

# VOYC Devon

## Child Protection Policy Statement

VOYC Devon believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

### **We recognise that:**

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### **The purpose of the policy:**

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive VOYC Devon's services, including the children of adult members or users.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of VOYC Devon.

### **We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice every three years.

## Procedures:

- Section 1 Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse
- Section 2 Guidance on how to respond to a person disclosing abuse
- Section 3 Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff / Volunteer
- Section 4 Safe recruitment practices
- Section 5 Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers
- Section 6 Photography & Filming
- Section 7 Internet, Social Media and Mobile Phone acceptable use
- Section 8 A Named Person(s) for Child Protection
- Section 9 Recording and managing confidential information
- Section 10 Whistle Blowing Procedure
- Section 11 Disseminating/Reviewing Policies and Procedures

Appendix 1 Definitions of Abuse

Appendix 2 Incident Report Form

Appendix 3 Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

## **Section 1: Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse**

VOYC Devon will ensure that identified staff members whether paid or unpaid, undertake appropriate training dependent upon their role to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and recognises how concerns about a child or young person's safety can come to light. For example:

- a child or young person alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe;
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received;
- a child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect;
- a child or young person reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago;
- a report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or young person.

**Also see Appendix 1 for Definitions of Abuse**

## **Section 2: Guidance on how to respond to a person disclosing abuse**

### **DO's:**

- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do tell the child they are right to tell you.
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- Do tell the child what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.
- Do write down everything said and what was done.

### **DON'T's:**

- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't interrogate the child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this.
- Don't cast doubt on what the child has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse.

- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your nominated Safeguarding Children person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

### **Section 3: Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff / Volunteer**

VOYC Devon will ensure that any allegations made against volunteers or members of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker must ensure that that the child is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The Designated Person for child protection should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving the named person, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by an independent person.
- The named person should contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) on 01392 386013 for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team (0845 6000388) can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the police.
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The named person (if appropriate) can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or M.A.S.H.
- Regardless of whether an investigation follows, VOYC Devon will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal dependant on the nature of the incident.

### **Section 4 Safe recruitment practices**

VOYC Devon will use the following checklist for safer recruitment:

1. Write a clear job/role description (what tasks the applicant will do) and a role profile (what skills the person will be expected to have).
2. Use application forms to assess the candidate's suitability for the role. This makes it easier to compare the experience of candidates and helps you to get all of the important information you need to ask.

3. Make it clear that VOYC Devon has a commitment to safeguarding and protecting children. You could include this in a job application pack.
4. Where possible have a face-to-face interview with pre-planned and clear questions. Include a question about whether they have any criminal convictions, cautions, other legal restrictions or pending cases that might affect their suitability to work with children.
5. Check the candidate's identity by asking them to bring photographic ID.
6. Check the candidate actually holds any relevant qualifications they say they have.
7. Apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service check.
8. Take up references. Ask specifically about an individual's suitability to work with children.
9. Provide a copy of VOYC Devon's child protection policy and procedures.

## **Section 5 Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers**

All staff and volunteers will be given details of this policy as part of their induction as well as the health and safety procedures. All new staff and volunteers should be adequately supervised and their progress reviewed on a regular basis. VOYC Devon will identify which staff and volunteers are required to participate in the relevant Child Protection training courses and be responsible for arranging this training and ensuring relevant updating takes place. From this training those staff and volunteers should be able to recognise signs of abuse and know the appropriate reporting systems for this. Information regarding the policy should be disseminated to all involved – young people, parents and carers knowing there is a policy in place and how to utilise this. It should be the role of staff and volunteers to ensure this happens.

## **Section 6 Photography & Filming**

VOYC Devon will not permit photographs, video or other images of children or young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children. If VOYC Devon requires photographs, video or other images of children or young people for its own promotional purposes it will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform VOYC Devon immediately.

## **Section 7 Internet, Social Media and Mobile Phone acceptable use**

VOYC Devon understands the importance of emerging technologies for children's education and personal development but recognise that safeguards need to be in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times. VOYC Devon will ensure that parents/carers read and discuss the agreed procedures with their child and then sign and return to VOYC Devon.

## **Section 8 - A Named Person(s) for Child Protection**

Every organisation that works with children or young people should have in place a named person who is responsible for dealing with child protection issues that may arise. A deputy must be made available in their absence. These individuals must be trained in child protection and their responsibilities clearly stated within your procedures. For example:

VOYC Devon has an appointed individual(s) who are responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers to consult with. The named persons for Child Protection within VOYC Devon are:

### **Designated Person for Child Protection**

Name: Mark Goodman  
Work telephone number: 01392 250976  
Mobile number: 07815 490151

### **Deputy Designated Person**

Name: to be agreed  
Work telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency contact no: \_\_\_\_\_

The role and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The Named Person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

## **Section 9 - Recording and managing confidential information.**

9.1. The pro-forma for recording concerns/allegations of abuse, harm and neglect can be found in Appendix 2 attached to the guidelines. The person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete the pro-forma.

9.2. A summary of the organisation's commitment to manage confidential information safely, how information is stored and, the circumstances under which information needs to be shared is set out in the VOYC Devon Data Protection Policy. A copy is available on request.

9.3. VOYC Devon believes that children and young people have the right to confidentiality unless the organisation considers they could be at risk of abuse and/or harm.

### **Section 10 Whistle Blowing Procedure** (Procedures to deal with in house allegations against other workers/volunteers)

It can be very difficult to report concerns about a member of staff or volunteer but all staff and volunteers have a duty to do this. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from suspected abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately.

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate supervisor/manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach a more senior level of management.

Should any uncertainty about how to proceed if there was a whistle blowing situation and you need immediate advice contact the Devon **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** on **0345 155 1071** or email [mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk)

If you would like to know more about safeguarding procedures and the Devon Safeguarding Children Board visit <http://www.devonsafeguarding.org/>

### **Section 11 Disseminating/Reviewing Policies and Procedures**

VOYC Devon will review this policy every three years and then be signed by the Chair of Trustees. Any changes/amendments will be clarified and shared with staff and where significant changes appear these must be relayed to parents/carers.

Date that the policy was last amended / reviewed by the Trustee Board: 10th September 2014

Signature of the Chair:

Date of the next Review: April 2017

## Appendix 1

### Definitions of Abuse

**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/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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. 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, 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, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**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)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## Appendix 2

### Initial Issue/Concern Reporting Form

Please provide information on this form, if you have a concern or an issue relating to someone or something whilst working for VOYC Devon.

<b>Name of child/young person:</b>	<b>Address:</b>
<b>Age/Date of Birth:</b>	<b>Male/Female</b>
<b>What is the concern?</b> (include details of the child / young person whose behaviour has raised concerns or if it was a disclosure try and capture here what you were told by the child / young person)	
<b>When and where did this concern/incident occur?</b>	
<b>Do you have any other comments?</b>	
<b>Your name:</b>	<b>Role:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	Email address: Mobile Phone No:

## Appendix 3

### **Useful Contacts/Support Organisations**

If you have concern that a child is being harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, you must not keep these concerns to yourself. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

You need to ensure that you either speak to your own organisations 'Designated Safeguarding Officer' or the Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) both of whom can listen to and record your concern, and then take appropriate action.

### **In Devon, these are the numbers that you can ring for advice and to make a referral:**

- VOYC Devon Designated Safeguarding Officer Contact Phone Number 07815 490151
- Devon M.A.S.H Contact Details  
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (M.A.S.H)  
PO Box 723  
Exeter  
EX1 9QS  
Tel: 0345 155 1071  
E-mail: mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk  
Fax: 01392 448951
- Devon Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) 01392 386013
- Devon Emergency Duty Team 0845 6000388
- If you have reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of harm, ring the police on 999
- NSPCC 24 hour National Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.