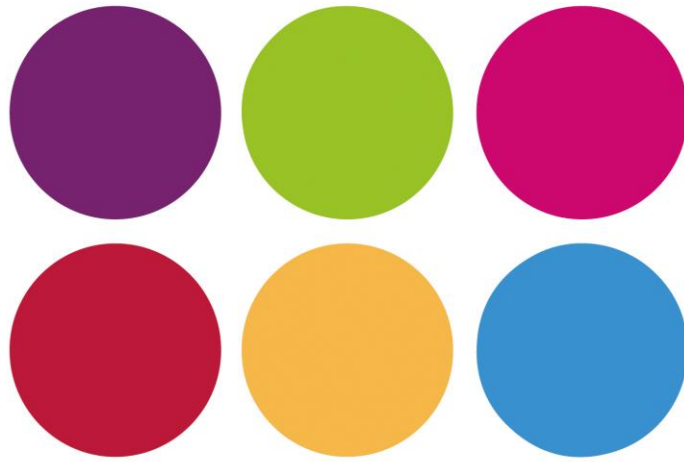


Equality Council UK



EQUALITY COUNCIL
UNITED KINGDOM

**Vulnerable Adults, Young People and Child
Protection Policy**

Vulnerable Adults, Young People and Child Protection Policy

Equality Council UK is committed to the safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults, Young People and Children.

The Equality Council UK believes that every child/vulnerable adult regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. In our organisation, if we have suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional well being, we will take action.

Vulnerable Adult/Child Protection is the responsibility of every adult who has involvement with these vulnerable groups.

For the purpose of this document, a child or young person is defined as someone under 18 years old (as in the children act, 1989).

1. Executive Summary

This vulnerable child and adult protection policy endorsed by ECUK demonstrates the importance that the ECUK places on the protection of adults and children who participate in all levels of the services and its member organisations. ECUK is committed to ensuring that children are safe and that their experiences are enjoyable.

ECUK is committed to implementing this Policy by:

- Disseminating appropriate vulnerable adult/child protection policy guidance to raise awareness of the issues and procedures with staff, volunteers, and member organisations, parents, and young people.
- Implementing sound recruitment procedures for new staff.
- Promoting good practice to protect all people involved in the Service
- Encouraging all members to seek vulnerable adult/child protection training for their staff and volunteers.

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- Implementing systems and procedures to deal with complaints and allegations
- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and its impact on the Service
- Maintaining a positive profile for vulnerable adults/child protection work.
- All staff working with children and vulnerable adults to be DBS checked.

2. Definition

2.1 Child Protection

The intention of the Children's Act 1989 is to ensure that the welfare and development needs of children are met, including their need for protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The Human Rights Act 1998 gives the right for children and young people to express and have their views taken into account on any issues or decisions that affect them.

2.2 Child Abuse and Main Forms of Abuse

Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s), or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child)"

Reference "Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility."

This is a very open definition that encourages us to be open minded and to think about what child abuse is. For those working in the field of Child Protection the definition is broken down further into Categories of Abuse, namely:

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Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a vulnerable adult/child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a vulnerable adult/child or young person whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a vulnerable adult/child or young person such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child or young person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to vulnerable adults/children or young people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young people. It may involve causing vulnerable adults/children or young people to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of vulnerable adults/children or young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all other types of ill treatment of a vulnerable adult/ child or young person although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable adult/child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may involve non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging vulnerable adults/ children or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable adult/child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the vulnerable adult/child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, ailing to protect a vulnerable adult/child or young person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a vulnerable adult/child or young persons basic emotional needs.

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3. The Role of the Designated Worker(s)

Responsibilities will include:

- Acting as a source of expertise and advice to staff and volunteers
- Working with staff and volunteers to support them in their development and training needs
- Representing the group or club as a liaison with other agencies about vulnerable adult/child protection issues relevant to the section
- Supporting staff and volunteers through the vulnerable adult/child protection process if requested
- Ensure your group or club has policies and procedures in place that are disseminated to all staff and volunteers

He/she should have sufficient knowledge and skills, and be sufficiently trained to act as a source of expertise, advice and support for colleagues.

4. What To Do When Abuse is Disclosed or Suspected

A worker receiving information about abuse must always explain that in order to protect the vulnerable adult/ child or young person it will be necessary to share information with others.

The workers role is to listen, reassure and support the vulnerable adult/child or young person it is not the responsibility of members of staff and volunteers to decide whether abuse is occurring but it is their responsibility to act on all concerns. They would normally share any concerns about a child or young person who they suspect, or who may be experiencing abuse with the Senior Worker, who may consult with a Designated Worker.

If the senior worker is not available, a member of staff who is concerned about whether there are grounds for suspecting abuse, or who is unsure of the appropriate action, should contact children's services to discuss the situation in the first instance and an agreed course of action will be agreed. The senior member of staff should be informed as soon as possible with the choice of involving the Designated Worker for support and advice. Referral may be by telephone where there is an urgent need to protect the vulnerable adult/child or young person or by referral form.

Sometimes a vulnerable adult/child or young person will choose to disclose to a particular worker (often a volunteer or an occasional worker) because that person is of a particular sex or of the same culture/race as the young person. For instance where the

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volunteer/occasional worker is female and the lead worker is male. In these circumstances the young person's choice should be respected, and the lead worker should not speak to the vulnerable adult/ child or young person.

In all cases the reporting procedures for volunteers and occasional helpers need to be clear so...

- Contact telephone numbers lead workers need to be made available
- If lack of clarity still remains then consult with Children's Services – duty social worker.

There are four broad categories of instances of abuse to consider:

i. Current abuse of a young person under 18 years old

If a child or young person under 18 years of age discloses a situation of abuse and there is a risk of further abuse, you must take immediate action to report this.

ii. Past abuse of a young person currently under 18 years old

If the disclosure is about a past situation and that the child or young person is safe at present, then the worker should take time to negotiate action with that child or young person and involve them in decisions. The worker should ask the child or young person if he/she is already known to Children's Services, and if they know of the abuse. The worker should also inform the child or young person that Children's services will be contacted in any event. Children's Services will want the information about the abuse to support and protect the child or young person also to enable them to record the abuse and hopefully protect them and others in the future.

iii. Abuse of a young person (adult) over 18 years old

If the disclosure of abuse is by a young person over 18 years old, then he/she is legally an adult, and workers must abide by their wishes regarding passing on information to Children's Services or the Police. It is unlikely that Children's Services or the Police will investigate unless the young adult chooses to make a formal statement. However, if their disclosure gives the worker good grounds for believing another child or young person aged under 18 years is currently at risk of abuse then this must be discussed with the lead worker who will usually refer to Children's Services.

Children's Services prefer to receive information about abuse in all instances, even if it is past and the victim is now over 18 years old and is safe. This is to enable them to record the abuse and hopefully protect other children and young people in the future, as there are usually other victims. Workers should support children or young people over 18 years to make an informed choice whether to make a statement to Children's Services or the Police about their abuse, and to be aware of the consequences. For some, the decision to "speak out" is liberating and empowering, but if the alleged abuser is not prosecuted or convicted there may be feelings of extreme disappointment.

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iv. Abuse of a Vulnerable Adult

A young person over 18 years old, though legally an adult, may be particularly vulnerable due to reasons such as learning or physical disability. It is difficult to define “vulnerable” and each case should be considered separately. As with any other adult, workers should aim to enable him/her to make an informed choice as to whether or not to disclose the abuse to Children’s Services or the Police. However if, due to his/her vulnerability, he/she is considered unable to protect him/herself then it may be necessary to take action to protect him/her without his/her agreement. Where a worker knows of or suspects abuse of a vulnerable adult then they should consult the lead or full-time worker. The Social services Adult Disability team are willing to be consulted informally and offer advice.

N.B. In all circumstances where the worker receives information about or suspects abuse, he/she should make detailed notes of what was actually said during or immediately after the disclosure of abuse (see para.7, recording).

5. What Happens Next?

In all cases, the worker should tell the child or young person what action they are taking, why they are taking it and what is likely to happen.

Reassure the child or young person that their welfare and the welfare of other children or young people are absolutely paramount.

Explain that Children’s Services will want to hear about the abuse directly from the child or young person. They will conduct this interview wherever the child or young person feels safest – this could be at a youth centre, community centre or appropriate leisure provision. Children’s Services will require the child or young person’s parent or legal guardian to be present, unless there are clear reasons to do otherwise – for instance, if the allegations are against the parents. The worker may be present to give support, if this is requested by the child or young person.

Referral to Children’s Services should preferably be with the child or young person’s consent, but this may not be possible in every case and the urgent need to protect the child or young person may take priority (see paragraph 5, entitled “confidentiality”).

The referral can be made by telephone, where the urgent need to protect the child or young person, or by a referral form. Recordings of what is said, to whom, the date and time of referral must be kept.

If the referral is by telephone a referral form should be sent to Children’s Services Department within 24 hours of the telephone call.

All information relating to the disclosure must be shared in making the referral and the worker must be prepared that further information may be required in interview. The child or

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young person must be told that the referral has been made, and told the extent of the information shared.

6. Confidentiality

Workers should not indicate to a vulnerable adult/child or young person that they will keep secrets or hold onto information. A particular feature of vulnerable adult/young person/child sexual abuse is the destructive confidential relationship which exists between perpetrator and child, and the worker must be careful not to collude with this secrecy.

If workers believe that a vulnerable adult/child or young person is in danger, or could cause danger to themselves or others, they must advise the vulnerable adult/child or young person and take appropriate action to protect them. Perpetrators are often abusing other vulnerable adults/children and/or young people at the same time and their safety is also of concern.

All clubs, groups and organisations should have a statement on confidentiality clearly on display in each building they meet in. workers should explain the confidentiality policy to vulnerable adults/children and young people with whom they are working with at the earliest opportunity.

7. Recording

Recordings are to be made immediately after the abuse has been reported/disclosed or suspected. Each group/club must take responsibility for keeping records in a secure and confidential location.

The words a vulnerable adult/child or young person uses to explain what has happened to them are admissible as evidence in a court case (usually hearsay is inadmissible in court). Vulnerable Adult/Child abuse is a crime and at some stage criminal proceedings may ensue. Therefore the record of the first conversation between worker and vulnerable adult/child or young person may be needed as evidence in a court case.

Where possible, these notes should be made in conjunction with the vulnerable adult/child or young person concerned with due reference to their age and communication skills. They should use the vulnerable adult child's or young person's words and be factual **without asking leading questions** as this could make the record inadmissible as evidence in court. The worker should record the date, time and setting and the names of all people present.

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The notes should be signed and dated and kept in a secure place, preferably a safe or locked filing cabinet.

8. Children or Young People as Perpetrators of Abuse

Workers need to recognise that young people who abuse other children or young people may have often experienced some form of abuse themselves. There are, therefore, two elements to the way that this should be dealt with:

i) Protection of other children or young people:

Where workers believe that children or young people are in danger of being abused by other young people they will advise the **alleged** abuser that they will take action to protect other children or young people. They should explain that this is to keep other children or young people safe in the same way they are entitled to be safe. This action will include referral to Children's Services.

ii) Support for the alleged perpetrator:

Children or young people who have abused other children or young people may require intervention to reduce the risk they may present. They may also need some support in order to help them deal with their own experiences.

9. Workers as Abusers

If it is suspected or alleged that a member of staff has abused vulnerable adults/children or young people the matter should be reported to the lead worker and referral should be made to the Police.

Worker Responsibility

Never assume that other agencies are monitoring a vulnerable adult/child or young person. Others may have doubts but as a worker you could be the only person taking action. The worker should check regularly with the vulnerable adult/child or young person that action is being taken to ensure they feel safe and offer on-going support.

10. Counselling and Support for Staff

Staff working with vulnerable adults/children or young people who have abused or been abused are entitled to counselling. It is the responsibility of the lead worker or staff training and development worker to ensure this opportunity is provided.

Policy will be reviewed in March 2021

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CONTACTS

Adult Disability Services.....	01908 253312
Campbell Centre.....	01908 660033
Child Health Department.....	01908 243547
Childline.....	0800 1111
Child Protection Co-ordinator Maternity Services.....	01908 660033
Children’s Act Complaints Officer.....	01908 253647
Children’s and Young Peoples Rights Services.....	01908 253167
Children’s Services Referral and Assessment Team... 	01908 253169/70
Community Mental Health teams.....	01908 643200/232533
Consultant Paediatricians.....	01908 243053
Department of Child and Adolescent psychiatry.....	01908 607501
Education Psychologists.....	01908 367333
Education Welfare Service.....	01908366042
Emergency Social Work Team.....	01908 265545
Family Group Conference Referrals	01908 253323
Family Rights Group Advice Line.....	0800 7311696
Family Protection Unit (Thames Valley Police).....	01908 276140
Greenleys Family Centre.....	01908 528882
Home Start.....	01908 230030
Independent Chairs/Child Protection Co-ordinators... 	01908254300
Local Authority Legal Services.....	01908 252336
Milton Keynes Council.....	01908 691691
Milton Keynes DASS.....	01908 313616

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Milton Keynes University Hospital.....	01908 660033
Milton Keynes Mind.....	01908 607956
Moorlands Family Centre.....	01908 679819
NCH Action for Children.....	01908 568813
NSPCC.....	01908 562244
Pegasus.....	01908 668603
Probation Service.....	01908 679734
Equality Council UK.....	01908 606828
Rape Crises.....	01908 691969
Samaritans.....	01908 667777
Senior Nurse Children in Need & Child protection.....	01908 222223
The Family Support Project – Coffee Hall.....	01908 604417
Community Language Services.....	01908 253253
Victim Support.....	01908 607989
Women’s Aid.....	01908 271900
Youth Information Services (YiS).....	01908 604700
Youth Offending Team.....	01908 391000
Emergency out of Hours Contact.....	01908 265545

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Confidentiality Statement

1. If you choose to talk to a worker here then what you say is usually kept between you and them.
2. If you say that you are being sexually or physically abused, I/the worker will report this abuse in order to prevent further abuse.
3. I/the worker will always inform you that I/we need to speak to someone else and discuss with you what support you may need.

March 2021