

Children Safeguarding Policy

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Business Unit	Head Office	Location	Newtown House, Newtown Road, Henley on Thames, Oxon, RG9 1HG
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Business Unit Head Sign Off	Peter Price-Taylor	Date	30/08/2021
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Why Is It Necessary?

All of us have a responsibility and none of us have the excuse not to take action. For children at risk, our commitment is more than a strategy, however robust; and can mean the difference between safety and danger. Our commitment is that "on our watch" with the help of our partners, safeguarding is an active part of how we do our job and we can be held to that promise.

Health services have a duty to safeguard all patients and to provide additional measures for patients who are less able to protect themselves from harm, abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding is 'everyone's business'. This policy sets out Evolutio's responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people are kept safe from harm.



Peter Price-Taylor
CEO

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and the associated procedures is to protect and promote the welfare of the children and young people using or receiving services provided Evolutio, its employees and sub-contractors in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

All employees and contracted service providers have a clear responsibility to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child or young person may be a victim of significant harm or abuse.

This policy demonstrates how Evolutio will meet its legal obligations and reassure members of the public, service users, employees and customers:

- a) What they can expect Evolutio to do to protect and safeguard children and young people
- b) That they are able to safely voice any concerns through an established procedure
- c) That all reports of abuse or potential abuse are dealt with in a serious and effective and timely manner
- d) That there is an efficient recording and monitoring system in place
- e) That Members, employees, volunteers and contractors receive appropriate training
- f) That robust 'safer' recruitment procedures are in place

Legal Duties

The Children Act 1989 states that the child's welfare is paramount and that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 10, 11 and 13 of the Children Act 2004 and specifies what is required of Evolutio.

This includes:

- The Boards commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare
- A clear statement of Evolutio's responsibilities to children
- Clear lines of accountability for work on safeguarding and promoting well being
- Using the views of children and young people to help shape services
- Safer recruitment procedures for those coming into contact with children and young people
- Appropriate training for staff
- Effective working relations within Evolutio and with other organisations to safeguard and promote well-being and to share information effectively

What Is Safeguarding Children And Why It Matters

We have a duty of care to safeguard the welfare of children and young people while they are under our care. We do this by:

- providing all clinical staff with child protection awareness training. We continually aim to meet recommended training levels and we report on this monthly.
- ensuring all staff are given information about the importance of child safeguarding and how they can support the needs of vulnerable children and young people.
- working with GPs, social services and other professionals to ensure the needs of vulnerable children and young people are met.

The aims of children and young people safeguarding are to:

- stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to children and young people
- raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
- provide information and support to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an children and young people
- address what has caused the abuse or neglect

Policy

Evolutio believes Safeguarding is committed to the following principles for children:

- Their welfare is paramount
- Whatever their background and culture, parental or pregnancy status, age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, they have the right to participate in society in an environment which is safe and free from violence, fear, abuse, bullying and discrimination
- They have the right to be protected from harm, exploitation, abuse, and to be provided with a safe environment.
- Working in partnership with them, alongside their parents or carers and other agencies, is essential to the promotion of their welfare

Evolutio is committed to safeguarding children and young people at risks from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by Evolutio or any sub-contractor providing services on behalf of Evolutio.

Evolutio will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- a) Endeavour to keep patients and service users safe from abuse. Suspicion of abuse will be responded to promptly and appropriately. Evolutio will always act in the best interests of the children and young people
- b) Proactively seek to promote the welfare and protection of all young people and children
- c) Ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and young people through robust 'safer recruitment' procedures
- d) Deal with any concern raised by an employee, contracted service provider, or member of the public appropriately and sensitively
- e) Safeguarding referrals made by an employee or contracted service provider cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, the referrer may be required as a prosecution witness
- f) Not tolerate harassment of any employee contracted service provider children or young person who raises concerns of abuse or neglect
- g) Prevent abuse by using good practice to create a safe and healthy environment and avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse could occur
- h) Establish an appropriate governance structure, made up with delegates from appropriate departments across the business to monitor activity and make necessary improvements around this agenda, led by the CEO and board.

This policy covers all Members, employees and volunteers at Evolutio, including contracted service providers

While employees and contracted services providers are likely to have varied levels of contact with children and young people as part of their duties and responsibilities for the company, everyone should be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and be clear about what to do if they have concerns. Responsibilities are limited and it is important to remember the following:

It is not the responsibility of any Evolutio employee or contracted service provider to determine whether abuse is actually taking place.

However

It is the responsibility of the an Evolutio employee or contracted service provider to take the actions set out in the procedure, if they are concerned abuse is taking place

Roles, Responsibilities and Governance

Chief Executive and the Board

The Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring that this policy and related procedures are implemented, monitored and consistently reviewed and make up the Safeguarding Board.

Employees

All employees are responsible for carrying out their duties in a way that actively safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and young people. They must also act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible. They must bring safeguarding concerns to the attention of the CEO and the Senior Management Team / Line Manager.

Contractors, sub-contractors or other organisations funded by or on behalf of Evolutio

Contractors, sub-contractors or other organisations funded by or on behalf of Evolutio are responsible for applying the appropriate CRB checks, delivering safeguarding training commensurate with their level of contact with children and young people; and ensuring their employees comply with their organisational Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Safeguarding Procedures

The procedure for reporting a concern or allegation informs all employees and those contracted service providers that have accepted this policy of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected of a child or young person at risk of abuse or neglect.

Even for those experienced in working with children and young people, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Whilst it is accepted that staff are not experts at such recognition, all staff have a duty to act and to discuss concerns with an appropriate Safeguarding representative within Evolutio.

Child specific abuse can take different forms. The main types of abuse are:

- Neglect – can mean the persistent lack of essential care for a child including enough love, stimulation, safety, food, clothing, shelter, medical care or education. It can also mean leaving a child alone and at risk. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.
- Emotional abuse – can mean repeatedly rejecting a child, constantly threatening or putting a child or young person down so that they feel unloved and worthless. It may involve the child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another (like a parent or sibling being deliberately hurt in front of them). It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing the child to feel frequently frightened or in danger, or it can also be the exploitation or corruption of children.
- Physical abuse – can mean any form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Sexual abuse – can mean forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in any kind of sexual activity, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It can include inappropriate touching, kissing or sexual intercourse. It can also involve causing a child to look at, or be involved, in pornographic material or videos, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Both women and men can commit acts of sexual abuse.

Who could be an abuser?

Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect including:

- Parents/Carers (including foster carers)
- Other family members
- Neighbours
- Friends
- Acquaintances
- Local residents
- People who deliberately exploit children and young people they perceive as vulnerable to abuse
- Paid staff or professionals
- Volunteers
- Strangers

Institutions and services can be guilty of abuse if they persistently fail to take account of the needs of the people using that service or do not provide the staffing or equipment to enable people's needs to be met adequately and safely.

Professional status or title does not guarantee safety. There are many recent examples of professionals being responsible for abuse.

More than one person may abuse children and young people at risk and some sources of risk will abuse more than one alleged victim.

Raising Concerns & Duty of Care

Duty of Care

All staff employed by Evolutio have a duty to act promptly and report concerns if they think that a patient in their care is being abused, or that their concerns about standards of care suggest there is a risk of abuse or neglect to children and young people using the service. The seriousness, or the extent of the abuse, is often not clear. It is therefore important that staff report incidents immediately so that the matter can be investigated further, and that staff approach such allegations with an open mind.

It is the responsibility of the staff caring for the patient to ensure there is in no immediate danger. If deemed necessary, the medical team caring for the patient may be required to examine the patient and instigate any clinical investigations needed.

Staff must make sure that they assure the person raising the concerns that their concerns will be taken seriously and that they, and we, have a duty to report incidents of this nature. It should be explained to the person raising the concern that in order to safeguard an individual information will need to be shared with others, or with safeguarding teams, who have a part to play in protecting them. Do not give promises of complete confidentiality.

When a child or young person at risk makes an allegation of abuse or bullying, you should:

- If you believe the person is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which any employee would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you must contact the relevant emergency service and notify the CEO, COO or Line Manager.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual
- Listen carefully to what is said and allow the person to talk at their own pace, being careful not to compromise potential evidence
- Establish their wishes and feelings
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain it is likely that information will need to be shared with other responsible people, do not promise to keep secrets
- Only ask questions for clarification, the use of open questions e.g. what, where, when, who is advisable, do not ask leading questions (that suggest certain answers as this could compromise evidence)
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Seeking consent to share information if patient has capacity and if this does not place you, them or others at an increased risk is best practice but not always required for safeguarding concerns
- You may share information without consent if it is in the public interest in order to prevent a crime or protect others from harm
- Tell them what you will do next and who you will inform
- Immediately report to and inform the CEO, COO or Line Manager
- Record all details you are aware of on the Safeguarding Incident Record Form (SIRF) as soon as possible

When allegations or concerns are expressed about an employee or contracted service provider, you should:

- Take the allegation or concern seriously
- Immediately inform the CEO/COO or Line Manager if they are not implicated in the allegation
- If you believe the child or young person is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which you would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you should contact the relevant emergency service and then notify the CEO/COO or Line Manager
- Record all details you are aware of on the Safeguarding Incident Record Form (SIRF) as soon as possible

In situations where there has been or may have been a crime, it is important that forensic or other evidence is preserved, or can be collected, as part of the police investigation. Try not to disturb evidence or potential evidence and seek advice about what you need to do to preserve evidence.

Who should complete the Safeguarding Incident Record Form (SIRF)?

It is the responsibility of the person who directly observes or witnesses the event (e.g. living situation) that is being recorded or who has participated in the meeting/conversation, to complete the record. Where this is not possible and records are completed or updated by other people, it must be clear from the record which person provided the information. Preferably, the person with first-hand knowledge should read and sign the record. There must be clear differentiation between opinion and fact. Records of decisions must show who has made the decision, the basis for it, the date and time.

Recording Concerns

If any employee has concerns about the welfare of a child or young person at risk, or has concerns about the behaviour of an employee, it is vitally important to record all relevant details regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with the Police or other emergency service. A Safeguarding Incident Record Form (SIRF) must be completed (even if no referral is subsequently made).

Records may be used for: Evidence for investigations and inquires; Court Proceedings; Monitoring Quality Assurance; and Disciplinary procedures. The CEO will then manage the process and follow established guidance on information sharing, confidentiality, consent and the making of appropriate referrals.

Who to go to

The Safeguarding Contract Contacts document available on SharePoint outlines where you should report concerns depending on the CCG area the concern has originated. If in doubt, then approach a board member for help and guidance.

Allegations against Staff

Where abuse is alleged against an employee, this must be reported immediately to your line manager and the COO of the company. Consideration should be given to whether a crime has been committed and the duty to report to the Police.

The procedure remains the same as if you were reporting an external party. In addition the following procedure applies.

1. Where the alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect is a member of staff an immediate risk assessment needs to be undertaken to decide if the staff member will be immediately removed from their work area. The decision will need to involve a Director of the company and Human Resources department.
2. The decision to suspend a member of staff pending an investigation will be made by the Human Resources Department. If the allegation is against a member of medical staff the Medical Director will be involved.
3. The disciplinary or workforce procedures will be instigated as soon as possible.
4. The Police must be involved if a crime has believed to have been committed. Contact with the police should be via the Director of Nursing, Deputy Director of Nursing or the Executive on call, unless it is an emergency.