Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Information

Responsible Person	**Wayne Stewart**
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Introduction

It is the policy of New Roots Devon Ltd to protect young people and vulnerable adults, especially some of the most vulnerable and at greatest risk of social exclusion. They may need coordinated early help services, that may involve New Roots Devon Ltd. We aim to protect young people and vulnerable adults from any form of abuse, whether emotional, physical, sexual or neglect. Referrals if required will be made to Devon County Council Children's Social Care service (MASH).

The staff of New Roots Workshop recognise their duty of care to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

New Roots Devon staff will have access to the Safeguarding Software of RecordMy, this will document all attendances, details of each student and staff and allow a safe process to update any safeguarding issues that will be automatically forwarded to the DSL for resolution. RecordMy will also log the administering of any medications and accident/near miss reporting. This safety software allows a chronological means of updating issues and will demonstrate patterns of concerns etc to ensure that the safeguarding of all persons within New Roots Devon are maintained at all times.

All practitioners should:

- Have direct access to the RecordMy software and how to use it in the event of a safeguarding issue.
- Be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect.
- Be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to young people.
- Maintain the highest standards of professional curiosity.

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- Share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the young person's needs and circumstances.
- Contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the young person's welfare.
- Take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the young person against specific plans.
- Work co-operatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the young person's safety.

Effective safeguarding arrangements should aim to meet the following two key principles:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:

For services to be effective, everyone and organisation should play their full part, access the RecordMy software and raise any concerns regardless of size of issue.

A young person-centred approach:

For services to be effective, they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of young people.

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines Safeguarding as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Policy Statement

- To provide an environment where people feel valued, respected, safe and secure.
- Every participant shall feel supported.
- To recognise children, young people and vulnerable adults, 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.
- To prevent harm and act where appropriate.
- To be mindful of the principles of proportion; and take the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk.
- To work in partnership with parents, carers, other agencies, and government departments responsible for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- To be accountable and transparent in delivering safeguarding.

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- To appoint an appropriate person to be responsible for safeguarding of all those associated with this policy.
- To ensure that the procedures relating to safeguarding are robust, fit for purpose, effective and carried out in an appropriate manner.
- To ensure that all staff, volunteers, and others who work with, or on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults are competent, confident and safe to do so.
- To recruit staff and volunteers using the Safer Recruitment guidelines.
- To ensure that all staff and, where appropriate, volunteers, participate in regular safeguarding training (at least every 3 years, or when there are changes in the law, policy or procedures).
- To review policy and procedures annually or as deemed necessary regarding changes in the law, recommendations or government guidance.
- To ensure that all those who work for or represent New Roots Workshop are aware of the underpinning principles of: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

The following definitions are based on those identified in Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education alongside the updated Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 - Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026.pdf:

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or another child.

Physical 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 fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

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- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations 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.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic abuse.
- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying).
- Causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.
- Exploiting and corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition; Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation which occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.

- A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching.

- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence.
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16- or 17-year-old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them.
- Where sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered.
- Non-consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim.
- If the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or their family has been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent; therefore, offences may have been committed
- Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group.

Neglect

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 because of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent 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, social and educational needs.

These definitions are used when determining significant harm and children can be affected by combinations of maltreatment and abuse, which can be impacted on by for example domestic abuse in the household or a cluster of problems faced by the adults.

In addition, research analysing Serious Case Reviews has demonstrated a significant prevalence of domestic abuse in the history of families with children who are subject of Child Protection Plans.

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Children can be affected by seeing, hearing and living with domestic abuse as well as being caught up in any incidents directly, whether to protect someone or as a target. It should also be noted that the age group of 16- and 17-year-olds have been found in recent studies to be increasingly affected by domestic abuse in their peer relationships.

It should therefore be considered in responding to concerns that the **Home Office Definition of domestic violence and abuse** is as follows:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim".

Safeguarding Policy Procedures

New Roots Workshop CIC is committed to ensuring effective, careful and a quick response to any concerns about physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of children, young people and vulnerable adults. To this end these procedures will be strictly always adhered to.

All New Roots Workshop CIC employees should:

- Be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect.
- Always show professional curiosity.
- Be alert to the risks which individual abusers or potential abusers, may pose to children.

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- Be alert to the impact on the child of any concerns of abuse or maltreatment.
- Be able to gather and analyse information as part of an assessment of the child's needs.

New Roots Workshop CIC child protection procedures will include information about how to:

- Identify potential or actual harm to children; whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.
- Discuss and record concerns with the DSL.
- Analyse concerns by completing an assessment.
- Discuss concerns with the agency's designated safeguarding children advisor (able to offer advice and decide upon the necessity for a referral to Devon County Council children's social care).

Staff

Regarding the Safer Recruitment guidelines, New Roots Workshop CIC will ensure:

- References will be taken up.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be carried out.
- Verification of previous work history.
- Regard for the "Rehabilitation of Offenders Act", making applicants aware that positions are exempt from this act.
- A probationary period of 6 months for new employees.
- All staff are made aware of the named person responsible for safeguarding at New Roots Workshop CIC is Wayne Stewart
- All staff are inducted into New Roots Workshop CIC safeguarding procedures. They should know how to react following disclosure, including reporting method
- All staff are supplied with and expected to read "Child Protection, a Brief Introduction", and other materials appertaining to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Team meetings regularly include safeguarding updates and training.
- Formal safeguarding training will be carried out every 3 years.
- Supervision will include discussion about low level safeguarding concerns.
- Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Seek advice from The Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (Devon SCP) https://devonscp.org.uk if needed.

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Volunteers and Visitors

- Visitors to New Roots Workshop CIC setting will be asked for identification before being admitted if they are not known to staff and sign the visitors' book.
- All visitors must make themselves known to the Manager on site and not left alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- All adult volunteers will have DBS checks and will not be left in a supervisory role.
- All volunteers will be expected to abide by the principles and procedures of this policy and refer any concerns they may have to the appropriate member of staff responsible and are not to be left alone with students.

Procedure to respond to the signs or suspicions of abuse

New Roots Workshop CIC staff will not decide whether abuse has taken place or if a person is at significant risk. This is the role of the statutory services. We do, however, have a responsibility to act if there are concerns about a young person's safety or welfare and report accordingly.

It is important that the person responding to this concern recognises that there is a different method of response for children and young people to that of vulnerable adults.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)' requires all staff to have knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and an understanding of the local early help and child protection arrangements.

New Roots Workshop CIC also has additional responsibilities in cases of suspected FGM, Peer on Peer abuse and children at risk of sexual exploitation.

In any case a formal referral to Devon County Council children's social care, the police or accident and emergency services (for any urgent medical treatment) must not be delayed by the need for consultation with management or the nominated safeguarding children adviser, or the completion of an assessment.

Responding to a child or young person disclosing abuse:

- Do stay calm.
- Don't make promises you cannot keep.
- Do listen carefully and note accurately what is said.
- Don't interrogate the person or ask leading questions.
- Do find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others.
- Don't cast doubt on what the person has told you.
- Do allow the person to continue at his/her own pace.

- Don’t interrupt or change the subject.
- Do ask questions for clarification only and always avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don’t make the person feel responsible for the abuse.
- Do reassure the person that they are doing the right thing in telling you.
- Do not fail to act.
- Do tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Do take further action immediately.
- Do record in writing what was said using the person’s own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.

Making a Referral

Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Wayne Stewart.

If the DSL is not available, the deputy should be contacted – Alan Tozer.

Referrals should also be recorded in the ‘RecordMy’ Safeguarding software and reflect the level of perceived risk of harm, not longer than within one working day of identification or disclosure of harm or risk of harm.

In urgent situations, out of office hours, the referral should be made to the LA children’s social care emergency duty team / out of hours team.

The referrer should confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing, within 48 hours.

Devon Early Help and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub: 0345 155 1071.

Parental Consultation

Concerns which have been raised, should, where practicable, be discussed with the parent and agreement sought for a referral to LA children's social care unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child at risk of significant harm through delay or from the parent's actions or reactions. For example, in circumstances where there are concerns or suspicions that a serious crime such as sexual abuse, domestic abuse or induced illness has taken place.

Where a practitioner decides not to seek parental permission before making a referral to LA children's social care, the decision must be clearly noted in the child's records with reasons, dated and signed and confirmed in the referral to LA children's social care. Practitioners should consult with their line manager/designated safeguarding advisor, if at all practicable, for advice.

When a referral is deemed to be necessary in the interests of the child, and the parents have been consulted and are not in agreement, the following action should be taken:

- The reason for proceeding without parental agreement must be recorded.
- The parent's withholding of permission must form part of the verbal and written referral to LA children's social care.
- The parent should be contacted to inform them that, after considering their wishes, a referral has been made. A child protection referral from a practitioner cannot be treated as anonymous and where any court proceedings may follow, whether criminal or family court, the information may be made available.

Recording of Attendance and Use of Attendance Data

- All students are registered upon arrival at New Roots Workshop CIC setting or upon collection at a designated location, date and time. This is recorded on the attendance register which is held securely on the office PC and one-drive.
- If a student has not arrived within 30 minutes, it is New Roots Workshop CIC's responsibility to check for communications, such as emails or phone calls from the student's parents or the student's school to explain their lateness or absence. If suitable communication can't be sourced, then New Roots Workshop will phone the students school in the first instance to obtain confirmation of lateness/absence, and a reason for the lateness/absence.
- It is then the responsibility of the school to further track the student and provide New Roots Workshop CIC with a reason for lateness/absence. New Roots Workshop CIC will phone parents at the school's request or when a student attends New Roots Workshop CIC setting but is not associated to an affiliate school.
- When a student is absent, their absence is recorded on the attendance register with a cross-referenced date and explanation for their absence.
- When parents have contacted New Roots Workshop CIC setting regarding a lateness/absence in advance of the lateness/absence, New Roots Workshop CIC will share this information with the student's school and the relevant assistant managers and mentors at New Roots Workshop CIC.
- Attendance information for students can be requested by schools to inform their wider attendance data. With prior agreement, this can be arranged to happen at regular intervals e.g. weekly.
- Schools and parents are not allowed direct access to the attendance register, and no data may be directly copied from the attendance register.

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