

South Essex Community Hub Charitable Organisation (SECH) – Safeguarding Policy

Last updated	February 2024
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SECTION 1

Details of the organisation

Name of Organisation: South Essex Community Hub

Address: The Help In Hub, 1st Floor, Victoria Shopping Centre, 324-325 Chartwell Square,
Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 5SP **Telephone No:** 01702 611199 **Email address:** info@sech-uk.com

Membership of Organisation Open to all residents of Communities in the area covered by South Essex

Charity Number: 1175385 **Company Number:** N/A

Regulators details (if any): Charity Commission

Insurance Company: Zurich

The following is a brief description of our organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

- To develop the knowledge and digital skills of members of communities throughout South Essex by the provision of digital support services, helping to identify and meet their needs and providing opportunities for access to digital services.
 - To provide advice and support for people suffering from mental health problems throughout South Essex working in partnership with other community groups to provide a range of support services
- To work in partnership with other community groups to provide advice and support on the management of debt, helping people living in communities throughout South Essex to improve their financial capability so they can better manage their money.
- To provide support and access to language translation services to people who do not have English as their first language through our South Essex using digital technology to assist and support them
- To work in partnership with other community groups to support and assist community engagement throughout South Essex and to support activities and projects that promote this goal and help improve community cohesion.

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults 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.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in our organisation we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the

child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also, for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included in our policy.

Safeguarding Awareness

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Following procedures as below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to Mr David Preston hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator") telephone number no: - 01702 611199 who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to (Name) Mrs Gemma Fisher (hereafter the "Deputy ") telephone no: 01702 611199. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to Social Services or the Police.
 - Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services.

AGE

We will:

ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity;

ensure that people are given equal access to our activities and amenities

challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

DISABILITY

We will:

provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services.
challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people; and
seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of loop systems, braille facilities, alternative formatting and sign language interpretation.

RACE

We will:

challenge racism wherever it occurs;
respond swiftly and sensitively to racists incidents; and
actively promote race equality in the charity and youth club.

GENDER

We will:

challenge discriminatory assumptions about gender;
take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone;
offer equal access for everyone to representation, services
provide support to prevent discrimination against transgender people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

We will:

ensure that we take account of the needs of everyone, including the LGBTQ+ communities; and
promote positive images of the LGBTQ+ communities.

RELIGION OR BELIEF

We will:

ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible; and
respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

PREGNANCY

We will:

Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity during pregnancy
challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy of our employees.

*Full support is offered to young people by the staff at the youth club under the guideline of all safeguarding acts.

The local Children's Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 01702 215007. The out of hours emergency number is 0845 6061212.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 8005000

Childline 0800 1111 (free calls)

The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 01702 215008. The out of hours emergency number is ASK SAL 08452 666663

The Police Protection Team telephone number is 999 **Domestic Abuse** 0800 3580351

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern (for example the Chair of Trustees to log that a safeguarding concern is being dealt with, Insurance company to log that there is a possibility of a serious incident concerning safeguarding or a Designated Officer (formerly LADO) if allegations have been made about a person who has a role with under 18's elsewhere.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police.

- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy 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.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies, although the Leadership hope that members of the organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/ deputy 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.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.

Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.

- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Contact Children's Social Services/Police.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, and domestic abuse. If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' no longer refers to them as LADOs only 'designated officers'. However, the function remains the same which is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

In addition to this, whether or not there are such mechanisms in operation, consideration should be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults. Where you are liaising with a designated officer discuss with them about the need to refer to the DBS. If a designated officer is not involved, you need to contact the DBS if the situation is that the nature of concern leads you to end the employment of the worker or volunteer or would have made this decision in circumstances where they have left voluntarily.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs.

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide.

SECTION 3

Prevention

Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post

- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form •

Those short listed have been interviewed

- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information and refresh it every 2 years.
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

The Home Office issued guidance in 'Abuse of Trust Caring for young people and the vulnerable: Guidance for preventing abuse of trust'. This guidance is intended to apply to those caring for young people or vulnerable adults in both paid and unpaid work, including volunteers, regardless of whether they are in the public, private, voluntary or volunteering sectors. It is important that organisations have clear boundaries in regards to the personal relationships which can develop.

SECTION 4 Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the organisation.

Working with offenders

When someone attending the organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

If someone who poses a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults wants to join in with activities or become part of an organisation, it is important the leadership manage the risk appropriately by creating clear policies and a code of behaviour the individual must follow. This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future. The contract should give details of both the boundaries you expect the individual to keep and the support you will offer them. It should be tailored specifically to individual circumstances and informed ideally by risk assessments from the statutory agencies.

SECTION 5 Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children, young people and vulnerable adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached/will be developed.


Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets our safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Signed by: David Preston



Date: 05/02/2024

APPENDIX 1

Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership of South Essex Community Hub hereafter referred to as Leadership recognises the importance of its work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the leadership/organisation on: 3rd May 2016

This organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the work of the organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.

- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. • Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities. • Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this organisation.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training (annual refreshing), monitoring, and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the organisation affected by abuse.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult with care and support needs then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this place of organisation.

Child Safeguarding Coordinator
David Preston

Deputy Child Safeguarding Coordinator
Gemma Fisher

Adult Safeguarding Coordinator
David Preston

Deputy Adult Safeguarding Coordinator
Gemma Fisher

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from -The Hub, Victoria Shopping Centre,
Southend-on-Sea or on our website sech-uk.com

Date: 05/02/2024