



Community Action Dacorum Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Version 7 – April 2025
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Policy Statement

Community Action Dacorum will from time to time become involved in projects / partnerships delivering services and interacting with children, young people and vulnerable adults. In doing so Community Action Dacorum recognises its responsibility in protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and safeguarding their welfare. All children, young people and vulnerable adults who come into contact with staff, volunteers and trustees of Community Action Dacorum can expect to be treated with respect and afforded an appropriate level of protection. The safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount. When working in partnership or providing support we will endeavour to seek assurance from those with whom we work that they have taken all reasonable steps to ensure this. We expect them to:

- Recognise that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are carefully selected and checked to the highest level possible.
- Adopt a Safer staff/volunteer recruitment policy
- That a risk assessment of any premises they use is done.
- That staff and volunteers are adequately trained to respond swiftly to any suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Appoint a child safeguarding / vulnerable adults officer to take responsibility for safety and act appropriately and confidentially when dealing with protection issues.
- Make sure all staff and volunteers know exactly who the child safeguarding /vulnerable adults officer is.
- Have a professional contact list including the local police station and social services.
- Have a child safeguarding / vulnerable adults policy that shows this commitment.

Community Action Dacorum is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We believe -

- That the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults should always be of paramount importance, whatever the circumstances.
- That everyone who may be involved in a project working with children, young people or vulnerable adults has a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse.
- Special care is needed in dealing with children, young people or vulnerable adults whose age, inexperience or physical state makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse.
- Where appropriate sufficient training must be made available to staff and volunteers to provide them with the necessary knowledge to ensure safe care is always maintained.

Supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector

As a council for voluntary service we promote and advocate best practice for the local voluntary and community sectors. We have an expectation that our members groups and project partners should have in place appropriate Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Policies and Procedures that clearly describe what individuals have to do in order to keep children and vulnerable adults safe. We will offer support to our members to achieve these standards in care.

Every organisation should have a designated person, or champion for safeguarding. The champion should be an individual whose responsibility is essentially, to make sure that things written in the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy/Procedures happen. Every organisation should also DBS check all staff and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults.

Policy

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating. female genital mutilation (FGM) or otherwise causing physical harm to a child/vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a carer/parent fabricates the symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child/vulnerable adult.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child/vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child/vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non penetrative acts. They may include noncontact activities such as involving children/vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child/vulnerable adults such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's/vulnerable adult's emotional development.

It may involve:

- Telling a child/vulnerable adult they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child/vulnerable adult.
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- A child/vulnerable adult seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another
- Bullying or harassment
- Causing a child/vulnerable adult to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption of a child/vulnerable adult

Neglect or acts of omission

Persistent failure to meet a child's/vulnerable adult's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health and development. Neglect may occur:

- During pregnancy as a result of substance abuse
- Failure to provide adequate food and clothing
- Failing to provide shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Failing to protect a child/vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Repeated incidents of poor professional practice or neglect.
- Inflexible services based on the needs of the providers rather than the person requiring the service.

Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory Abuse includes age, race, religious/belief, gender and sexist abuse, plus abuse based on a person's disability, favouring, acting upon personal prejudices and lack of access or individuality

Financial Abuse or Material Abuse

Unauthorised and improper use of funds, property or any resources of a vulnerable person (Stein 1991). Misappropriating money, valuables or property, forcing will changes and denying rightful access to personal funds, arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance, denying access to benefits, someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress and employees taking a loan from a person using the service.

Modern Day Slavery

Human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation such as escort work and prostitution and debt bondage.

Organisational or Institutional Abuse

Discouraging visits or the involvement of relatives or friends, lack of leadership and supervision, lack of respect for dignity and privacy, misuse of medication, abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service.

Domestic Violence or Abuse

Can be characterised by a number of indicators of abuse such as psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

Self Neglect

Lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety e.g. hoarding, neglecting household maintenance and failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs.

Prevent

In respect of safeguarding individuals from radicalisation/extremism, Community Action Dacorum recognises that radicalisation can occur to any individual from any community and is not particular to any ethnic, social or racial group. There are no definitive indicators that an individual is susceptible to radicalisation but there are a number of signs that together can increase the risk.

Signs include:

- Social exclusion
- Religious conversion
- Change in behaviour
- Poverty
- Being in possession of extremist literature
- Global or national events
- Confused identity
- Online searching or sharing of extremist messages
- Intolerance of difference – faith, gender, race, sexuality
- Advocating violence towards others

Community Action Dacorum is committed to supporting the Prevent element of the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy and will continue to champion British Values through all services and activities. We will provide training and development opportunities for staff, trustees, tutors, volunteers and learners to recognise signs of radicalisation and to understand their responsibilities and systems for reporting concerns.

Please refer to our Online Safety Policy for keeping learners safe online.

If you are worried that someone is being radicalised or susceptible to being drawn into supporting terrorism or becoming a terrorist, you should speak immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy in their absence and record the concern on our "logging a concern" form. The check process will be undertaken to see whether there is enough information leading to a real concern and whether a referral should be made or in the case of an emergency a police referral required. The Designated Lead will then seek advice from the local authority Prevent Team¹ and if concerns still remain a [Prevent referral](#) will be completed and sent to Hertfordshire Prevent². Concerns should also be logged with external funders where there is a contractual obligation to do so.

¹ prevent@hertfordshire.gov.uk

² preventreferrals@herts.police.uk

What should you do if you suspect abuse is taking place?

Community Action Dacorum will respond promptly to any concerns expressed by an employee or volunteer about a child or vulnerable adult. Community Action Dacorum has a designated safeguarding person who takes responsibility for issues relating to child and vulnerable adults safeguarding. It is not the responsibility of the employee/volunteer to investigate or make a decision as to whether or not abuse has taken place. There is however a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. It is very important that any concerns on a child's/vulnerable adult's safety are logged using the appropriate form by the project/service manager and then reported directly by the manager to the designated safeguarding person for action. The named people for safeguarding children/vulnerable adults will be responsible for dealing with any concerns reported by project/service managers relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. They are currently Linda Nateghi and Loretta Anderson (Designated Safeguarding Leads) and Helen Mutio (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead). The Officers will be responsible for referring allegations or suspicions of abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Leads, or if the concerns relate to that person they should be reported to the deputy designated person. It should also be noted that where a contract demands it there may be a requirement to log safeguarding concerns and any subsequent referrals with the funding/lead agency. The Designated Safeguarding Leads are able to provide further guidance and will take responsibility for this requirement.

Designated Safeguarding Person

- Community Action Dacorum has two dedicated members of staff to take responsibility for safeguarding children/vulnerable adult matters. They are Linda Nateghi and Loretta Anderson
- Because of their key role in keeping children/vulnerable adults safe enhanced level DBS checks will be undertaken and 2 references taken up.

Their role is to:

- Ensure the organisations Safeguarding Children/Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedures are implemented and updated as required
- Ensure they know how to make contact with social care and police both during and after office hours
- Report any concerns to social care or the police. Urgent concerns should be reported immediately by those aware of them even if the designated person is not available, and it is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure all staff and volunteers know how to do this
- Act as a source of advice on all safeguarding children/vulnerable adult matters
- Ensure that a record is kept of any concerns about a child or adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies
- Ensure that any such record is kept safely and securely

- Appoint a 3rd designated person to cover for holiday and sickness leave, the current 3rd designated person is the Deputy DSL Helen Mutio

Staff, volunteer and tutor selection and training

Where Community Action Dacorum is the lead agency we will take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from being employed or volunteering for projects that involve work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Applicants for such posts will be subject to Community Action Dacorum's safer staff recruitment procedures and required to give consent for an appropriate disclosure and barring service check at a level appropriate to their role.

Staff and volunteers will not be permitted to work unsupervised with children, young people or vulnerable adults until the appropriate references/disclosures have been obtained. All personal data will be processed and stored in accordance with the Community Action Dacorum Data Protection Policy and GDPR requirements. Sufficient training will be made available to staff and volunteers to equip them with the necessary knowledge to ensure that a safe environment is always maintained. Staff, volunteers and tutors who come into regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be asked to sign a self-declaration on an annual basis to confirm that there have been no changes in their circumstances.

Recruitment Procedure for Staff, Volunteers and Tutors

The aim of any process of selecting staff, volunteers and tutors is to make sure people are suitable for the role and understand what is expected of them. Where a role involves working with children/vulnerable adults Community Action Dacorum uses the following recruitment procedure:

1. The whole interview and selection process is completed BEFORE any staff and/or volunteers take up their duties.
2. Job descriptions and person specifications are prepared for all paid roles and volunteers. These make clear what personal qualities are required specific to the role and are given to anyone interested so they can see what will be required.
3. There will always be a minimum of two people on an interview panel. This usually includes a member of the senior management team/project manager and for senior roles at least one member of the Board of Trustees.
4. All staff and volunteers are required to fill in an application form. They will be required to provide, at least, two referees who can vouch for their character and suitability to be in a position of responsibility for children/vulnerable adults. They will also be required to complete a declaration of any criminal offences or matters of concern.
5. Short listing of candidates is done in line with the person specification and shortlisted candidates will then be interviewed.
6. Where necessary the following checks will be undertaken i) qualification check, ii) right to work check and iii) overseas check.
7. If a person is thought to be suitable for the role they will be asked to complete a DBS

application form and their identity checked.

8. Once DBS clearance is obtained, if there are no adverse reports the person can start their duties. As an integral part of their induction they will be given a copy of the Safeguarding Children/Vulnerable Adult policy, procedure and the code of conduct and asked to sign for them.
9. If a DBS disclosure reveals a criminal record that would not automatically ban the person from working with vulnerable adults or children but causes concern, Community Action Dacorum will discuss the offence with the applicant and take into consideration the circumstances of the offence, type of offence, when committed, pattern etc and assess fairly thus ensuring fair appointment and selection.
10. The Service/Project Manager and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead will meet with the person to explain their duties and any key points from the code of conduct specific to their role
11. All staff, volunteers and tutors will serve a probationary period, and there will be a two-way meeting halfway through this period. This meeting should be a positive experience with a chance to discuss areas for development.

Code of conduct for all staff and volunteers

Always remember that while you are working with children/vulnerable adults you are in a position of trust and your responsibilities to them and Community Action Dacorum must be uppermost in your mind at all times. Where appropriate, staff and volunteers will receive information and basic training in safe conduct and what to do if they have concerns about a child/vulnerable adult.

Do Not:

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting
- Smoke in front of any child/vulnerable adult
- Use non prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child/vulnerable adult
- Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language
- Invite a child/vulnerable adults to your home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times
- Engage in any sexual activity (this would include using sexualised language) with a child/vulnerable adult you meet through your duties or start a personal relationship with them, this would be an abuse of trust
- Engage in rough or physical games, including horseplay
- Let allegations a child/vulnerable adult makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Rely upon good nature to protect you or believe "it could never happen to me"
- Give children/vulnerable adults presents or personal items

Do:

- Exercise caution about being alone with a child/vulnerable adult.
- Ensure that any physical contact is open and initiated by the child's/vulnerable adults needs
- Talk explicitly to children/vulnerable adults about their right to be kept safe from harm
- Listen to them and take every opportunity to raise their self esteem

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- Work as a team with your coworkers/volunteers. Agree with them what behaviour you expect and be consistent in enforcing it
- Make sure you have read the Safeguarding Children/vulnerable adults Procedure and Policy and that you feel confident that you know how to recognise when a child/vulnerable adult may be suffering harm, how to handle any disclosure and how to report any concerns
- Seek advice and support from your colleagues and your designated safeguarding officer for safeguarding children/vulnerable adults
- Be clear with anyone disclosing any matter that could concern the safety and well-being of a child /vulnerable adult that you cannot guarantee to keep this information to yourself
- Seek opportunities for training
- Make sure you are familiar with Community Action Dacorum's confidentiality policy

Visitors

Visitors are made aware of our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy and are given information about what to do if they are concerned about any aspect of a child's or vulnerable adult's welfare. When visitors are invited to speak to staff/volunteers or learners we undertake due diligence to ensure that visiting speakers are appropriate.

Role and Responsibilities

Staff and volunteers must remember it is the policy of Community Action Dacorum to keep "no secrets" where safeguarding is concerned.

If you have any concerns regarding the safety/wellbeing of any children, young people of vulnerable adults you are working with on behalf of Community Action Dacorum, or a child/young person or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure to you, you must follow the safeguarding procedure as described below

STAGE 1

It is your duty of care to make sure that the child/young person/vulnerable adult is safe. Ensure that the person knows that they are safe at the moment and check that the person is as safe as possible.

Do not start an investigation

If necessary, you may have to call the police or an ambulance at this point

STAGE 2

All staff/volunteers are duty bound to report any allegations/suspensions of abuse or threatened abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. All staff must record all relevant information using the "logging a concern form". Once reported it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the continuing safety and well-being of the child/young adult/vulnerable adult.

Designated Safeguarding Leads
Linda Nateghi and Loretta Anderson
Deputy Designated Person
Helen Mutio
01442 617666

STAGE 3

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make the referral to the appropriate outside agency and external funder where this is a contractual obligation.

Child Safeguarding Concern Hertfordshire County Council

0300 123 4043

Vulnerable Adult Concern Adult Care Services Adult Protection

0300 123 4042 or 0800 6444 101 (if adult at risk is known to be receiving mental health services)

STAGE 4

The case responsibility now rests with the external agency to whom the initial referral was made. There may be a requirement for further involvement from Community Action Dacorum, but this is dependent upon the course of action decided upon by the external agency.

If you are unable to contact either of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), please in the first instance contact the Deputy Designated Lead. In the unlikely event that all members of the safeguarding team are unavailable you should you speak to Chief Executive to report your concerns by calling 01442 617664 or 01442 253935. The list of contacts is located on the notice board in the kitchen. At any stage, please ensure that a member of staff is aware of the situation as soon as possible. Any changes to contacting the appointed DSL's will be notified in advance to staff, volunteers, and tutors.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and if necessary, more frequently in line with changes in legislation and guidance on the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults and any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children, young people or vulnerable adults in Community Action Dacorum.

Legislation

Community Action Dacorum's commitment to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children is underpinned by its legal obligation to provide employment and services without discrimination under the following pieces of legislation

- Sexual Offence Act 2003
- Children's Act 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Disclosure and Barring Service 2013
- Care Act 2014
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015