a staff member or volunteer has no clear 'evidence' of abuse or neglect but has suspicions. In these circumstances, they must talk directly to their line manager about these suspicions, e.g., due to a change in behaviour. There may be circumstances that they are not aware of that have caused a temporary change of behaviour.

7.2 Process on receiving a disclosure

How to respond if you receive an allegation or disclosure:

REACT

if you have a suspicion of neglect or abuse or if a young person or volunteer makes a disclosure or allegation you have a duty to react. Safeguarding is

everyone's responsibility.

RESPOND

Your first duty is to assess if the individual is at immediate risk of harm. If they are injured or at risk of immediate harm, phone 999 and request the relevant service.

You also have a duty to maintain your own safety.

When a child or young adult presents a disclosure or allegation remember it takes a great deal of courage to disclose abuse.

Reassure the person concerned.

Never make promises of confidentiality. Remind them that you have to report their disclosure.

Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.

RECORD

As soon as practicable, make a note of what the person has said using their own words.

Do not ask investigative questions. Use phrases like "tell me... explain....

describe..." In the notes, describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.

Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate.

Tell the child or young person what will happen next.

Make sure you include any nonverbal signs or indicators in your report.

Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times. Information must only be shared with your line manager (unless they are the subject of the allegation/disclosure) and the safeguarding lead.

REPORT

Complete an Incident Form and submit to the safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

When submitting the form, you must password protect the document and send to ben.feasey@actioneastdevon.org.uk. If the CEO is unavailable or is a subject of concern contact Chris Botham chris.botham@actioneastdevon.org.uk

REVIEW

All situations of abuse or alleged abuse will be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead or CEO. If a trustee, staff member or volunteer feels unable to raise this concern with the Designated Safeguarding lead or CEO then concerns can be raised directly with MASH (Devon Children and Families Partnership) If in doubt, or if you have an urgent child protection enquiry, please ring the MASH consultation line on [0345 155 1071](tel:03451551071).

8 Consent and Information Sharing

Workers and volunteers within Action East Devon should always share safeguarding concerns with their line manager and/or safeguarding lead in the first instance, except in emergency situations.

The Data Protection Act and GDPR (2018) do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

Fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of the need to protect the welfare and safety of children.

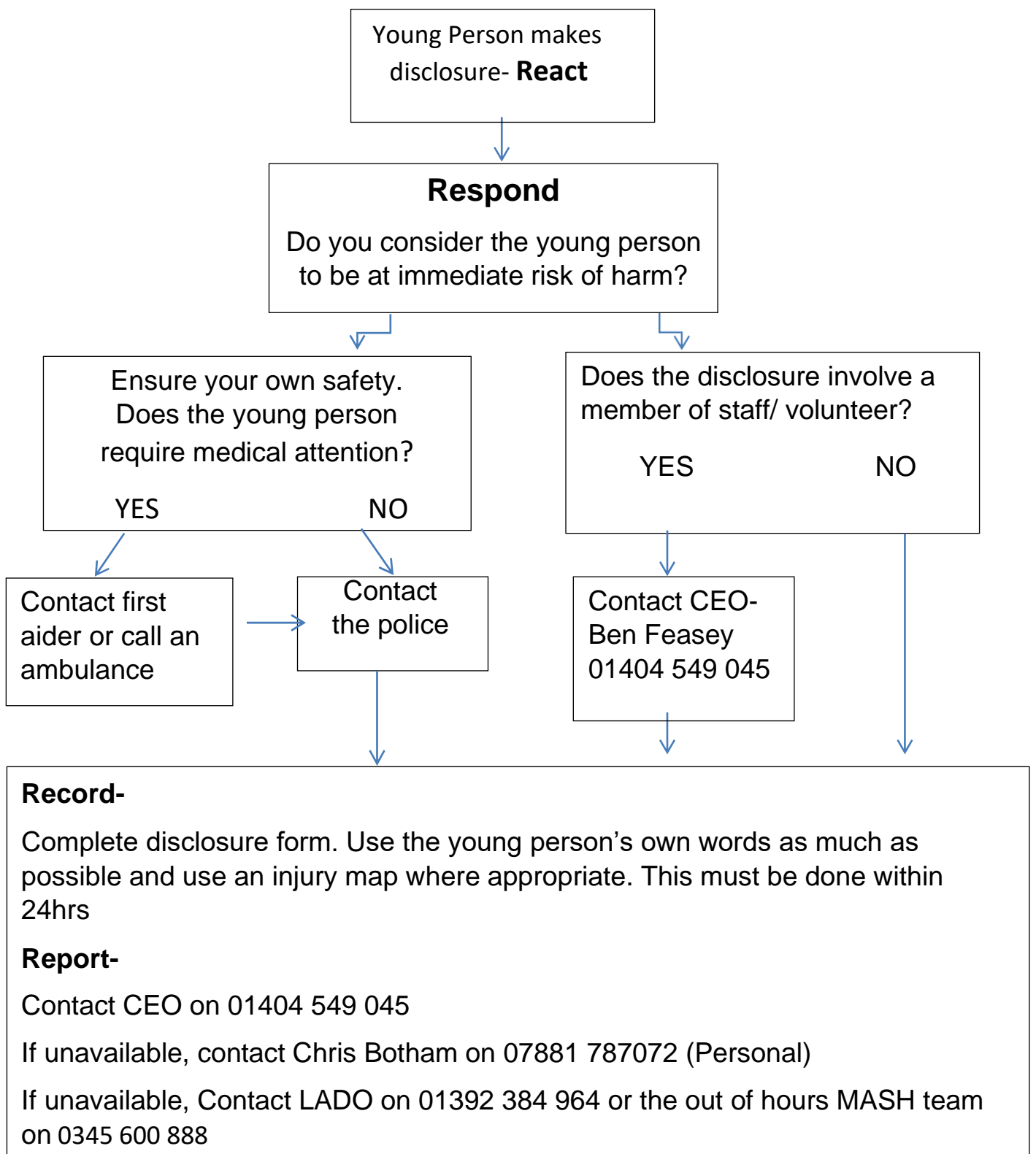
Child protection and safeguarding information will be handled and kept in line with Data Protection Act and within good practice guidance.

Safeguarding disclosure reports and referral forms will be kept securely with limited staff access. Electronic information will be password protected.

The DSL will normally seek to gain permission from parents/ carers before sharing information with agencies. Where there is good reason, the DSL may share information without consent.

All staff and volunteers recognise that child protection issues must be treated with the upmost confidentiality with information shared only on a 'need to know basis'.

9 Flowchart: Safeguarding Children and Young People



Review Following a report, an action plan will be put in place; support will be available for the young person and yourself.

What happens next?

Once a safeguarding form has been received, the DSL will contact the relevant members of AED staff and decide on actions to be taken. If further support is needed from MASH or DCFP then the procedure set out in the link below will be followed.

[Making a request for support - Devon Children and Families Partnership \(dcfp.org.uk\)](https://www.dcfp.org.uk)

Action East Devon recognises that for staff or volunteers receiving or recording a young person's disclosure, the experience can be stressful and upsetting. We will endeavour to support staff and volunteers by taking time to listen to concerns and providing support and counselling where required.

After a disclosure is made, every effort will be taken to support the child/young person's continued involvement. Action plans and risk assessments for inclusion will be undertaken where appropriate.

Staff and volunteers must cooperate fully with any external support agencies.

10 Managing allegations made against members of staff or volunteers.

Action East Devon will ensure that any allegations made against a member of staff/volunteer will be dealt with swiftly. Where a member of staff/volunteer is thought to have committed a criminal offence the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately. Any staff/volunteers who have allegations made against them will be suspended from work with pay whilst an investigation takes place. Suspension does not imply guilt. It is used to protect everyone concerned in a non-judgmental way.

Should the Police (or other authorities) initiate an investigation into the allegations, Action East Devon will delay internal investigation until external investigations have been concluded. The staff member/volunteer will remain suspended from duty during this time.

11 Disseminating policy and procedures

This Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedure will be clearly

communicated to staff, trustees, volunteers, service users, parents and carers, contractors, and anyone working on behalf of AED. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for ensuring that this is done.

12 Review

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. Any changes will be clearly communicated to all staff/volunteers by the Safeguarding Lead. In addition to an annual review of the policy and procedure, the Trustees will have Safeguarding as a standard agenda item for each Board meeting.

Date of review: July 2023

Signed by Board Member:

Chris Botham

Chair of Board of Trustees Next review date: July 2024