

# **Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults, Children and Young People Policy**

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## **Policy Statement**

We in Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service are committed to a practice which protects vulnerable adults, children and young people from harm.

Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of issues which may cause our clients harm.

We will endeavour to safeguard vulnerable adults, children and young people by –

- Adopting safeguarding guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Planning the work of the organisation so as to minimise opportunities for vulnerable people to suffer harm whilst using the organisation's services.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, relatives and children appropriately.
- Following carefully the procedures for safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision and support
- We are committed to owning this policy at all levels within our organisation and to ensure that we shall review our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

## **Statement of Intent**

It is the policy of Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service to safeguard the welfare of all vulnerable adults, children and young people by protecting them from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

This organisation is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people and adults can feel comfortable and secure using our service. Our staff should at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service .

## **Procedural Guidelines for all Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service staff and volunteers**

### **Code of conduct and behaviour**

- Staff and volunteers should be committed to treating all children, young people and adults with respect and dignity, fairly and without prejudice.
- Always listening to what a person is saying
- Valuing each person and recognising the unique contribution each individual can make

### **BY EXAMPLE**

- Staff and volunteers should endeavour to provide an example of how we would wish others to treat us.
- Using appropriate language when working with service users and challenging any inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language or behaviour used by a young person, adult service user, or by an adult working with young people.
- Respect the individual's right to privacy and dignity.

### **ONE TO ONE CONTACT**

Other than in the normal course of their duties of driving vulnerable adults or children to and from appointments, staff and volunteers should:

- Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults or children, away from others
- In the unlikely event of having to meet with a vulnerable adult or individual child or young person make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.
- If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Staff and volunteers should never

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay
- Do things of a personal nature for a child, young person or adult that they can do for themselves. If such an incident arises, for example, where a service user has limited mobility, our volunteers should decline to assist and if possible contact the service user's family or carer.
- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind

### **GENERAL**

Staff and volunteers should:

- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned
- Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts

- Never exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person or adult, even in fun

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

Staff and volunteers who are involved in relationships with other members of staff or volunteers should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service or the work of Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service .

### **Staff Responsibilities to safeguarding**

- Paid and volunteer staff need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults and children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary. (Working Together to safeguard children, HM Government (2013))
- These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child or adult who accesses services provided by Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service . It is recognised that abuse can be a difficult subject for workers to deal with. Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service is committed to the belief that the protection of vulnerable adults and children from harm and abuse is everybody's responsibility and the aim of these procedures is to ensure that all managers, trustees of the organisation, management committee members, staff and volunteers act appropriately in response to any concern around adult abuse.

### **Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse**

- Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service is committed to ensuring that all staff, the management committee, trustees and volunteers gain a basic awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse by drawing their attention to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Policy, Protocols and Guidance and to this policy
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children - the action we take to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and children and protect them from harm - is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with vulnerable adults and children and families has a role to play.
- "Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons" (No Secrets: Department of Health, 2000)

#### **Abuse includes (for children or adults):**

- physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint
- sexual abuse: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material
- psychological or emotional abuse: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation, domestic abuse
- neglect and acts of omission: including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs

**In addition, adult safeguarding also identifies the following extra categories:**

- financial or material abuse: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- discriminatory abuse: including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- institutional or organisational: including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practices, lack of person-centred care or treatment
  
- 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.
  
- **Designated Named Person for safeguarding**
  
- Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any Safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will be available for workers to consult with. The Designated Named Person(s) for Safeguarding within Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service is/are:
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  - Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Bridget Harris
  - Work Telephone number 01732 865353
  - Deputy Christina Hodson
  - Telephone number 01732 700247

## **SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR ADULTS**

Good communication is essential in any organisation. In Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns, they will be listened to and taken seriously.

It is the responsibility of the management to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between, all those involved in this organisation and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis. When sharing information, Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service personnel will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing.

We publicly state our commitment to safeguarding by:

- Publishing the named Designated Officer (s) and how they can be contacted on our website
- Publishing and making available a full copy of our Safeguarding Policy on our website

### **Other Bodies**

A copy of our Safeguarding Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body upon request.

## **SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT CONCERNS WITH AGENCIES**

### **REPORTING CONCERNS**

The Designated Officer is responsible for receiving and dealing with child protection or vulnerable adult concerns and liaising with statutory agencies.

It is not the responsibility of staff to investigate or to try to decide whether abuse has occurred and under no circumstances should a staff member attempt to deal with the situation alone. It is your responsibility to pass on concerns to the Designated Officer. All concerns must be reported to the Designated Officer who can decide on the appropriate level of action with partner agencies and ensure that a written record of what you have witnessed is made.

If staff are unable to contact the Designated Officer they should report their concerns to a senior member of staff without delay.

When alerted to concerns about a child or vulnerable adult the Designated Officer should:

- Ensure that the child or vulnerable adult is in no immediate danger and that any medical or police assistance required has been sought;
- Consider whether the concern is a safeguarding issue or not. This may involve some clarification of information provided but being careful not to investigate.
- If the concern is not considered a safeguarding issue and it is decided that there should be no referral made to a statutory authority, a record should be made of the concern; details kept on file; including any action taken; the reasons for not referring; and the situation monitored on an ongoing basis.
- Consult with statutory agencies where there is any doubt or uncertainty. If the concerns are in relation to a child this consultation should be with the local children's social care contact team. If the concerns are in relation to a vulnerable adult consultation should be via the Adult Protection team at Kent County Council.
- Where a discussion has taken place with Social Care and it is decided that a referral should not be made, this should be recorded and the situation monitored as above. The decision to monitor should also be recorded. This is important in case further concerns are raised which, when taken together, indicate that the child or vulnerable adult is being harmed and protective action is required.
- A formal referral will be made if after discussion Social Care considers the concern to be a safeguarding issue. The contact should be made by telephone in the first instance, but should be confirmed in writing under confidential cover within two working days using the Referral proforma.

## Allegations against staff members

- If an allegation of abuse, including physical, emotional and sexual harm is made by a service user, family member, friend or co-worker all details will be fully recorded by the Designated Officer who will without delay consult with and take advice from Kent County Council
- Agree the next course of action, ensuring it is in line with any investigation being undertaken by the Police or Social Care.
- Take protective measures, which may include suspending the staff member or volunteer or moving them to alternative duties for the period of the investigation.

## **DESIGNATED PERSONS and CONTACT DETAILS**

The following are the Designated Safeguarding Leads for the organisation:

Name: Christina Hodson

Tel 01732 700247 and

Bridget Harris

Tel: 01732 865353

The Designated Person(s) will inform the relevant outside organisation of the incident.

### **Social Care**

Kent Children Services:

Tel: 03000 411111 or email [social.services@kent.gov.uk](mailto:social.services@kent.gov.uk)

Kent Adult Protection Services

Tel: 03000 416161 or email [social.services@kent.gov.uk](mailto:social.services@kent.gov.uk)

Out of hours or in an emergency call 03000 419191

### **Police**

Tel: 101

24 hours for advice

NSPC C Help line Tel: 0800 800 500 – 24 hours, Freephone  
Child Line (NI) Tel: 0800 1111 - Freephone



## **RECORD-KEEPING**

All safeguarding records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.

Only the designated Persons will have access to these files.

Keep all rough notes that you may have taken, especially when someone has disclosed

## **DISCLOSURE**

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Child Protection and Safeguarding will always have precedence over any other issues.
- Listen to the child or adult, rather than question him or her directly.
- Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what they say seriously.
- Allow the child or adult to speak without interruption,
- Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question.
- Do not overreact.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event. Use the individual's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child/adult was trying to say.

Contact one of the Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service Designated Persons for advice / guidance.

The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and agree the appropriate response.

If the Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer / member of staff with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation themselves

Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

## **FOLLOWING CAREFULLY THE PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITMENT & SELECTION OF STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service operates employment and supervision procedures that ensure highest priority is given to issues relating to safeguarding.

## **PROVIDING EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERING THROUGH SUPERVISION, SUPPORT**

Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service encourages the development of staff and volunteers through its ongoing support and supervision

## **INDUCTION**

Each member of staff or volunteer is made familiar with this policy and the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Policy, Protocols and Guidance