



# **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures**

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## **Introduction**

Epic Partners has always placed and continues to place the highest priority on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The policy and procedures have previously been reviewed and revised in the light of learning from serious case reviews and the subsequent policy developments that have taken place. The policy considers the statutory guidance contained in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2015 DfE, Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board (updated June 2017) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016 DfE.

This document follows guidance on what organisations providing services to children or working with children and adults need to have in place.

It also includes a policy statement, roles and responsibilities, guidance for staff and managers. It outlines arrangements for training, monitoring and information sharing.

**This policy has been reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees in September 2020.**

- The policy will be up-dated every year
- Next review date September 2021
- Epic's Designated Safeguarding Officers are Peter Bewley and Chantelle Stefanovic. Contact details are in Appendix V

## **Section 1: The Policy**

### **Epic Partners Commitment to Safeguarding**

Epic Partners adopts an open and accepting attitude towards children and vulnerable adults and recognises the contribution it can make to protect them. The aim of this policy is to explain how Epic Partners will safeguard and promote safety and health when working with children and adults, by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The child/adult's welfare is of paramount importance. There are five main elements to this policy:

- Ensuring safe recruitment: checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who will work with children and vulnerable adults
- Raising staff awareness of issues concerning the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- Developing and implementing rigorous systems for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- Establishing a safe environment in which children and vulnerable adults can learn and develop
- Working with appropriate support agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults

**This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults.**

Staff and volunteers aim to create an environment where children, parents and vulnerable adults will feel confident to talk about any concerns with staff or volunteers and will see Epic Partners activities as safe and well-led. To achieve its aims, Epic Partners will:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children and vulnerable adults feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Ensure that children and vulnerable adults know that there are adults whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty

- Develop activities and opportunities which equip children and vulnerable adults with the skills and resilience to stay safe from abuse
- Where appropriate, establish effective working relationships with parents (in the case of safeguarding children) and colleagues from other agencies

This policy considers the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults separately and covers aspects of safeguarding that are common to both groups.

## **Safeguarding Children**

### **Supporting Children at Risk**

Epic Partners recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at Epic Partners activities, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may be withdrawn.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

Epic Partners will support children through:

- Promoting activities which encourage self-esteem and self-motivation
- Promoting a positive, supportive and secure environment
- Treating children with respect and sensitivity
- Managing behaviour effectively
- Developing productive, supportive relationships with parents and partner schools, whenever it is appropriate to do so
- Developing and supporting responsible and knowledgeable staff members who are trained to respond appropriately in safeguarding situations

Staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. It must also be stressed that children from homes where there is domestic violence and drug or alcohol abuse may also be vulnerable and in need of support.

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**

For the purpose of this policy 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over.

A Vulnerable Adult 'is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. (*Definition from 'No Secrets' March 2000 Department of Health*)

This may include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates. It may include an individual who may be vulnerable as a consequence of their role as a carer in relation to any of the above.

It may also include victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social behaviour. The person's need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts and includes the failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they did not, or could not, consent. Issues of abuse may relate to neglect and poor standards of care, which may be ongoing and if ignored may result in a severe deterioration in both physical and mental health and even death. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual.

The following legislative acts provide the framework within which Epic Partners will provide support to vulnerable adults:

- Human Rights Act, 1998
- Mental Capacity Act, 2005
- Public Interest Disclosure Act, 2013
- Data Protection Act, 1998
- Freedom of Information Act, 2000
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Code of Practice, 2008.

Concerns about abuse of a vulnerable adult should be raised and reported to Adult Social Care at Nottingham City Council, using the agreed system.

## **Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities**

Epic Partners Designated Safeguarding Officers are Peter Bewley and Chantelle Stefanovic.

The Board of Trustees member responsible for monitoring safeguarding is Jane Swingler.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:**

- ensure that the policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed.
- Ensure that information is immediately passed to the appropriate agency, co-ordinate action and liaise with other agencies on suspected abuse cases.
- Ensure sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in inter-agency meetings and contributing to the assessment of vulnerable children.
- Ensure that all staff are alert to signs of possible abuse and know what to do if they have any concerns or suspicions.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibility to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and ensure that such concerns are addressed sensitively, effectively and in accordance with the agreed Whistleblowing policy.
- Monitor training and induction and ensure all staff receive safeguarding training every two years.
- Be responsible for investigating allegations against staff.
- Work with lead trustee to produce a yearly safeguarding report.
- Support and advise line managers.
- Monitor safeguarding work in order to evaluate outcomes for children.
- Keep up to date with current legislation, policy, guidance and practice.
- Undertake safer recruitment procedures.

### **Lead trustee will:**

- have a monitoring role and responsibility to ensure the organisation is following good practice and that policies are up to date.
- Work with the designated Epic Partners Safeguarding Lead on a yearly report to trustees.

**Staff will:**

- be familiar with Epic Partners' and the schools' safeguarding policies and procedures and adhere to them at all times.
- Know the Schools' Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, and their Epic Line Manager, Epic Safeguarding Lead and Epic Deputy Safeguarding Lead, and record advice given and action taken, as outlined in Appendix III: Staff guidance on responding to disclosures.
- Discuss all safeguarding with their Epic line manager/Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- Keep detailed, accurate and clear records.
- Provide where necessary written additional information for meetings about safeguarding in cooperation with Epic's Safeguarding Lead.
- Check with their Epic Line Manager if asked to do anything unusual or out of the ordinary or which compromises or may compromise professional boundaries.

**School Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibilities:**

- Keep all staff updated with current safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure that all staff receive safeguarding training.
- Undertake training at two yearly intervals.
- Provide advice and support to school staff.
- Refer any concerns as soon as they arise to Children's Social Care.
- Monitor attendance and development of children on the Integrated Children's systems & Child Protection Plan and inform Children's Social Care of proposed or actual change of school.
- Ensure that all relevant information about a child is disseminated to appropriate staff within Epic Partners.
- Maintain accurate and secure safeguarding records.
- If an allegation is made against an Epic Partners member of staff, the school must inform Epic Partners as the employer immediately. Agreement will then be made to inform the local authority.

**Section 3: Guidance and procedures for Epic Partners staff****Safeguarding Procedure****Reporting a disclosure**

All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously. This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. Staff guidance is included in Appendices III and IV.

A full record must be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information, using the City Council's Multi Agency Referral Form. This should be sent online to the appropriate agency within 24 hours or as near as possible.

**Responding to an allegation made against a non-staff member**

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Epic Partners Safeguarding Lead on that working day where possible. The Safeguarding Lead will report the matter to the appropriate social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority social services department within 24 hours.

**Responding to allegations made against a staff member**

Epic Partners understands that a vulnerable child/adult may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform their line manager, who will conduct a full investigation.

To avoid putting themselves in a difficult situation, or even the possibility of claims of abuse, staff should follow the general guidelines for good practice (Appendix IV).

The Epic Partners Safeguarding Lead will decide how to proceed and will inform the staff member of any further involvement which may be needed.

### **Whistleblowing**

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, staff should speak to their Epic Partners line manager. See the Whistleblowing Policy for more details.

### **Maintaining Records and Monitoring**

Well-kept records are essential to good practice. The Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Lead are responsible for such records and for deciding at what point these records should be passed over to other agencies. The Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Lead will disclose any information about a child/adult to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. All records will be kept securely at the Epic Partners offices. All staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child/adult, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, will be expected to make notes as soon as possible (within the hour, if possible), writing down exactly what was said, **using the child/adult's own words**. All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature.

## **Section 4: Guidance for Epic staff working with sexually active young people under the age of 18**

This guidance has been devised with the understanding that many young people under the age of 18 will have an interest in sex and sexual relationships and that this is part of healthy development.

It is designed to assist those working with children and young people to identify where these relationships may be abusive, and the children and young people may need the provision of protection or additional services.

It is based on the core principle that the welfare of the child or young person is paramount, and emphasizes the need for professionals to work together in accurately assessing the risk of significant harm when a child or young person is engaged in sexual activity.

This section is written in the context of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

This legal framework has the aim to protect the rights and interests of young people and make it easier to prosecute people who pressure or force others into having sex when they do not want to.

There are two key principles:

1. The legal age for young people to consent to have sex is still 16 whatever their sexual identity.
2. The law is not intended to prosecute consensual teenage activity between two people of a similar age unless it involves abuse and/or exploitation.

Under the Sexual Offences Act young people still have the right to confidential advice on contraception, condoms, pregnancy and abortion even if they are under 18 (see Fraser guidelines section 4.3).

### **Risk assessment**

Not all sexual activity engaged in by under 16s is against the law, and even if it is, the likelihood of prosecution is low unless there is an element of force, deception or abuse of power involved.

In order to determine whether the relationship presents a risk to the young person, the following factors should be considered. This list is not exhaustive and other factors may be needed to be taken into account:

- Whether the young person is competent to understand and consent to the sexual activity they are involved in

- The nature of the relationship between those involved, particularly if there are age or power imbalances as outlined above
- Whether overt aggression, coercion or bribery was involved including misuse of substances/alcohol as a dis-inhibitor
- Whether the young person's own behaviour, for example through misuse of substances, including alcohol, places them in a position where they are unable to make an informed choice about the activity
- Any attempts to secure secrecy by the sexual partner beyond what would be considered usual in a teenage relationship
- Whether the sexual partner is known by the agency as having other concerning relationships with similar young people
- If accompanied by an adult, does that relationship give any cause for concern?
- Whether the young person denies, minimises or accepts concerns
- Whether methods used to secure compliance and/or secrecy by the sexual partner are consistent with behaviours considered to be 'grooming' where the abuser may organise the environment.
- Whether sex has been used to gain favours (e.g. swap sex for money, cigarettes, clothes, CDs, trainers, alcohol, drugs etc).
- The young person has a lot of money or other valuable things which cannot be accounted for.

It is considered good practice for practitioners to follow the Fraser/Gillick guidelines when discussing personal or sexual matters with a young person under 16. The Fraser guidelines give guidance on providing advice and treatment to young people less than 16 years of age. These hold that sexual health services can be offered without parental consent providing that;

- The young person understands the advice that is being given
- The young person cannot be persuaded to inform or seek support from their parents, and will not allow the worker to inform the parents that contraceptive/protection, e.g. condom advice, is being given
- The young person is likely to begin or continue to have sexual intercourse without contraception or protection by a barrier method
- The young person's physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless they receive contraceptive advice or treatment
- It is in the young person's best interest to receive contraceptive/safe sex advice and treatment without parental consent

### **Young People under the Age of 13**

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, children under the age of 13 are considered of insufficient age to give consent to sexual activity. A child under the age of 13 who is having penetrative sex is a victim of statutory rape and a safeguarding referral must be made to Children's Social Care in the local authority where the child or children live immediately.

The police must be notified as soon as possible when a criminal offence has been committed or is suspected of having been committed against a child unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so (see recommendation 12 of Sir Michael Richard's report).

A referral would be made through existing Epic Partners safeguarding procedures, if one had not already been made.

When a girl under 13 is found to be pregnant, a referral must be made through existing Epic Partners procedures if a referral has not already been made.

### **Young People between 13 and 16**

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 reinforces that, whilst mutually agreed, non-exploitative sexual activity between teenagers does take place and that often no harm comes from it, the age of consent should still remain at 16. This acknowledges that this group of young people may still be vulnerable, even when they do not view themselves as such.

Sexually active young people in this age group will still have to have their needs assessed using this protocol. Discussion about whether to refer using Epic Partners safeguarding procedures should take place with your Epic Partners Line Manager and Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

This difference in procedure reflects the position that, whilst sexual activity under 16 remains illegal, young people under the age of 13 are not capable to give consent to such sexual activity.

### **Young People between 17-18**

Although sexual activity in itself is no longer an offence over the age of 16, young people under the age of 18 are still offered the protection of safeguarding procedures under the Children Act 1989. Consideration still needs to be given to issues of sexual exploitation through prostitution and abuse of power in circumstances outlined above. Young people, of course, can still be subject to offences of rape and assault and the circumstances of an incident may need to be explored with a young person. Young people over the age of 16 and under the age of 18 are not deemed able to give consent if the sexual activity is with an adult in a position of trust or a family member as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The Sexual Offences Act, recognising changes in family structures, has widened the definition of family. As well as blood relatives, the act covers wider family members who are or have been living in the same household. This includes foster parents and foster siblings, step parents, cousins, step brothers and sisters.

### **Abuse of positions of trust**

This applies to people who work with children in places like schools and the youth service. Under these laws, young people under the age of 18 are protected from abuse by those in positions of trust.

### **Sharing Information with Parents and Carers**

Decisions to share information with parents and carers will be taken using professional judgement, consideration of Fraser guidelines and in consultation with the safeguarding Procedures. Decisions will be based on the child's age, maturity and ability to appreciate what is involved in terms of the implications and risks to themselves. This should be coupled with the parents' and carers' ability and commitment to protect the young person. Given the responsibility that parents have for the conduct and welfare of their children, professionals should encourage the young person, at all points, to share information with their parents and carers wherever safe to do so.

This protocol is written on the understanding that those working with this vulnerable group of young people will naturally want to do as much as they can to provide a safe, accessible and confidential service whilst remaining aware of their duty of care to safeguard them and promote their well-being.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 does not affect the ability of health professionals and others working with young people to provide confidential advice or treatment on contraception, sexual and reproductive health to young people under 16.

The Act states that a person is not guilty of aiding, abetting or counselling a sexual offence against a child where they are acting for the purpose of:

- Protecting a child from pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection
- Protecting the physical safety of a child
- Promoting a child's emotional well-being by the giving of advice.

In all cases, the person must not be causing or encouraging the committing of an offence or a child's participation in it. Nor must the person be acting for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification. This exception, in statute, covers not only health professionals, but anyone who acts to protect a child, for example teachers, social care practitioners and parents.

## Section 5: Guidance for Epic Partners Line Managers

### Managing Safeguarding Cases

In the context of overall support of staff, managers must gather regular updates on outstanding safeguarding cases, and double-check whether any new safeguarding concerns have emerged. Cases which have either a CP or CIN plan or are identified as being on the cusp of social care involvement (Early intervention) must be discussed at every supervision meeting.

What to do when a worker brings a concern to you:

- Find out as much information as possible about the situation and ask the member of staff to forward you a copy of events in writing.
- Who else is already involved – has the situation already been discussed with the local Designated Safeguarding Lead?
- If more information is needed contact the local Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Inform your Line Manager and Epic Partners Safeguarding Lead.
- Keep your own record of the situation and outcome of discussions.
- Monitor the situation regularly to check what action has been taken

### Risk Assessments

Where Epic Partners staff have potential evidence of abuse, it is not generally our responsibility to carry out a risk assessment. Instead we must report our concerns to the school DSL, or the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Lead. Should the DSL or deputy be unavailable then the member of staff should contact their line manager. In these unusual circumstances (which in theory should never happen), the line manager should make a risk assessment based on information available, considering whether there is reason to believe the children are at risk of immediate danger, or whether there is potential for abuse. Manager should agree action to be taken in conjunction with Epic Partners Safeguarding Lead, and where there is an immediate risk of significant harm, Epic Partners will make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care.

Once a referral has been made to Children's Social Care the case becomes their statutory responsibility. Where staff are concerned about the response of Children's Social Care, Line Managers may follow up these concerns after discussion with local Designated Safeguarding Lead and the relevant person in Children's Social Care. Managers should liaise with the Epic Partners' Safeguarding Lead in these circumstances.

### Recording

- Managers must keep a clear record of all communication with staff about safeguarding issues, to be saved centrally in the appropriate folder.
- Careful recording of these discussions is vital, including key information, evidence of risk, concerns, advice given, and next steps.
- Records of all supervision and line management given to staff must be available for scrutiny, as part of the Epic quality assurance processes, or as specific needs arise in relation to particular cases.

### School Safeguarding Procedures

Where there may be concerns re safeguarding procedures in a school, Line Managers should:

- Gather the facts from the member of staff
- Make a clear note of the issues and check back with the member of staff that they are correct
- If then, the Epic Partners Line Manager does have any concerns, they should discuss with the Epic Partners Safeguarding Lead.
- The Line Manager should arrange to meet the school Link Manager and designated person to discuss the issues.
- Check whether the school have a reasonable explanation of their decisions.
- Epic Partners Line Managers should monitor and record the situation concisely and clearly, including any and all follow up action.

- If the member of staff or Line Manager continue to have concerns and the school does not appear to be giving satisfactory answers to these concerns, aim to arrange a meeting with the head/line manager and the LA/borough Designated Officer to discuss Epic Partners concerns. Support is available for managers at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-about-childrens-social-care-services-to-ofsted>

## **Section 6: Staff Training**

Epic Partners will ensure that all staff and volunteers who will be working with children and adults are confident and competent to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities. Training will include:

- Recognising signs of abuse and how to respond to a disclosure
- Awareness and understanding of Epic Partners Safeguarding Policy and other associated policies
- Induction safeguarding training for all new staff and volunteers
- Training in recording of referrals/concerns
- Update training for Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Safer recruitment training for senior staff and Trustees

Staff undertake safeguarding training in accordance with the legal guidelines. Epic Partners keeps a record of all relevant staff training.

### **Support for staff**

Epic Partners recognises that staff working with an adult/child who has suffered harm, or may be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Epic's Safeguarding Lead and to seek further support as appropriate.

### **Confidentiality**

The important statutory duties in relation to children and vulnerable adults cannot be met without effective and appropriate sharing of relevant information, some of which may be regarded as confidential. This should not be confused with secrecy. Information is shared on a need to know basis. Anyone with concerns that a child/adult is subject to abuse has a duty to maintain confidentiality and disclose such information only with the appropriate members of staff. The purpose of confidentiality is to protect the child/adult.

### **Further Guidance**

The Local Authority Safeguarding contacts are:

Children and Families – 0115 876 4800 - [candfdirect@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:candfdirect@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

Adults: Nottingham City Council Health and Care Point – 0300 131 03 00 (Opening times; Monday - Friday 8.00am – 7.00pm)

This policy is shared with staff as part of the induction process and through ongoing training. It is reviewed and updated on a yearly basis. It is the role of the Board of Trustees and Epic Partners management team to ensure that the policy is adhered to at all levels.

## **Section 7: Information sharing**

Information-sharing is an essential element of Epic Partners support for children and families, enabling us to promote early intervention, to improve outcomes, and to protect children. The need for good information-sharing among agencies must be balanced against the need for us to retain a trusted relationship with the children and parents we support. Where information-sharing among agencies is demonstrably necessary in order to protect the safety of a child, this takes precedence over client confidentiality.

Epic Partners always aims to work in partnership with children and families, and to avoid breaches of trust. Staff must be open and honest with service-users about the limits of confidentiality that we can offer at the outset of their working relationship. The extent to which referring schools or Local Authorities require detailed updates on the progress of casework may vary according to the school or the project, and staff should be open with service-users about these expectations. Staff should highlight that at a minimum, we must share information on a need-to-know basis with school or Local Authority, where children may be at risk of harm. Staff should also be open with children and families about supervisory and case recording arrangements within Epic Partners.

Staff should exercise their professional judgement in deciding whether to share information without consent, and should seek guidance from their Epic Partners line manager whenever there may be a question about our duty. Sharing information without consent should always be a proportionate response, based on the need to safeguard children and families. Staff and managers should keep a clear record of the decision to share information, including managerial guidance, the reasons for this decision, and details of what information has been shared and with who.

To support good judgement in these matters, practitioners and managers should refer to the government guidance Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers (DCSF 2008):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

## Appendix I: Definitions of Child Abuse and Triggers for Concern

- **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 or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This is often described as "fabricated or induced illness".
- **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill treatment 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, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care/treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

There are many varied indicators that a child is suffering from abuse whilst, at the same time, these may not be the result of abuse. It is therefore important that any unexplained injuries or significant changes in a child's physical appearance, behaviour or emotional state are responded to by discussing concerns with the appropriate person.

### Triggers for concern

- Patterns of attendance
- Changes in classroom/workshop functioning
- Statements, comments, stories, drawings, play
- Parental interest and comments
- Medicals
- Response to PE/Sport
- Injuries/marks, past and present
- Changes in mood or behaviour (eg, aggressive) and attitude to peers and adults
- Abnormal reaction to a situation or a person
- Pseudo mature or promiscuous behaviour or language
- General demeanour and appearance

## Appendix II: Types of Abuse in Vulnerable Adults

The Department of Health has identified the following as the main types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - including race, sex, culture, religion, politics, that is based on a persons disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment, hate crime.
- **Institutional abuse** - Institutional abuse although not a separate category of abuse in itself, requires specific mention simply to highlight that adults placed in any kind of care home or day care establishment are potentially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be especially so when care standards and practices fall below an acceptable level as detailed in the contract specification.
- **Multiple forms of abuse** - Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

## **Appendix III: Staff guidance on responding to disclosures**

### **Children:**

If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained from another child which gives concern of abuse, the person receiving this information should follow the guidance below:

- Ensure the child is reassured that she/he has done the right thing by telling you, however, do not make promises of confidentiality.
- It is essential that the child is listened to and treated sensitively.
- Avoid asking leading questions. It is best to listen to the child, not directly; allow him/her to speak freely.
- Do not examine the child.
- Decide with the child what he/she wants to do whilst you speak with your Epic Line Manager/Deputy Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding Lead and Head Teacher.
- As soon as the child has been settled, make some very quick brief notes of the information you have received — the date and time, where it took place, the child's demeanour and information about any bruises or marks.
- Immediately, tell your Epic Line Manager/Deputy Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding Lead and/or Head Teacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead and share all the information.
- Complete the school's child protection referral form and Epic safeguarding alert form as soon as possible.
- Ensure a copy of both of the forms are kept for Epic records.
- The school or Epic will refer this to Social Care. A verbal referral must be followed with a written referral within 24 hours.

### **Adults:**

If information is obtained from an adult which gives concern that they or a child is being abused, the person receiving this information should:

- Take what is said seriously and react calmly.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality.
- Make a full written record of what has been said, heard and seen as soon as possible.

## **Appendix IV: Good Practice Guidance**

To avoid putting yourself in a difficult situation, including the possibility of claims of abuse against you, the following notes are provided to give general guidance.

- Avoid doing anything that is not totally open, make sure you treat all children in the same way
- If you have to assist a child to put on specialist clothing, get them to agree that you will fit it, explain what you are doing while you are assisting them and make sure you do so openly and in sight of others
- If you are required to lift, carry or support children, avoid making contact with sensitive parts of the body and explain what you are doing while you are doing it and, where possible, gain their consent
- Do not put yourself in a position where you might find yourself out of public view or alone with a child
- Do not make any sexually suggestive comments to any child
- Do not engage in rough physical or provocative games with any child
- Never make any unnecessary physical contact with children
- Never take, or arrange to meet, children outside of the premises without the express permission of parents
- If a child makes approaches to you, or is overly familiar you should remove yourself from the situation and report the matter to the DSL (if in a school) or the EPIC Safeguarding Lead
- Never agree to keep a secret and, if asked, explain that it is not possible to keep secrets

## **Appendix V: Key Personnel**

The link Trustee for Safeguarding at Epic Partners is Jane Swingler.

The Designated Safeguarding Officers for Epic Partners are Peter Bewley, Norman Floyd and Chantelle Stefanovic.