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<b>Author</b>	<b>Name</b>	Ann Richardson-Greaves	<b>Review Period</b>	2 year
	<b>Job Title</b>	Director of Services	<b>Expiry Date</b>	16/08/2025
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**Safeguarding Lead (SL):** Ann Richardson-Greaves, Director Services

**Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Rebekah Smith, Deputy Chief Executive

Epilepsy Action has a safeguarding lead who is the person responsible for reporting concerns of abuse and neglect to the relevant authority. In their absence the deputy safeguarding lead will take this action.

### Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to all paid staff and volunteers at Epilepsy Action including senior managers and council members. It also applies to anyone working on behalf of Epilepsy Action

No one should ignore allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect, prevention of abuse is a core responsibility of **everyone**.

***Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility***

### Why do we have a policy?


We have a policy to:

- protect children and young people who receive Epilepsy Action services. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- detail what Epilepsy Action will do to keep children safe and how we will deal with any concerns we have regarding a child's safety
- provide staff/ volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to children's safeguarding and child protection

It's important we have a policy because in the course of their day-to-day work within Epilepsy Action it's possible that staff/ volunteers will come into contact with children.

Epilepsy Action aims to keep children safe and prevent them from harm. We are committed to:

- having sound recruitment practices
- ensuring all staff/ volunteers have an understanding and awareness of children's safeguarding

				
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- ensuring all staff/ volunteers know how to raise safeguarding concerns and feel confident doing so

### Our legal duties

Although there are no specific mandatory regulations in the UK requiring staff and volunteers at Epilepsy Action to report suspicions of child abuse to the authorities, there are some expectations that are set out in legislation and guidance.

Sections 11 and 12 of the [Children Act 2004](#) places a statutory duty on agencies to co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.


Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the introduction to the government guidance 'Working together to safeguard children' state that "Everyone who works with children - including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early years professionals, youth workers, police, Accident and Emergency staff, paediatricians, voluntary and community workers and social workers - has a responsibility for keeping them safe".

Legislation and guidance across the UK highlights the responsibility of those who work with children to safeguard them from all forms of abuse and neglect.

- [Child protection in England](#)
- [Child protection in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Child protection in Scotland](#)
- [Child protection in Wales](#)

Other relevant legislation in relation to children's safeguarding includes:

- The Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice 0-25 years. This is statutory guidance for organisations that work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (HM Government 2014)

				
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### Who is protected by this policy?

Safeguarding and child protection applies to all children and young people under the age of 18. This includes service users and their children.

Epilepsy Action recognises that:

The welfare of the child is paramount as enshrined in the Children Act 1989

- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse
- Some children are especially vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues

### What do we mean by safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant hardship. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

### What is child abuse?

Epilepsy Action follows guidance on child safeguarding and child protection set out by the NSPCC, who are a leading child safety charity.


The NSPCC have extensive information on [child abuse, the different types of abuse and signs and symptoms of child abuse](#).

Below is a summary of the main types of child abuse. Further information on signs and symptoms of abuse can be found on the NSPCC website.

Type of Abuse	Detail of abuse
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Domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can apply to different types of abuse that occur either in a relationship or between family members.</li> <li>• Can also occur in teenage relationships</li> <li>• If children witness domestic abuse this is considered child abuse</li> </ul>
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be physical but can also occur online</li> <li>• Involves a child being forced, persuaded or coerced into taking part in sexual activities</li> <li>• Can include being made to watch sexual acts or material</li> </ul>
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a child's needs are not met on an ongoing basis</li> </ul>
Online abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abuse that occurs online and through social media</li> </ul>
Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a child is hurt or injured deliberately</li> </ul>
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This can sometimes come under the heading psychological abuse</li> <li>• It involves neglecting a child's emotional needs or mistreating a child emotionally</li> <li>• Can include verbal abuse, ignoring or belittling a child or frightening them</li> </ul>
Child sexual exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a child is exploited sexually for gain. The gain could be financial, but it can also be for power or status</li> </ul>
Female genital mutilation (FGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ritual removal of some or all of the female genitalia for non-medical reasons</li> </ul>
Bullying and cyberbullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can occur in a number of locations as well as online</li> <li>• Is normally ongoing for a long period of time</li> </ul>
Child trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are trafficked by being recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, mistreated or sold</li> </ul>
Organisational abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can occur in various settings such as a hospital or care home</li> <li>• This type of abuse can be one-off incidents as well as ongoing patterns of abuse</li> </ul>

				
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Grooming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can occur online and through social media as well as in real life</li> <li>• Abusers can be strangers or someone known to the child</li> <li>• The abuser works to gain the child's trust so that they can abuse or exploit them sexually</li> </ul>
Harmful sexual behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This includes when a child displays a range of sexual behaviour including inappropriate touching, the use of sexually explicit words or phrases, using sexual violence or threats, and sex with other children or adults</li> </ul>

The NSPCC identifies several situations of increased risk of harm:

- deaf or disabled children
- children affected by previous experiences, level of dependency, communication needs or other issues

### Radicalisation and safeguarding

If you are concerned about a child becoming radicalised, follow the stages in our safeguarding procedure. Epilepsy Action does not have a statutory duty in this area but it's important to keep people safe.

The government has a counter-terrorism strategy that includes supporting vulnerable people to prevent them being drawn into terrorism. You can read [more detail on this strategy](#).


All staff/ volunteers at Epilepsy Action will be mindful of radicalisation and report any concerns using our safeguarding adult and children policies.

### Confidentiality and safeguarding

It is important that our service users can trust us and know that the information they disclose to us is treated in confidence.

If a person aged under 18 is a service user of Epilepsy Action, the details of the advice given to them should remain confidential. However, if a staff member/ volunteer has suspicions or has information disclosed to them about a child being abused, they have a responsibility to take action. The welfare of the child is paramount in these situations.

Where a member of staff/ volunteer has a suspicion that a child is being abused or has information disclosed to them alleging abuse, they should follow the steps in the

				
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safeguarding procedure.

Epilepsy Action are legally required to report any incidents where a member of staff/ volunteer is disciplined or dismissed for inappropriate behaviour with or against a child.

### **Screening of staff and volunteers**

Anyone with a conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult, whenever it was committed, is not considered suitable to work or volunteer at Epilepsy Action. Any other convictions must be considered on an individual basis in line with the Checking for Criminal Convictions Policy and the Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders.

For further details of how Epilepsy Action screens staff and volunteers, see our Recruitment Policy.

### **Training staff and volunteers**

During induction staff/ volunteers will be inducted in the organisations safeguarding policies and procedures as well as completing online Safeguarding mandatory training.

Staff/ volunteers will be given regular 1:1s / supervision appropriate to their role.

Appropriate safeguarding training is available to all staff/ volunteers. This may be in the form of:

- policy awareness sessions delivered internally
- briefing sessions by a local authority or other relevant authority
- attendance at training arranged through partner agencies
- eLearning and/ or on line training

### **If a staff member or volunteer is removed from their role**

If a staff member/ volunteer is moved or dismissed from their role because of safeguarding concerns arising from their actions or inactions, Epilepsy Action may have a responsibility to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service. Epilepsy Action will follow the [guidance set out by the Disclosure and Barring Service](#) in these situations.

### **Developing new services**

Any new services in development will take account of the need to safeguard children. This may be achieved by:

- risk assessment of proposed activities

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- agreeing safeguarding measures with partner organisations including information sharing protocol
- seeking specialist advice, for example from the local safeguarding children board

### Review

All policies will be reviewed on a regular basis, in line with legislation changes or at the discretion of the management team to ensure good practise and compliance with relevant legislation.

Version	Review Date	Author	Comments
5	16/08/2023	ARG	Update to relevant processes and reporting platform. Update o relevant linked policies

## Appendix A : Safeguarding behaviours for working with children

				
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This awareness of safeguarding and child protection will be demonstrated through the following behaviour and actions:

- Staff/ volunteers will be aware that a person under the age of 18 is legally a child, even if they look and express themselves like an adult
- Where possible, activities that involving a child working with an adult will take place in a room which can be easily observed by others.
- Staff/ volunteers will not look after children out of the sight of a parent or carer
- Staff/ volunteers will never visit a child in their home unaccompanied, they will ensure that a parent or guardian is present.
- Staff/ volunteers will never transport a child in their car unless prior arrangements have been made or in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency, where this is appropriate.
- Epilepsy Action will employ sound recruitment practices which aim to prevent anyone considered to be a risk to children from working within the service.
- Staff/ volunteers will comply with the requirements of any DBS check required by Epilepsy Action.
- Staff/ volunteers will take care not to make any comments which may be interpreted as sexual in nature, to a child
- A child will never be allowed into a staff or volunteers home.
- Staff/volunteers will not engage in sexually provocative games
- Staff/ volunteers will not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- If a child is distressed, comfort will be offered with words rather than by touching them.
- Staff/ volunteers will not let allegations that a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded
- Staff/ volunteers will not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- Staff/ volunteers will not take photographs of children without consent from their parent or carer



## Appendix B – Safeguarding Procedure Flow Chart

