

Safeguarding Children Policy

Last review date: November 2025

Next review date: November 2026

Safeguarding Children Policy Statement

Everyone who participates in Eating Distress North East (EDNE) activities is entitled to do so in a secure and safe environment. As an organisation we have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, we provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

EDNE is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The policy and procedures have been drawn up to enable EDNE to:

- promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of EDNE.
- to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
- stop abuse occurring.

The policy applies to all managers, staff, volunteers, service users, carers, students, trustees and anyone working on behalf of EDNE, hereafter referred to as 'EDNE team member'.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children Act 1989)

It is acknowledged that significant numbers of children are abused, and it is important that EDNE has a safeguarding children policy, a set of procedures to follow, and puts in place preventative measures to try and reduce the risk of harm.

EDNE will:

- ensure that all EDNE team members are familiar with this policy and associated procedures.
- ensure that all staff and volunteers are DBS checked before working with EDNE and all staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- work with other agencies within the framework of local authority Safeguarding Children Board Policy and Procedures
- pass information to the Local Authority when more than one person is at risk. For example: if the concern relates to a worker, volunteer or organisation who provides a service to children.
- inform service users that where a child is at risk then a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency without the service user's consent.
- make a safeguarding children referrals to the Local Authority as appropriate.
- endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of children.
- ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) understand their responsibility to refer incidents of abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Local Authority).

The Designated Safeguarding Leads in EDNE are Anne Fry (CEO) and Liz Oliver (Service Manager) They should be contacted for support and advice on implementing this policy and associated procedures.

This policy and associated procedures are kept on the EDNE shared drive accessible to all staff and given to all staff and volunteers as part of induction.

Procedures

1. Introduction

EDNE provides support and therapeutic services to people and their carers whose lives are affected by eating distress, and training to professionals. These procedures have been designed to ensure the wellbeing and protection of any person under 18 who accesses services provided by EDNE.

The procedures recognise that abuse can be a difficult subject for workers to deal with. EDNE is committed to the belief that the protection of children at risk from harm and abuse is

everybody's responsibility and the aim of these procedures is to ensure that all EDNE team members act appropriately in response to any concern of abuse.

2. Preventing abuse

EDNE is committed to putting in place safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within the services it offers and that all those involved within EDNE will be treated with respect.

Therefore, this policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- DBS
- Equality and Diversity
- Volunteer
- Complaints
- Whistle Blowing
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Privacy Notice
- Data Protection

EDNE is committed to safer recruitment policies and practices for paid staff and volunteers (always defined as including students) This includes Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for staff and volunteers, ensuring references are taken up, and provision of adequate training on safeguarding children. Training logs will be kept ensuring that all staff have undertaken training at a level appropriate to their role.

Safeguarding training will be renewed every three years, and every two years for Designated Safeguarding Leads. Annual refresher training will be carried out.

The organisation will work within the current legal framework and EDNE DBS Policy for referring staff or volunteers to the DBS who have harmed or pose a risk to vulnerable adults and/or children.

Information about safeguarding children and the complaints policy will be available to service users and their carers/families.

EDNE is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the child is paramount.
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, disability, language, racial origin, religious belief, sexual identity and/or gender identity should be able to participate in a safe environment.
- to take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- to listen to children and respect their views and concerns.
- to ensure children, young people and their families know about the organisation's safeguarding and policies and what to do if they have a concern.
- to make sure all staff and volunteers understand and follow safeguarding procedures.
- appoint Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in matters of safeguarding, who will take responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level in the organisation.
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- all EDNE team members who work with young people will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, in accordance with all pertinent regulations.
- to follow the procedure in Appendix 1 if a child protection issue arises.

3. Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional, or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in their home or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm

may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.

- **Sexual abuse and exploitation** involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

Recognising and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- Significant changes in a child's behaviour.
- Deterioration in a child's general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising or marks.
- Comments made by a child which give cause for concern.
- Reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, e.g. in the child's home, or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation; and/or
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

If abuse is suspected or disclosed

When a child makes a disclosure to an EDNE team member, they will:

- Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out.
- Listen to what the child is saying but do not question them.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- Not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions.
- Not promise to keep it a secret.
- Give reassurance that you will act.
- Record and report the incident as soon as possible.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Peer-on-peer abuse is taken seriously by staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential for online bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of peer-on-peer abuse:

- Sexual activity (in primary school-aged children) of any kind, including sexting.
- One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other (e.g. much older).
- One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (e.g. in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength).
- There has been some use of threats, bribes, or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

If peer-on-peer abuse is suspected or disclosed

We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated they may follow the individual into adulthood.

Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can get support from the local Children's Services Child Protection Team.

4. Designated Safeguarding Leads

EDNE has appointed individuals who are responsible for leading safeguarding work in the organisation. The Designated Safeguarding Leads within EDNE are:

Liz Oliver, Service Manager
Anne Fry, CEO

Should either of these named people be unavailable, then EDNE team members should contact the local authority Safeguarding Children's Board directly. See below for contact details.

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

- ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that a child at risk may be experiencing, or has experienced abuse or neglect
- ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred to the relevant Safeguarding Children Board
- follow up any safeguarding children's referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed
- manage and have oversight over individual complex cases involving allegations against an employee, volunteer, or student, paid or unpaid
- consider any recommendations from the safeguarding children process
- reinforce the utmost need for confidentiality and to ensure that staff and volunteers are adhering to good practice regarding confidentiality and security. This is because it is around the time that a person starts to challenge abuse that the risks of increasing intensity of abuse are greatest
- ensure that staff and volunteers working directly with service users who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision
- ensure staff and volunteers are given support and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998: they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome

5. Recording and Reporting

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you.

Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- time and date

- the child's name, age, and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- who gave you the information
- the context in which it was said
- who else was present and what they said
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times, and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

Concerns should be recorded on EDNE's Safeguarding Child at Risk Reporting Form (Documents – Counselling – Safeguarding – Safeguarding Referrals).

6. Making a safeguarding children referral

EDNE are not child protection experts, and it is not our responsibility to determine whether abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations **must** be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Children's Services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 and 2004 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern.

Allegations of abuse can be made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and report to Children's Services. This is because other children may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous

conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

7. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff or volunteer:

- The allegation will be recorded on EDNE's **Safeguarding Child at Risk Record Form**.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will advise if other agencies (e.g. police) should be informed, and EDNE will act upon their advice.
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff or volunteer pending full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate EDNE will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service in line with our DBS Policy.

8. Recording and managing confidential information

EDNE is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around safeguarding children should be shared only with those who need to know.

All allegations/concerns should be recorded in the Counselling - Safeguarding folder on the shared drive. The information should be factual and not based on opinions: record what the person tells you, what you have seen and witnesses if appropriate.

The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with data protection legislation and EDNE's Data Protection Policy.

9. Disseminating/Reviewing policy and procedures

This Safeguarding Children's Policy and Procedure will be clearly communicated to managers, staff, volunteers, service users, carers, and trustees. The Designated Safeguarding Leads will be responsible for ensuring that this is done.

The Safeguarding Children's Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually by EDNE's trustees. The Designated Safeguarding Leads will be involved in this process and can recommend any changes. They will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated

to staff, volunteers, service users and carers. It may be appropriate to involve staff, volunteers, service users and carers in the review.

Signed by the person responsible for ensuring this policy is reviewed and communicated effectively:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Anne Fry', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Anne Fry
Chief Executive, EDNE
November 2025

Step by Step Procedure for Safeguarding Children and Young People

If there is immediate threat to life, phone the emergency services without delay

1. Please ensure you read the full policy document so that you know what to do if a child protection issue arises.
2. It is your responsibility to pass on safeguarding / child protection information if you are the person who has received it.
3. Emergency out of hours numbers for Children's Services are at the end of this document.
4. If you have any concerns regarding any young person you are working with, or something is said to you which causes concern, do not take a decision in isolation. Speak with EDNE's Designated Safeguarding Leads or the LADO.

5. Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately if there is a child protection / safeguarding issue. Let either of them know the details of this and whom you will be contacting to pass on the information. Record this on the Reporting Form in EDNE SharePoint folder.
6. The Designated Safeguarding Leads need to know ASAP because they may receive a telephone call in connection with the information you have passed on regarding safeguarding, and they need to be prepared and informed to deal with the caller.
7. If they are not available to speak to in person contact them via email, Microsoft Teams, or their mobile phones.
8. If you find yourself unable to speak to one of them directly leave a message to say there has been a safeguarding issue and who they should contact at EDNE for further details. You may not be at EDNE when they call back so always leave the name of a nominated person who you have given the information to.
9. Do not leave any specific information on anyone's voicemail service. Ensure the written record of the steps you have followed and the information passed on is recorded in the safeguarding folder on SharePoint.
10. Report the incident to the relevant local authority safeguarding contact, following their guidance about how to make a referral.
11. Record the information fully on the Safeguarding Child at Risk Reporting Form in SharePoint and make the referral as instructed.
12. You should record what you did with the information, who it was passed to at the local authority, their job title and contact details where relevant, and any other relevant details, on the form.
13. We take safeguarding matters very seriously and fully appreciate the process of safeguarding issues may affect you. Consequently, it is important that you remember your own self-care and in so doing you may decide to de-brief what has happened. The Safeguarding Leads at EDNE are here to support you so please ensure you get the support you need before you leave EDNE.

14. All safeguarding issues should be talked through in clinical supervision. However, if you are not due to have supervision soon after the incident and depending upon how you feel, you may need or want additional support, therefore please contact your Clinical Supervisor to arrange supervision ASAP.
15. Be aware that safeguarding reporting is still subject to Data Protection and the 7 'golden rules of safeguarding' which are available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1062969/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Children's Services Safeguarding Contacts (Professional Referrers)

Newcastle 0191 277 2500

Emergency Duty Team out of hours 0191 2787878

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/care-and-support/children/keeping-childrensafe/report-concern-about-child-or-young-person>

North Tyneside 0345 2000 109 Out of hours 0330 333 7475

<https://www.northtynesidescp.org.uk/>

South Tyneside 0191 4245 010 Out of hours 0191 456 2093

<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/13755/How-to-report-a-concern>

Northumberland 01670 536 400 Out of hours 0345 600 5252

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/about-council/contact-council/contact-us/reportconcern>

Durham 03000 267 979

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/firstcontact>

Darlington 01325 406252

<https://darlington-safeguardingpartnership.co.uk/professionals/working->

withchildren/concerned-about-a-child-how-to-report-aconcern/

Gateshead 0191 433 2653 Out of hours 0191 477 0844

<https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9179/Report-concerns-about-a-child>

Sunderland 0191 5205560

Out of hours 0191 520 5552

<https://www.safeguardingchildrensunderland.com/>

Tees Safeguarding Children numbers for local authority available from

<https://www.teescpp.org.uk/>

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