



Safeguarding Policy and Associated Appendices

Adopted September 2020
Updated March 2023
Renewal Date March 2024

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Section 1

1.1 Details and Contact Information

Connect Mid Devon

Address: 98 High Street, Cridton EX17 3LF

General Information / Administrator: Email: info@connectdevon.org

Trustees:

Email: Trustees@connectdevon.onmicrosoft.com

Safeguarding Coordinator:

Email: Safeguardingteam@connectdevon.onmicrosoft.com

Charity Number: Registered UK Charity No. 1126303

Insurance Company: Integra Insurance Solutions Ltd

Child Protection Services: Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Telephone: 0345 155 1701

Email: mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

Adults at Risk Services: Care Direct Telephone: 0345 155 1007

Email: csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk

1.2 Definition of roles (as referred to within this policy):

Safeguarding Coordinator - Nominated by Executive Group 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

Worker – Trainees under the accountability and responsibility of the Connect Trustees, training through South West Youth Ministries (SWYM)

Associates – Youth Workers seconded to the work of Connect and as such when in that role are under the responsibility of the Connect Trustees

LSG – Local Support Group – A group of volunteers that manage the day to day practicalities of hosting a worker

Executive Committee – A group of volunteers, primarily consisting of nominated members of LSG's, alongside the Connect Executive Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Safeguarding Officer

Trustees – A group of volunteers that meet bi-annually to hold the accountability of the organisation.

Leadership - Trustees and Executive Group

Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS) - Safeguarding Advisory Organisation, to which Connect currently subscribes (thirtyoneeight.org)

Section 2

2.1 Our Commitment

As Connect 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, emotional and spiritual abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants 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 Connect 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.

This policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten Safe and Secure safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight (<https://thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/who-we-are/our-ten-standards/>)

As Connect we undertake 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 our workers, associates and volunteers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- Recognise and comply with the Safeguarding Policy, training and safer recruitment procedures of the Secondary Schools, Churches and Youth Groups that Connect trainees, associates and volunteers interact with.

2.2 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 places of worship and organisations, 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:

“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.

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

Recognition of Abuse:

Those who work in statutory agencies are well trained to identify child/vulnerable adult abuse. However, they often have to rely on people close to children, spotting the signs that something is wrong. So we have a special responsibility to look out for children in difficulty.

Abuse may be: **by neglect**, - e.g. when important aspects of care are needed; **physical** - eg hitting, burning, **sexual** - e.g. where adults seek sexual gratification by using children; **emotional** - e.g. when children are harmed by persistent lack of love and affection, or by threats, taunting, etc. **spiritual** - eg coercive control or abuse of positions of trust.

Child abuse may be suspected for a number of reasons:

- The child may tell you outright that they are being abused
- You may notice bruises that cause you concern
- Another child may alert you to a friend that is being ill-treated
- An adult may admit they've harmed a child in some way
- An allegation may be made on a child's behalf by a parent or carer.

For how to respond to a disclosure of abuse see section 4.

2.3 Role of Safeguarding Coordinator

The Safeguarding Coordinator, who will always be a member of Executive Group, will take responsibility for their own ability to fulfil the Safeguarding Coordinator role. Where possible the Safeguarding Coordinator will be supported by an administrator.

At the outset of Connect youth workers' placement and annually in September/October, the Safeguarding Coordinator is responsible for arranging a meeting with all youth workers and their respective Line Managers to:

- Introduce themselves and their role
- Revisit the SWYM Safeguarding induction training
- Ensure that the youth workers understand the Connect Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies and how to use the associated forms
- Update the LSG Safeguarding Contacts form
- Ensure that all the workers, associates and volunteers are aware of the need to read and abide by the Safeguarding and Health & Safety policies of the colleges, churches and all other organisations that they work with.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will:

- Be familiar with Connect Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies and how to use the associated forms and current guidance on safeguarding provided through SWYM training.
- Be a point of reference for Connect youth workers in the event of a concern or incident.
- Be aware of the youth and children's activities that the project is involved in, including schools work and church work, and understand the types of activities in which any young people's groups are engaged.
- Provide Connect youth workers annually with an up-to-date list of the named Safeguarding Officer for their school (Queen Elizabeth's Academy, Chulmleigh Community College, Holsworthy College or Okehampton College) and the youth groups where Connect youth workers regularly provide assistance, using the Connect LSG safeguarding contact list format.
- Be alert to concerns about any unusual or inappropriate behaviour on the part of any youth worker or volunteer helper towards young people.
- Be alert to any concerns on the part of a youth worker or volunteer if they feel they are being put at risk.
- Ensure that any disclosures are referred to the Safeguarding Officer of the school/youth group.
- Be responsible for reporting any safeguarding concerns to the Chair of Executive Group who will agree and take appropriate action.
- Ensure that any actions/reporting necessary is carried out in line with the safeguarding policy of any covering organisations (including SWYM) when a disclosure/allegation has been made and appropriate records are kept securely.
- Ensure that the Safeguarding and Health & Safety Policies of other agencies are accessible to the workers.
- In the event of suspicion or allegation of abuse, know when to inform Police, Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (hereafter referred to as MASH) or other necessary parties.

2.4 Safer recruitment of workers and all volunteers

The Executive Group will ensure all workers, associates and volunteers (inc. all LSG Officers and Trustee Members) 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
- All Connect trainee youth workers will have a DBS check at the outset of their placement, in order to meet school and youth groups' (church or community based) requirements. Where volunteers or associate youth workers are involved in Connect activities, it is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are adhered to and DBS checks completed where necessary, with renewals happening every four years.
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- Suitable training is provided for the successful applicant (and is completed before commencing any direct work with young people or children either online or in person)
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy, acknowledging that it has been read and knows how to report concerns.

2.5 Safeguarding training

The Executive Group is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities

for all workers, associates, management members (LSG Officers and members of the Executive Committee) and trustees, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone.

All our workers and associates will receive annual induction training in addition to the basic awareness training provided in Year One of the SWYM foundation training course. It is also expected that all workers, associates, Executive Committee members and trustees undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis. When appropriate training is suggested or offered by placement schools and/or denominations/churches workers and, where appropriate, associates and volunteers are expected to attend.

2.6 Management of Workers and Associates – Code of Conduct

Executive Group - we are committed to supporting all workers, associates and volunteers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers, associates and volunteers have been issued with a Code of Conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

Section 3 - Practice Guidelines

As Connect works with children and young people, we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers and associates 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, associates and volunteers, we also have specific good practice guidelines, agreements, policies, risk assessments and proformas for every activity we are responsible for and these are attached or in the appendices.

These include (and can be found on the Connect portal – pCloud):

- Acceptable Use of the Internet, Digital and Electronic Communication and Social Networking Sites Policy
- Associate Youth Worker Agreement
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Code of Conduct for all Workers, Associates and Volunteers
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Flowchart for Safeguarding Communication
- Fundraising Policy
- Grievance and Discipline Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Nurturing New Christians Policy
- Parental Consent Form
- Risk Assessment Proforma
- Safeguarding Incident Policy
- School Liaison Policy
- SWYM Trainee Agreement
- Training Partnership Policy
- Youth Worker Vehicle Policy
- Youth Worker Accommodation and Hosting Policy – safer recruitment
- Youth Worker Support Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy

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 regarding 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 within our Associate Youth Worker Agreement.

We believe 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.

Section 4 - Responding to allegations of abuse

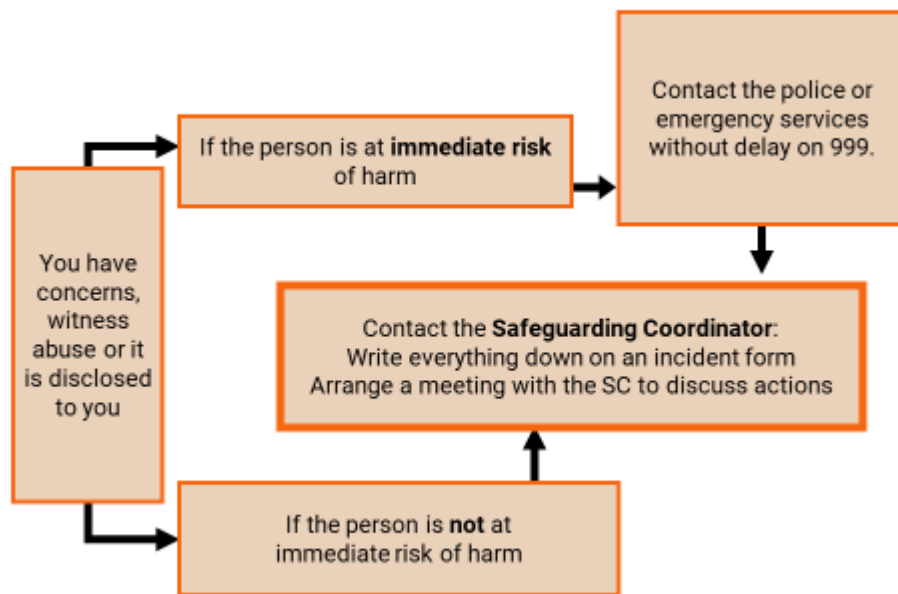
Under no circumstances should a worker/associate or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

If there is an immediate risk to life a 999 call should be made immediately

To review and remind yourself of categories of abuse and what is not okay, the NSPCC website has helpful pages: www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/

Follow procedures as below:

The worker/associate or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:



The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to: the Safeguarding Coordinator - email:

Safeguardingteam@connectdevon.onmicrosoft.com

- Writing everything observed or heard down, recording notes on a Connect Incident form (using the words of the child if a verbal disclosure has happened).
- Arrange a meeting with the Safeguarding Coordinator to discuss next steps and pastoral care needs of those involved (including the trainee/associate or volunteer).

In the absence or unavailability of the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Coordinator, then the report should be made to:

The Chair of the Trustees: Trustees@connectdevon.onmicrosoft.com

Who will then seek the advice and support of thirtyone:eight (Tel: 0303 003 1111)

Suspensions **must not be discussed** with anyone other than those nominated above.

The Safeguarding Coordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern:

- The Police
- Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Tel: 0345 155 1071
- Executive or Trustees Chair who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
- Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker, associate or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- School Safeguarding Lead
- Partner organisation Safeguarding Coordinator

Chairs of Executive Group and Trustees will support the Safeguarding Coordinator/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.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will submit a written record **of the concerns and the actions/choice not to act** should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place (at www.pcloud.com; account for Trustees@connectdevon.org).

All safeguarding records are legally required to be securely stored for 75 years.

The role of the Safeguarding Coordinator 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.

Notes to consider:

It is **the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.*

Section 5 - Pastoral Care

5.1 Supporting those affected by abuse

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

5.2 Working with Ex-offenders and those who may pose a risk

We recognise that some ex-offenders may be able to offer excellent volunteering services to the work of Connect, but those known to be a risk – through self declaration or a blemished DBS will need to have a risk assessment completed to determine the appropriateness and safety of their interaction. Extra safety measures may need to be adopted and a contract of engagement signed.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the Trustees of Connect and will be reviewed annually in: March 2024

Signed by:

Position:

Signed by:

Position

Date:

Date of renewal: