

CONSUMER DUTY POLICY - CHILD SAFEGUARDING

POLICY AND PROCEDURES



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LAST APPROVED	JUNE 2023	REVIEW CYCLE	APRIL/JUNE
RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES			
Adult Safeguarding Policy	Whistle blowing Policy		
Data Protection Policy	Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy		
Health and Safety Policy	Induction Policy		
Safer Recruitment Policy			

OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING

Churches Housing Action Team (CHAT) recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults at risk of harm. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults at risk of abuse can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” We have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This policy and procedures document has been developed in order to safeguard the welfare of the children and young people with whom CHAT has contact, as well as to protect the staff and volunteers, which also includes trustees.

The policy and procedures outlined in this document comply with the guidance contained in ‘Working together to safeguard children interagency guide’. HM Government 2018, and ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (2015), and Information Sharing (2018). As a charity based on Christian values this policy is also prepared in conjunction with the guidelines issued by the Diocese of Exeter.

CHAT is committed to

- endorsing and following all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- providing all staff and volunteers with regular on-going training and guidance that is appropriate to their role on Safeguarding of Children and Young People. This will cover: a) the various types and definitions of abuse; b) appropriate ways of working; and c) procedures for dealing with suspicion or disclosure of abuse. This will be reviewed regularly and refreshed every 2 years.
- ensuring that procedures are produced on the following issues: a) recruitment and support of staff and volunteers; b) guidance on working with young people for staff and volunteers; c) abuse – suspicions and allegations – what to do.

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- Ensuring at least one trustee on the board has relevant experience and/or training and is designated to support the staff and ensure a culture of safeguarding is developed throughout the organization
- ensuring that this policy and procedures document is brought to an individual staff member and volunteer's attention prior to the commencement of their employment (paid or unpaid).
- ensuring the implementation of robust procedures for responding to suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect.
- creating a culture of heightened awareness and sensitivity.
- designating at least one person as the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) and supporting them in their role and in any action they may need to take
- ensuring that those involved with children's work understand they have a duty not only to protect young people from abuse but also that this duty is more than non-participation in abuse, it includes a duty to act where abuse is seen to be, or suspected to be, taking place.
- ensuring that all reasonable measures are taken to make sure that the premises are welcoming and inclusive and meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation
- developing best practice in this area and reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures annually as part of this process.

CHAT recognises that this safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding. Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults at risk of harm, and to all those with whom we work in partnership. They also recognise that many current and potential abusers do not possess criminal records and that the best way to prevent the abuse of children is through good management practice and continuous provision of support, guidance and supervision of staff and volunteers.

EX OFFENDERS STATEMENT

Old, minor and unrelated offences will not prohibit otherwise suitable people from work with children. However, it is policy that all people with positive or blemished DBS checks will undergo a risk assessment from the Manager who may seek advice from the designated safeguarding trustee.

PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Recruitment and support of staff and volunteers.

In accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, CHAT will vet and register all individuals who want to work or volunteer with vulnerable people. The new Disclosure and Barring Service which came into force in 2013 aims to improve employment vetting practices. This covers all those who currently work or volunteer, or seek to work or volunteer with children and/or vulnerable adults. *Please see Safer recruitment policy and procedures for more information*

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of these policies and procedures (and others where necessary to the role including data protection and confidentiality). They will be expected to attend awareness sessions on safeguarding. All frontline staff and volunteers will receive training on how to identify abuse and gain knowledge and understanding of the relevant procedures for reporting concerns. If appropriate to the role they will then receive Level 2 training with a refresher every 2 years. The DCPO and deputy will be trained at Level 3, with a refresher every 2 years.

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CHAT will ensure that there is a culture where safeguarding matters are discussed in an appropriate way, training is available and supervision and support given.

Role of the designated child protection officer (DCPO)

The DCPO can be approached by any member of staff about a safeguarding concern of a child or young person. They will:

- assist with your induction when you join the organisation
- listen to your concerns about a child or young person
- listen to your concerns and allegations made against clients and members of the public about a child or young person
- keep your concerns confidential at all times and pass on information where necessary and only on an agreed need to know basis in accordance with keeping children safe
- Support any team member in reporting their concerns to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), or to a LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) where appropriate, (contacts in Appendix One) and follow their statutory guidelines and recommendations.
- Record/log all reports and concerns and store in a designated confidential place in line with GDPR regulations – Data Protection.

In most cases the DCPO will be the person who assists, except when the allegation or concerns are relating to

- a member of staff or volunteer (the Manager or designated safeguarding trustee must be contacted)
- a person is known to the DCPO (the deputy must be contacted)
- a trustee or the Manager (the designated safeguarding trustee or Chair of Trustees must be contacted)

Where the DCPO is not available the deputy will assume that role. The DCPO, deputy DCPO, Manager and designated trustee can all deal with a concern ensuring that there is no delay in dealing with any concerns or allegations. If these people are not available, the member of staff or volunteer should not delay in reporting any suspicions or concerns.

CODE OF CONDUCT

CHAT seeks to undertake to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a relationship of an intimate, or sexual, nature to develop with a known adult at risk of harm or child for as long as the relationship of trust continues. People in a position of trust should always be aware of how behaviour can be interpreted and follow the specific guidelines for the activities they are involved in at all times.

Whilst this policy and these guidelines are in place to protect the children and young people and the workers it is noted that we cannot plan for every situation. In the event of workers finding themselves in situations outside of these guidelines, the DCPO must be notified as soon as possible for advice.

WHISTLE BLOWING BY STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, CLIENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from child protection organisations or charities; it is the hope that staff

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and volunteers of CHAT will use this procedure. If however, the individual with the concern feels that the DCPO has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DCPO as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that CHAT demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable. (See Whistle Blowing Policy).

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

When someone attending CHAT or activities run by CHAT is known to have abused children or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults then CHAT will arrange to supervise the individual concerned and offer support. In CHAT's safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, it will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. We will work closely with the Statutory agencies in such situations.

INFORMATION SHARING

Where it is necessary to share information, staff and volunteers should follow the following guidelines:

- Explain openly and honestly what information you will share, with whom and why. The only time that you should not do this is if letting them know may leave someone at risk of significant harm.
- You should respect the wishes of the young person and family members involved if they do not want information shared unless someone will be placed at risk by not sharing the information.
- If in doubt speak to the DCPO or MASH or LADO (contacts in Appendix One).
- Make sure the information you share is accurate, up to date, necessary and share only with those who need to know
- You should always record the reason for your decision, whether you shared the information or not.

Ongoing support of the child/young person

- Sometimes the relevant authorities may be unable to get involved because the situation is not serious enough or because of lack of information. In this case, you should continue to follow up your concerns and collect further information. This may mean reviewing your support plan and risk assessments for the young person or family. Continue until you are sure the young person's needs are being met or that there is no need to be concerned. If you feel your concerns are not being heard please consult the CHAT Whistleblowing Policy.
- Where an investigation is being carried out, staff should ensure that the welfare of the child or young person remains paramount. Measures should be put in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the young person in full cooperation with any course of action recommended by MASH or LADO. Support plans and risk assessments should be updated as required. In doing so, staff should respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of the young people, whilst ensuring they and others are safe.
- Where sexual exploitation and/or trafficking is suspected, careful consideration should be given to the effect any action might have on the outcome of any investigation and/or the safety of the child or young person. Staff should cooperate fully with the relevant authorities ensuring that information sharing protocols and Risk Management Procedures are closely followed. (Modern Slavery Helpline. 08000 127 700, 24 hours)

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SUPERVISION

Regular staff sessions are mandatory for all frontline staff and volunteers in the organisation and child protection and safeguarding is routinely discussed during these sessions. Staff responsible for supervision receive training on supervision skills. Staff are also offered external supervision which is taken up at the discretion of each staff member.

RECORDING AND STORAGE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

All members of staff have responsibility for highlighting all child protection concerns/allegations on the client's individual record on the AdvicePro Database. However, no confidential information or named individuals, or details that are not relevant to the case should be recorded here.

All confidential records related to concerns and allegations, or child protection reports, reviews and case conference notes are stored securely in the designated location by the DCPO or by the manager (if it relates to a member of staff or volunteer). The details that a referral has been made will be noted on AdvicePro but details will not be recorded on AdvicePro.

ABUSE SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS - WHAT TO DO

Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect 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; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities,

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encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males - women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Spiritual Abuse is the subtle but nevertheless extremely damaging use of spiritual authority to persuade a person to act in ways which are damaging to his or her individual identity and integrity, in the name of obedience to a higher purpose.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Modern Day Slavery. There are several types of MDS which include: Child trafficking (or adults) where under 18s are moved either internationally or domestically so they can be exploited. This exploitation may involve forced labour to pay off debts for someone and the child is forced to work against their will. Sexual exploitation when children (or adults) are forced to perform non-consensual or abusive sexual acts against their will such as prostitution, escort work and pornography. Criminal exploitation when children (or adults) are forced into crimes such as cannabis cultivation or pick pocketing. Domestic servitude where children (or adults) are forced to carry out housework and domestic chores with little or no pay, restricted movement and minimal privacy. Please see Appendix two for more information.

Breast Ironing (Children) This is where a girl's breasts are bound tightly to stop them growing with a view to keeping her 'childlike' for the benefit of abusing males. There have been a known 1000 girls in the UK subjected to this abuse to date.

Forced Marriage (can affect both children and adults) It usually affects females forced to marry males without their (the females) consent.

Female Genital Mutilation (FMG) FGM is illegal and involves the mutilation and circumcision to females both adult and child. It causes alteration and injury for non-medical reasons.

Radicalisation (generally adult but could be child) This is carried out with the notion towards violent, extremism and terrorism via exploitation. This can be carried out by friends, family or groups through face-to-face approaches, the internet, social media and online gaming.

DUTY TO REPORT

Everyone has a duty to report suspicions and disclosures of abuse of children and young people immediately; failure to do so is a failure of our duty of care. It is not the responsibility of those working in a voluntary or paid capacity to judge whether abuse has taken place. Workers, both in voluntary and paid work, must act and make sure action is taken. Every allegation/suspicion of abuse involving a child must be treated seriously and reported.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting) the worker should alert the DCPO who may encourage the parent/carer to seek help from other agencies and charities. This approach must be taken with care.

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The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the relevant person to deal with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities. (See Appendix One)

The following procedures should then be followed:

- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the DCPO (or other relevant person) if they cannot be contacted the reporting should not be delayed and the same reporting process and procedures listed below followed. The DCPO, deputy DCPO, Manager and designated safeguarding trustee are all available.
- The DCPO will wherever possible take advice from the MASH (0345 155 1071), unless it is an emergency and then 999 should be contacted. The MASH will advise the DCPO on any further action. The manager and/or chair of trustees will be informed unless he/she are directly involved. (All contact details are listed at the end of this section).
- If medical help is needed and sought, inform the doctor of any suspicions.
- Parents or carers should not be told unless advised to do so if they are involved in the allegations.
- If an accusation is made against a worker (staff, volunteer or trustee) the DCPO must refer this to the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) on 01392 384964 and follow their advice.
- If an accusation is made against a worker whether a volunteer or paid member of staff including the manager or the DAPO, the concerns must be referred to the Local Authority Designated officer (LADO) on 01392 384964 and follow their advice which may well be that person with allegations against them must be suspended from their duties pending an internal or criminal investigation.
- Where required the insurance company, Charities Commission and any other agency required should be informed.
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the person talking) including a description of any injuries, its size, and drawing of its location and shape on the person's body, using a body map if needed.
- Write down exactly what has been said, when s/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening beforehand (e.g. a description of an activity). Use the persons words where possible.
- Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made. Also write down any action taken and keep all hand written notes even if subsequently typed up.
- These notes should be passed on to the DCPO to assist them should the matter need to be referred further.
- All documents should be signed, dated and given to the DCPO. These will be kept in accordance with CHATs data protection policy.

CHAT will support the DCPO in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

Everyone who makes an allegation, complaint or raises a concern should be assured that they will be taken seriously and their comments will be treated as confidentially as soon as possible.

The role of the DCPO (or whoever else is reporting) is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. Do not investigate the concerns. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated in this document and not brought to wider team meetings or recorded on client notes unless absolutely necessary.

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APPENDIX ONE – CONTACT DETAILS

CONCERNS FOR CHILDREN

CHAT Designated Child/Adult Protection Officer	Alison Padfield
Alison.Padfield@chatmid.co.uk	
CHAT Deputy Designated Child/Adult Protection Officer	Sharon Hayes-Vallance
Manager	Sharon.Hayes-Vallance@chatmid.co.uk Alison Padfield Alison.Padfield@chatmid.co.uk
Designated Trustee for Safeguarding	Jennifer Tower Jenny.tower@chatmid.co.uk
Support and Advice Team Leader	Denise.Henson@chatmid.co.uk
Chair of Trustees	Simon Friend Simon.friend@chatmid.co.uk
Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	0345 155 1071
Emergency Duty Team	0345 6000 388/0845 6000 388
Police non-emergency	101
LADO enquiries	01392 384964 https://new.devon.gov.uk
Early Help Team Mid Devon	07815 562 370 earlyhelpmideastsecuremailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk
NSPCC	0808 800 5000 http://www.nspcc.org.uk
Childline	0800 1111 http://childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx
Stop it Now preventing child sexual abuse	0808 1000 900
Anti-Bullying	http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/
Beat Bullying	http://www.beatbullying.org/
Safer Internet	Centre http://saferinternet.org.uk
Transgender	http://www.mermaidsuk.ork.uk
Cruse bereavement helpline	0808 808 1677
Modern Slavery Helpline 24 hrs	08000 121 700 www.modernslavery.co.uk
National Domestic Violence Helpline 24 hrs	0808 2000 247
Rape Crisis Devon	0808 802 9999
Spiritual Abuse support	www.spiritualabuse.com

REVISIONS	
June 2023	Minor changes and updates of contact names and numbers Renamed policy – Consumer Duty – Child Safeguarding