



Chichester City Centre Drop In Safeguarding Children Policy 2026

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Details of The Chichester City Centre Drop-In

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Project Manager: Sam Harding

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Designated Safeguarding Lead Name: Sam Harding

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Safeguarding Trustee: Elspeth Barron 07885993595

Policy Scope

- This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, sessional workers, and anyone working on behalf of The Chichester City Centre Drop-In.

Policy Statement

- The Chichester City Centre Drop-in is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all young people, by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual harm.
- The Chichester City Centre Drop-in believes that safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all young people is the responsibility of everyone: staff, volunteers, Trustees, and young people.
- The Chichester City Centre Drop-in staff and volunteers will show respect and understanding for the rights of young people, their safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects this.

- The Chichester City Centre Drop-in will support anyone who raises a concern regarding the welfare or protection of a young person. Any concerns raised will be formally recorded and managed in accordance with this.
- The Chichester City Centre Drop-in will ensure that the best interests of the young person are paramount when considering any action regarding matters of child protection and safeguarding the welfare of young people.
- All policies and procedures will be reviewed annually.

The Chichester City Centre Drop-in will do this by:

- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are carefully selected based on character reference before attending their first session, appropriately trained in safeguarding, supervised and receive a DBS check upon appointment.
- Assessing risks carefully and taking all necessary steps to minimise and manage risk.
- Ensuring everyone knows how to voice concerns or complaints about anything they may not be happy with.
- The Chichester City Centre Drop-in will provide accurate information about what it does and what can be expected to all parties involved.

Definitions

YOUNG PEOPLE/PERSON: All safeguarding and Child Protection legislation and guidance recognise a child or young person as anyone up to the age of 18. This policy is in place to safeguard all young people Chichester City Centre Drop-in works with, which in some cases may include those up to the age of 25.

All young people have the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, particularly young people. Given the wide variety of young people that The Chichester City Centre Drop-in works with, it is apparent that some young people are more vulnerable than others and may require special considerations when working with them.

The Chichester City Centre Drop-in aims to ensure that all young people it works with experience positive opportunities in a safe environment. It is the responsibility of the management and Trustees to ensure that appropriate systems are in place to help protect young people from all forms of abuse and discrimination as far as possible.

This policy and the procedures apply to all young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual identity, or religion.

This policy aims to ensure that all staff and volunteers are informed about child abuse and what their role is in reporting the issue. As a first step towards this, all Chichester City Centre Drop-in staff complete an application form, and the references are taken up. Personnel over 16 obtain a full Disclosure and Barring Clearance (DBS). Full induction training takes place with all new staff, and they receive a safeguarding policy, Staff Code of Conduct, which covers all aspects of the induction including Safeguarding Procedures.

Legislation

The Acts mentioned below provide the Legal Framework in which child protection takes place:

- **Children Act 2004**
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
- **Care Act 2014**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children**
- **Modern Slavery Act 2015**
- **Data Protection Act 2018**

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a management and board of trustees, we are committed to supporting all workers and ensure they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

Child Abuse

There are 4 main types of child abuse -:

1. Physical Abuse – This is when an injury is sustained by striking, hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting, burning, or any other excessive force used on a child. Condoning, or giving a child access to, substances such as alcohol, tobacco, medicines, narcotics, glue etc. is also a form of Physical abuse.
2. Child Sexual Abuse – This is the abuse of children by adults seeking their own gratification. This type of abuse ranges from full Sexual Intercourse to fondling or exposing a child to pornographic materials or telling stories and jokes of a sexually explicit nature.
3. Neglect – This occurs when an adult fails to meet the basic needs of the child with regard to food, warmth, hygiene, clothing or medical care and safety.
4. Emotional Abuse – This occurs when an adult (parent or carer) fails to exhibit care and attention but particularly where a child is threatened, taunted or shouted at which, as a consequence, leads to a loss of self-esteem and confidence.
5. Child Exploitation - When someone uses a child for financial gain, sexual gratification, labour or personal advantage. Using cruel, violent or threatening behaviour to force a child to take part in criminal or sexual activities. Trafficking (moving a child from place to place with the intent to exploit them) The exploitation of children can take a number of different forms and perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse at the same time such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

Recognition of Abuse

The responsibility of The Chichester City Centre Drop-In staff and volunteers is in reporting their concerns to The Chichester City Centre Drop-In Safeguarding Lead.

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In staff and volunteers will receive training in order to appropriately and professionally manage knowledge of abuse when talking to a young person. They will be aware that initial conversations with young people are critical and should be conducted calmly and carefully without personal reaction or questioning. They should be reassured in a calm manner that they have done the right thing by telling someone. Just listen very carefully and try not to lead or show a reaction. The person to which the disclosure is made must create a disclosure record notice as soon as possible after the conversation has taken place in order to preserve a record for further action.

The Chichester City Centrer Drop-in staff and volunteers will be trained to recognise some of the indicators of abuse.

1. Injuries, which are not consistent with the normal recreational habits of young people, either in body position or type.
2. Inconsistent or unreasonable explanation of an injury by a child, parent or carer.
3. Inconsistent or inappropriate behaviour e.g., sexually suggestive remarks, mood swings, very quiet/aggressive, severe tantrums.
4. Socially isolated.
5. Overeating/Loss of appetite, weight loss/gain.
6. Inappropriately dressed, ill kept or dirty.
7. Self-inflicting injury.
8. Distrust of parent/carer.
9. Delayed social development, poor language and speech
10. Nervous behaviour e.g., rocking, hair twisting.

11. Low self-esteem.

General Indicators of Abuse (often typical of sexual abuse)

1. Recurring abdominal pain.
2. Reluctance to go home.
3. Flinching when approached or touched.
4. Recurring headaches.
1. Significant/ unusual/ unexpected change in appearance, obscuring body shape or areas usually exposed. (e.g wearing warm clothes or multiple layers in hot weather)

Child Protection Procedure - What should you do if you suspect abuse?

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In, its staff, trustees and volunteers are legally required to report when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a young person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Process of reporting disclosure steps.

- Listen to the young person rather than directly question
- Never stop the young person when they are freely recalling significant events
- Explain that you are concerned for their well-being and that the safeguarding lead and the Safeguarding team will be contacted.
- Make a note of the disclosure, including the time, setting and people present, detailing what the young person said and presentation and behaviour as observed.
- Record all actions taken concerning this incident
- Where an issue arises the Session Leader will contact the Project Manager and or Safeguarding Lead who will in turn then liaise with the Safeguarding Trustee, Thirty One Eight (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service) as well as IFD (Integrated Front Door) leading to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.)
- Under advice from CCPAS the Chichester City Centre Drop-In Project Manager will contact the young person's School Safeguarding Officer. The Project Manager will also write a report and circulate to the board of Trustees
- If any staff member or volunteer involved in the running of a session where a safeguarding concern has occurred and feels that a young person is in immediate danger, or that urgent assistance from professionals or children services is required, they can contact The Integrated Front Door directly using the information below (Contact Information for External Safeguarding support/ Children's Services.) Or in the case of emergency where a young person is deemed to be in immediate danger, should contact the Police.
- Where a disclosure involves accusations against a member of staff or volunteer, this must be reported immediately to the safeguarding trustee and the member of staff can have no involvement in the subsequent investigation other than providing a statement in their defence.

Concerns about or allegations against a staff member.

Allegations against staff or volunteers working with children will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via the Integrated Front Door.

Staff and volunteers who feel unable to raise safeguarding concerns internally may contact the Safeguarding Trustee, the Chair of Trustees, or external safeguarding authorities.

Staff Support

All staff and volunteers will receive support and supervision from the Project Manager in the first instance of a disclosure. The Project Manager will receive support from the Safeguarding Trustee and appropriate local authorities.

Considerable Mentions Forms.

Considerable Mentions Forms enable staff to record low-level concerns regarding young people which, when considered individually, may not meet the threshold required to complete a Safeguarding Form or initiate immediate action. However, when multiple minor concerns are recorded over time, they may collectively indicate a level of concern that warrants further investigation or safeguarding intervention.

Low-level concerns can easily go unnoticed if they are not consistently recorded and reviewed collectively. Different staff members may observe separate indicators of concern; without a shared and structured recording process, emerging patterns of behaviour that could suggest abuse or neglect may be missed. The use of Considerable Mentions Forms ensures that such information is documented, stored securely, and reviewed appropriately to support the safeguarding and wellbeing of young people.

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In sought professional advice from Thirtyone:eight regarding the use and storage of Considerable Mentions Forms. Thirtyone:eight confirmed that the use of these forms is advisable, provided that they are regularly reviewed and that staff have access to previous entries made by other team members. This enables effective oversight and supports early identification of potential safeguarding concerns.

Definition

A *Considerable Mention* is a low-level concern about a young person that does not meet the threshold for completing a Safeguarding Form but nonetheless prompts a member of staff to exercise professional curiosity and consider the young person's wellbeing.

Disclosure Processed

The following action should then be taken:

1. The member of staff/volunteer explains to the young person that The Chichester City Centre Drop-in Safeguarding Lead has to be informed, unless the disclosure directly involves the Safeguarding Lead, in which case the Safeguarding Deputy, Safeguarding Trustee or Chair of Trustees should be informed. Or if all are implicated a call to thirtyone:eight must be made.
2. When a child protection concern arises a written record is completed. A copy is made and kept in The Chichester City Centre Drop-in online protected site on Google Drive.
3. The Trustees will be informed, and the document will be submitted to the Bell Tower Safeguarding Lead and deputy. The board of Trustees will also be informed and take further action if required through reports to the external agencies listed above.
4. If appropriate, the project supervisor may contact family members of the young person in concern as well as their school safeguarding team as a concern is processed. If a parent is disclosed as the source of abuse by the young person, the Project Manager will seek advice from Thirty One Eight, or The Integrated Front Door or the Police in respect of legal responsibility regarding disclosure to parents or carers.

This record may be shown to the police and local school safeguarding team. The report should include the following-

- Name of Young Person
- Address
- Name of Parent/Carer/ Significant adult
- Phone numbers for parent/carers.
- Nature of allegation.
- When/where did it occur
- Was anyone else involved? If so, who and how?
- What was said by those involved?

- Were there any obvious signs e.g., bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour etc.
 - Was the young person able to say what had happened and what did they say.
 - Who has been told about it and when
 - Do the parents/ significant adults know?
 - Signature of person filling in record
 - Date of record
1. Where a member of staff/volunteer is named as the abuser, the Project Manager must be contacted.
 2. If the Project Manager is the named abuser, those raising concern should contact the Safeguarding Deputy, Safeguarding Trustee, Chair of Trustees and/or external Safeguarding authorities listed above.
 3. No one should 'disclose details of the disclosure statement with anyone other than those listed in the disclosure process.'
 4. The Chichester City Centre Drop-in recognises that disclosure could be distressing for all staff involved. Anyone involved in such an incident will be offered additional support and counselling if necessary.

Insurance Reporting.

After a safeguarding concern has been processed, the designated safeguarding officer and safeguarding trustee will assess whether it needs to be reported to the Chichester City Centre Drop-In public liability insurance provider even if no claim is made for the purposes of transparency. If the need is felt to report the incident, the project manager will submit a report to the insurance provider with the exclusion of personal information and unnecessary detail, focusing more on where the charity has learned any lessons or could have been at risk.

Staff and Volunteer Conduct

- The Chichester City Centre Drop-in staff and volunteers conduct themselves professionally and appropriately to maintain safe and suitable contact with the young person.
- There must be two persons present when any staff member or volunteers is working with a young person out of the public eye.
- Always have female helpers helping female children/young people and where possible male helpers with male children/young people.
- They do not initiate physical contact with children/ young people.
- If physical contact is offered from a child/young person, The Chichester City Centre Drop-in staff/volunteer must cease it immediately.

DO - All staff and volunteers

- **Do** treat all allegations extremely seriously and act towards the child/young person as if you believe what they are saying.
- **Do** tell the child/young person that they are right to tell you.
- **Do** reassure them that they are not to blame.
- **Do** be honest and tell them who you have to tell and why.
- **Do** take further action – speak to the Project Supervisor or local safeguarding authorities.
- **Do** write down everything that is said and what was done.
- **Do** seek medical attention if necessary
- **Do** Call the police if you feel a young person is in immediate danger of abuse or harm.
- **Do** inform parents/carers unless there is suspicion of their involvement - after liaising with the Project Supervisor.

DON'T - All staff and volunteers

- **Don't** make promises you can't keep.

- **Don't** interrogate the child/ young person
- **Don't** cast doubt on what the child/ young person has said, don't interrupt or change the subject
- **Don't** say anything which makes the child/ young person feel responsible for the abuse
- **Don't** do nothing.

The following behaviours are **NEVER** acceptable –

- Sexual Contact
- Giving, lending or borrowing money or property
- Exclusive or secretive relationships
- Befriending a young person under the age of 18 on personal social media platforms.
- Being alone in your home with a young person

Training and Recruitment process

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In is committed to ensuring that all those recruited to work as staff members, or who serve as volunteers or Trustees are vetted and then sufficiently trained to be able to detect the signs of abuse and know how to process concerns efficiently.

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Information Sharing

Information relating to safeguarding concerns will be shared on a need-to-know basis with appropriate safeguarding professionals. These could include Schools, social services or the Police.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where a young person is at risk of harm. The safety and welfare of the young person will always take precedence over confidentiality.

It is best practice that the young person is made aware that their disclosure will be shared with other professionals, who they are and why, unless it is judged that doing so could risk further harm to the child, cause them to dispose of evidence or attempt to hide their abuse.

This aligns with guidance from
HM Government safeguarding guidance.

Safer recruitment

Staff Recruitment and training

Potential staff members are subject to a thorough interview process where their suitability to work on staff for the charity is assessed. During this process, they are asked questions relating to safeguarding, including queried on their response to specific case studies. These answers are reviewed by the project supervisor and Trustees and affect decisions to appoint staff. Questions are also asked regarding previous youth work experience and appointments.

Potential staff also require two-character references prior to interview in relation to their appropriateness to work with children and young people. If a potential staff member has been successful in interview and offered a position on staff, their appointment is finally subject to a DBS check before they can start working with children. Staff members are then required to receive safeguarding training delivered in person by a safeguarding professional. This usually takes between three and four hours and covers content designed to

inform staff how to recognise the signs of abuse, communicate with those concerned, and process a disclosure, as well as informing them of the relevant safeguarding authorities available to assist in processing disclosures.

A new DBS check is required every three years and safeguarding training is required to be refreshed annually.

Volunteer Recruitment

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In is delighted to have volunteers from many different areas from the local community. Upon notifying the Project Supervisor of their interest in volunteering, new volunteers are required to provide two contacts in order for the charity to follow up with to provide a character reference as to the suitability of the individual to work with young people. We request that these referees are people who hold some form of responsibility in society, in order to make sure that references are more reliable, such as previous teachers, university lecturers, employers, church or community leaders etc.

Once these references have been provided, the volunteers are invited to attend a taster day during a session at the Drop-In, in order for the Project Supervisor to observe their ability to work with children and if a more permanent appointment as volunteer is appropriate. If the Project Supervisor feels this is the case, the new volunteer has a DBS check processed as soon as possible and receives online interactive safeguarding training through the High-Speed Training website during their first session and then can attend Drop-In sessions as a volunteer. This training is completed under the supervision of the safeguarding lead.

A new DBS check is required every three years and safeguarding training is required to be refreshed annually.

One to One/ Lone Working

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In occasionally supports young people on a one to one basis. This has primarily taken place in school to support young people struggling with their emotional and mental well being. The Chichester City Centre Drop-In is committed to delivering one to one support sessions safely and staff and volunteers will follow this section of the policy when engaging in one to one activities.

Before we look at what one to one support is and does, it is important to establish what one to one support is and is not when an adult meets with a young person one on one with the purposes of supporting them in their wellbeing.

A staff or volunteer team member delivering one to one support is:

- Intentional in establishing a boundaried relationship of trust with the young person
- A listening ear
- A non judgemental adviser
- A support
- Responsible for responding to/ reporting safeguarding concerns

A staff or volunteer team member delivering one to one support is not:

- A friend
- A counsellor
- A psychiatrist/doctor
- Responsible for giving professional medical advice
- A parent

Do:

Set clear boundaries around how often/when/where you will meet and the purpose of mentoring (If this is in school this will be agreed with teaching staff. If not in school, this information will be known to the safeguarding lead and deputy). Staff should be honest about what the young person can expect from the one to one support and any review periods.

Allow the young person to talk more than you. Listening more, speaking less and making sure that you are careful with the information disclosed.

Encourage your young person with affirming words.

Encourage honesty.

Set targets if appropriate.

Don't:

Make promises you cannot keep.

Give gifts or lend money.

Promise secrecy – if a young person discloses something that points to abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect) or could put the young person at risk, the mentor must immediately report it to the Safeguarding Officer.

Use electronic communication. This should be done through the school or parents.

Meet up more than once a week.

Online Safety

The Internet is significant in the distribution of indecent photographs/pseudo photographs of children and young people. Adults often use the Internet to establish contact with young people to “groom” them for inappropriate or abusive relationships.

When a worker or volunteer is discovered to have placed child pornography on the internet, or accessed child pornography, the police will normally consider whether that individual might also be involved in the active abuse of young people. In particular, the individual's access to young people should be considered.

Any project that provides service users with direct access to the Internet must have protocols in place to ensure safe use. Many websites contain offensive, obscene or indecent material such as:

- Sexually explicit images and related material
- Advocating of illegal activities
- Advocating intolerance for other
- Inappropriate contact/ interaction with strangers

Staff authorised to use the internet must not download pornographic or any other unsuitable material onto this organisation's technical equipment or distribute such material to others. In addition, users must not upload any material to the internet that could be considered inappropriate, offensive or disrespectful of others.

Disciplinary action will be taken against staff in breach of this policy in line with the staff and volunteer code of conduct.

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In will ensure that all devices available to young people to use while attending sessions are protected against inappropriate websites. This will include firewall software and password protected download mechanisms that ensure staff have control over the content young people can access while at the Drop-in.

All volunteers and staff must behave in accordance with the staff and volunteer code of conduct in regards to personal online activity at the Drop-in as well as outside.

Attendance and Responsibility

The Chichester City Centre Drop-In is a come-and-go, open access provision intended to support young people during the period when many are travelling home from school. Young people may arrive and leave the Drop-In freely during the published opening hours.

Because the provision operates as an open access drop-in service, parental consent is not required in advance for a young person to attend during normal operating hours, unless the young person is participating in a specific event, trip, or activity outside of the Drop-In's usual programme or opening times, where additional consent may be required.

The charity has a duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of young people while they are on the premises and participating in activities within the Drop-In. Staff and volunteers will take reasonable steps to maintain a safe environment and to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns in accordance with the organisation's safeguarding policy.

As the Drop-In operates on an open access basis, young people are free to leave the premises at any time during opening hours. Once a young person has chosen to leave the Drop-In, responsibility for their supervision transfers away from the charity. The charity cannot accept responsibility for the safety or wellbeing of young people after they have left the premises of their own accord.

Parents or carers may request that staff encourage a young person to remain at the Drop-In until they are collected by a parent or carer. Any such request must be discussed and agreed in advance with the session leader. However, parents and carers will be informed that, due to the open access nature of the provision, staff cannot physically prevent a young person from leaving if they choose to do so.

If a young person leaves the premises in circumstances where staff have concerns for their safety or wellbeing, staff will respond in line with the organisation's safeguarding procedures, which may include contacting parents, carers, or relevant safeguarding services where appropriate.

Contact Information for External Safeguarding Authorities

IDF (Integrated Front Door - Previously known as MASH): Tel - 01403 229900

Email - WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk

Thirty One Eight Tel - 03030 031111

Email - info@thirtyoneeight.org

thirtyone:eight : PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Tel - 0303 003 1111.

Immediate Police assistance in case of emergency: Tel - 999 (and ask for the Police)