



East Sussex Community Voice

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Policy Schedule

Version	Date of next review by ESCV Board	Date of adoption by ESCV Board
1	n/a	31/07/2014
2	30/03/2016	30/03/2016
3	27/02/2025	March 2025
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1 Introduction: Purpose and Aims

- 1.1 East Sussex Community Voice (ESCV) is an independent community interest company that listens to people in the community to bring about positive change.
- 1.2 ESCV comes into contact with children and young people in the course of its activities when delivering its mission to:
 - Strengthen the voice of communities and contribute to effective decision-making
 - Generate insight and messaging that support services to be effective and inclusive
 - Be forward-thinking optimistic change makers
 - Be independent, impartial and accessible to all.
- 1.3 ESCV believes that children and young people have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse. ESCV is committed to protecting all the children and young people we come into contact with from harm.

2 Scope of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all children and young people aged under 18 years old. It applies to all staff, Board members and volunteers who work directly with children and young people. It also applied to any individuals or organisations contracted by ESCV to work directly with children and young people on its behalf.



3 Context

3.1 ESCV's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and procedures are informed by the following relevant legislation:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

3.2 This policy is informed by the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures. This states that professionals in all agencies and organisations (including commissioned voluntary organisations) who come into contact with children should:

- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect
- be alert to risk and vulnerability factors which can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse and neglect
- be aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children
- be alert to the impact on the child of any concerns of abuse or maltreatment
- be able to gather and analyse information as part of an assessment of the child's needs.



- 3.3 ESCV is committed to the principle of shared responsibility, working together with local agencies to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of work to protect and promote the welfare of children, including making arrangements to identify and support children at risk of harm.
- 3.4 All children have the right to be safeguarded from harm and exploitation whatever their:
- Race, religion, first language or ethnicity
 - Gender (including gender identity) or sexuality
 - Age
 - Health or disability
 - Location or placement
 - Any criminal behaviour
 - Political or immigration status.
- 3.5 Statements about, or allegations of abuse or neglect made by children must always be taken seriously.

4 Recognising Child Abuse

- 4.1 Child abuse manifests itself in a variety of different ways, some overt and others much less so. All staff, Board members and volunteers are required to have safeguarding training as part of their induction programme and will be vigilant to signs and evidence of abuse or neglect.
- 4.2 Physical Abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes hitting with hands or objects, slapping and punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning and scalding, biting and scratching, breaking bones and drowning.
- 4.3 Sexual Abuse includes contact and non-contact abuse. Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child or forces the child to make physical contact with someone else. Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online.
- 4.4 Child Sexual Exploitation is when an abuser gains a child's trust or control of them through violence or blackmail before moving onto sexually abusing them. This can be in person or online.
- 4.5 Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. This can be in person or online.



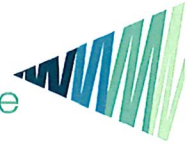
- 4.6 Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.
- 4.7 Bullying is intentional behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone. A person can be bullied online and offline at the same time.
- 4.8 Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people who are or have been in a relationship. It can also happen between adults related to one another. It can seriously harm children and young people, and experiencing domestic abuse is child abuse.
- 4.9 Child trafficking is where children and young people tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.
- 4.10 Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.
- 4.11 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting' but has many other names.
- 4.12 Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming.

5 Safeguarding Culture

- 5.1 All staff, Board members and volunteers should understand ESCV's child protection procedures and have had appropriate training and guidance in the principles of safeguarding before any direct work with children or young people.
- 5.2 The Safeguarding Lead for ESCV is the Chief Executive Officer. In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead then staff, volunteers or Board members can consult the Safeguarding Adviser on the ESCV Board for advice on safeguarding procedures.



- 5.3 Every effort will be made to avoid instances when members of staff, Board members and volunteers are left alone with a child or young person other than their own. This is for the protection of children and young people.
- 5.4 There will ordinarily be two adults with children and young people at all times. This includes groupwork and online meetings. The only exception to this will be where an adult is working with a child or young person in a public space in a health or care setting, undertaking an activity on behalf of Healthwatch or ESCV.
- 5.5 In an extreme case or emergency where a member of staff is alone with a child or young person, the door of the room should be kept open, and another member of staff should be informed. This should be recorded in the ESCV Safeguarding Log and reported to the Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.6 Children and young people who volunteer with Young Healthwatch will travel independently or with the support of an appropriate adult carer to any volunteer activities in the community. ESCV staff will liaise with the emergency contact as necessary in advance of any activity to make contingency arrangements, depending on the competency and age of the young person.
- 5.7 If the travel arrangements for the child or young person are disrupted, then staff will liaise with their emergency contact to confirm the alternative travel arrangements to ensure their safety. If it is necessary for staff to travel with a child or young person, then every effort should be made to ensure that two adults are present in the car or on public transport. If it is unavoidable for a member of staff to travel on their own with a child or young person to maintain their safety, then this should be recorded in the ESCV Safeguarding Log and reported to the Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.8 Staff will never carry out a personal task for children or young people that they can do for themselves. Unless a child has an exceptional need, staff should not accompany children into the toilet. Where this is essential, staff will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague. Staff should be aware of the need to maintain the safety of the child or young person at all times.
- 5.9 Physical contact with children and young people will be avoided at all times. Staff will be mindful of unnecessary and inappropriate physical contact and will not touch children and young people unless in exceptional circumstances, such as preventing them coming to physical harm.



- 5.10 If a child or young person makes inappropriate physical contact with a member of staff, Board member or volunteer, this will be recorded fully in the ESCV Safeguarding Log and reported to the Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.11 Any allegations made by a child or young person against a member of staff will be fully and accurately recorded, including any actions taken, by the Safeguarding Lead. In the event of there being a witness to an incident they should sign the records to confirm this.

6 Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

- 6.1 ESCV is committed to ensuring that it meets its safeguarding responsibilities by responding to any disclosures and allegation seriously and sensitively. On identifying a safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding Lead (or Safeguarding Adviser on the ESCV Board) will immediately refer the case to the local statutory safeguarding agencies. The following procedures will inform the response to the safeguarding concern.
- 6.2 Where ESCV staff are approached for information and advice on reporting safeguarding concerns, they will be signposted to the [East Sussex Single Point of Advice](#), or to Sussex Police if a crime is in progress or there is immediate risk of serious harm.
- 6.3 Where actual or suspected abuse comes to the attention of staff, Board members or volunteers, they will immediately report this to the Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence to the Safeguarding Adviser on the ESCV Board. This includes any allegation about a staff member.
- 6.4 ESCV staff are encouraged and supported to use their professional curiosity and trust their professional judgment. If they suspect abuse has, or is taking place, staff must report this.
- 6.5 Full written factual records of all reported incidents will be produced and kept confidential in a sealed envelope, locked in a filing cabinet, dated and signed. Accurate information recorded will include:
- Full details of the alleged incident
 - Details of all the parties involved
 - Any evidence or explanations offered by identified parties
 - Relevant dates, times and locations and any supporting information or evidence from members of staff.

- 6.6 ESCV staff, Board members and volunteers will record stated facts, and take care to distinguish factual information from reported opinions when recording information about safeguarding concerns.
- 6.7 Staff, Board members and volunteers will ensure that all concerns and allegations are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. Where a child or young person makes an allegation or a disclosure, the member of staff, volunteer or Board member will:
- Listen fully to all the child or young person has to say
 - Make no observable judgement
 - Ask open questions that encourage the child to speak in their own words
 - Ensure the child is safe, comfortable and not left alone
 - Make no promises that cannot be kept, such as promising not to tell anybody what they are being told.
- 6.8 Where possible, ESCV will always respect the wishes of children and young people who do not consent to share confidential information. However, the lack of consent can be overridden in the child's interests, or if the facts of the case are in the public interest.
- 6.9 ESCV will always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding factor.
- 6.10 The Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for ensuring that written records are dated, signed and kept confidential.
- 6.11 If an allegation of abuse is made against the Safeguarding Lead, then the Safeguarding Adviser on the ESCV board will be informed as soon as possible. They will then assume responsibility for reporting the safeguarding concern to the appropriate statutory safeguarding agency.
- 6.12 Staff are immediately suspended pending further investigation following statutory procedures and an internal investigation will run parallel with any safeguarding enquiries. Any member of staff who is dismissed or leaves under investigation for being unsuitable for work with children will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).



7 Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

- 7.1 If the Safeguarding Lead has reasonable grounds for believing that a child or young person has been abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, then following procedures will inform the reporting of safeguarding concerns.
- 7.2 The Safeguarding Lead, or Safeguarding Adviser on the ESCV Board, will make immediate contact with the [East Sussex Single Point of Advice](#), or to Sussex Police if a crime is in progress or there is immediate risk of serious harm.
- 7.3 If the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Adviser on the ESCV Board are unavailable then the ESCV member of staff, Board member or volunteer who identified the safeguarding concern will make contact with the [East Sussex Single Point of Advice](#) or Sussex Police.
- 7.4 The Safeguarding Lead will communicate as much information about the disclosure, allegation and related incidents as is consistent with advice given by Children's Social Services or Sussex Police.
- 7.5 At all times, the safety, protection and interests of the children and young people concerned will take precedence. The Safeguarding Lead will work with and support parents and carers as far as they are legally able.
- 7.6 ESCV will assist the social services and the police, as far as it is able, during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written and verbal information and evidence.

8 Support and Training

- 8.1 ESCV is committed to ensuring that it meets its safeguarding responsibilities through the provision of support and training to staff, Board members and volunteers. Therefore, ESCV will ensure that:
- 8.2 All ESCV staff, Board members and volunteers are carefully recruited, have verified references and have full and up to date DBS checks where they have contact with children or young people.
- 8.3 All ESCV staff, Board members and volunteers are made aware of safeguarding policies during their induction, and have their implications explained to them.



- 8.4 All ESCV staff, Board members and volunteers receive training on safeguarding and indicators of child abuse and know how to report any safeguarding concerns.
- 8.5 All ESCV staff, Board members and volunteers are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, and their requirement to maintain safe relationships working with children and young people.
- 8.6 All ESCV staff, Board members and volunteers are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and neglect, and the procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns. All staff, Board members and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse and neglect to the Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- 8.7 ESCV will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse, consistent with its duties to protect the safety of children and young people, and uphold fair processes for staff, Board members and volunteers.
- 8.8 All ESCV staff, Board members and volunteers will have an awareness and understanding of the Complaints Policy. Any ESCV staff, Board member or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child or young person will be subject to the provisions of the staff Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure, or Volunteer Problem Solving Policy.

9 Use of Recording Devices

- 9.1 Staff who work with children must not use personal mobile phones, cameras, iPads, camcorders and any other equipment that connects to the internet which would enable them to take photos of children.
- 9.2 To comply with our duties under the Data Protection Act 1998, ESCV strictly prohibits the use of photographic equipment at our activities by ESCV staff, Board members, volunteers or visitors without the consent of the Safeguarding Lead. A photo of a child or young person is personal data and so requires formal written parental consent.
- 9.3 ESCV sometimes uses photographs or video footage to evidence its work. Photographs and video footage of children and young people will only be taken using ESCV's photographic equipment following formal written parental or carer consent.
- 9.4 ESCV will not permit parents or carers to take photographs or record video footage of children and young people at any of its activities.

10 Compliance and review

- 10.1 The Board of East Sussex Community Voice has the ultimate responsibility for implementing and reviewing this policy. The Board will scrutinise our work on disclosure to ensure that we meet our legal, ethical and operational commitments.
- 10.2 The East Sussex Community Voice Chief Executive holds the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- 10.3 This policy will be reviewed and updated on a two-year rolling basis by the East Sussex Community Voice Board.
- 10.4 This policy may be revised sooner if there is a change in working premises, conditions or laws directly affecting disclosure or any other aspect embedded in the document.

11 Related Policies

- 11.1 The following policies and procedures are related to the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy:

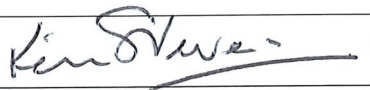
- Safeguarding Policy Statement
- Complaints Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure
- Lone Working and Personal Safety Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Record and Retention Policy
- Secure Storage of Data
- Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Problem Solving Policy



11.2 Approval and Adoption

Author	Matthew Ryan
Sponsor	Veronica Kirwan
Date of approval and adoption	27 th February 2025
Date of next scheduled review	March 2027

Signature of East Sussex Community Voice CIC Board Chair

Name	Keith Stevens
Signature	
Date	9 th April 2025

