

ACCURO (CARE SERVICES)

Policy & Procedure on Safeguarding Children

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees working or participating in any activities for Accuro (Care Services).

Accuro believes that all children or young people should be protected from abuse. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people who utilise Accuro projects and keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

2. The Purpose of this Policy is:

- To protect children and young people who have a disability that utilise Accuro projects
- To ensure all Accuro staff, volunteers and trustees are aware of their obligation to adhere to the safeguarding policy and procedures, thereby reducing the possibility that a child's welfare will suffer or that they are likely to suffer abuse
- To ensure that all Accuro staff, volunteers and trustees are aware that children with a disability may be more vulnerable to abuse than other children due to their dependency on others and in that they may have difficulties with communication. Awareness of the increased vulnerability of children with disabilities is to some extent a safeguarding in itself and everyone connected with Accuro should be conscious of this.

3. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Set Procedures (Southend, Essex and Thurrock)
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- 'Prevent Duty' Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Accuro recognises that:

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

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- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of abuse or harm. Abuse includes bullying, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse that could also be related to female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour based violence, child sexual exploitation (peer on peer abuse) and radicalisation
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences and their level of dependency, communication needs and other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of the young people we support and work with.

4. Policy Principles

- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be addressed and information will be shared with relevant agencies. Accuro as an agency cannot carry out a child protection investigation, this can only be completed by the local authority or NSPCC. **Please see attached procedures regarding reporting concerns.**
- It is the duty of all staff, volunteers and trustees to report any evidence of or concerns of possible abuse. Concerns should be relayed immediately in ways outlined in the safeguarding procedures. Failure to comply with this directive will lead to disciplinary action being taken against the individual(s) concerned and may lead to dismissal.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and safeguarding training
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks and training is in place prior to them working with children
- Ensuring that staff know the procedures in light of any concerns

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- All staff, volunteers and trustees will be made aware of this policy and their particular responsibilities that arise from it
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children/young people, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, involving parents and children appropriately.

Accuro's appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead and a Safeguarding Officer who can deputise in their absence/unavailability. The responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead will include:

- Ensuring the organisation operates within this policy and guidelines and that these procedures and guidelines remain compatible with the SET Child Protection Procedures adopted by Essex CC and/or the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB)
- Resolving any inter-agency issues that arise
- Acting as a link with the ESCB
- Acting as the person to whom all allegations/concerns should be reported (except in the case of concerns/allegations relating to the designated Safeguarding Lead. Such concerns should be addressed to the Accuro Chair of Trustees
- Reporting and consulting with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to each individual concern/allegation.

All allegations of abuse must be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently to provide effective care for the child and at the same time support the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Confidentiality will be an important issue and all enquiries will be conducted in the strictest confidence; information being restricted to those who have a need to know. Accuro also operates a Confidentiality Policy that reflects current legislation and provides guidance on sharing of information (including guidance on consent to the sharing of information).

Accuro will maintain and operate a Safer Recruitment Policy that will specify the need for all staff and volunteers to be subject to a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check prior to appointment.

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The Chair of Trustees must be made aware of any safeguarding issues that arise by Accuro's Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer who is:

Alison McKeown – Operations Manager

or in her absence, the Safeguarding Officer who is:

Emma Cruse – Saturday Play Club Co-ordinator

All staff and volunteers will receive support and advice through regular supervision sessions conducted by a designated Line Manager. Safeguarding issues, including awareness of this policy, will be an essential component of such supervision.

Accuro will operate an 'Internal Safeguarding Group' which will meet on a 6 weekly basis to consider any incidents in which a safeguarding concern has arisen, its primary purpose being to review the effectiveness of Accuro's policies, procedures and practices in dealing with the specific incident and to make recommendations for changes as appropriate.

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SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Your primary responsibility is to protect any child in your care as every child has a right to be protected from harm.

1. The Responsibilities of Volunteers and Staff

What should you do if you have noticed something that has concerned you about a particular child? Perhaps it is something that you cannot quite put into words or several small things that have built up to give a picture that makes you uneasy for some reason or perhaps a child comes into your care with worrying bruises or marks.

The Things You Must Do Are:

- a) **Report your concerns** (see section 2)
- b) Record everything that has given you cause for concern and say why it has concerned you. It is essential that these records are kept confidential
- c) Ensure all information recorded is factual and does not contain personal comments and assumptions
- d) Record all the dates and times when these things happened
- e) Include any explanation for the injuries or behaviour given at the time. This will give you and us a clearer picture of what has taken place and why you are concerned. Whether or not you are sure, do contact Accuro's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Safeguarding Officer who will give advice.

2. What Happens When Abuse is Reported?

Your primary responsibility is to protect the child in your care because each child has a right to be protected from harm.

If you have any suspicions:

Individually any of the signs and symptoms may or may not be a true indication that harm has occurred. It is not always easy to identify child abuse; therefore, **if you have any suspicions at all, for the child's sake, you should always seek further advice immediately.**

What Should You Do?

If a child has told you something which gives you cause for concern or if you suspect that child abuse either is taking place or has taken place then contact Accuro's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. They will then advise you of what further action needs to be taken. In the unlikely event that the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Safeguarding

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Officer are not available, you should contact Essex Social Care or one of the agencies listed in Section 4.

3. Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

For the purposes of this policy and guidance, a 'worker' is defined as any person whose work brings them into contact with children. As such this definition includes:

- Employees of Accuro, both temporary and permanent
- Individuals working in a voluntary capacity
- Agency staff
- Contract workers.

Any allegations against a worker must be reported to Accuro's Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity.

If the designated Safeguarding Lead is implicated in the allegation the concern should instead be reported to the Chair of Trustees for Accuro.

In either of the above two situations, the person receiving the allegation will compile a written record outlining the details of the allegation. This report should be timed, dated and signed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Safeguarding Officer will pass on the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other appropriate representative of the local authority or Police. This will lead to the allegation being investigated in line with the SET procedures. Failure to pass on the concern by the person receiving it is prohibited and such a failure is likely to lead to disciplinary action being taken against the person responsible.

Any member of staff who believes allegations or suspicions which have been reported to the relevant person are not being dealt with appropriately has a responsibility to inform a more senior person within Accuro or to report it to the LADO.

The LADO must be informed immediately of **all** allegations and always within 1 working day.

If, for any reason, there are any difficulties in following the above procedures a referral should be made directly to Essex Safeguarding Children's Board and/or to the Police.

The designated Safeguarding Lead or a Safeguarding Officer should inform the worker (who is the subject of the allegation) as soon as possible after consulting with the LADO.

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The person who is the subject of the allegation should be:

- Advised at the outset to contact her/his Union or Professional association or to seek other relevant advice e.g. from the CAB or a solicitor
- Treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed, processes involved and the possible outcomes
- Kept informed of the progress of the case and of the investigation
- Clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary or related processes
- Provided with appropriate support during the case (via occupational health or employee welfare arrangements where these exist)
- Be kept informed about workplace developments if suspended.

Suspension

A decision to suspend or temporarily re-deploy staff or volunteers is made without prejudice and is at the discretion of Accuro.

Suspension will not be automatic, but it will be considered in every case where:

- Not to suspend may continue or increase the risk of significant harm for any child
- Not to suspend may hamper investigations
- The allegation warrants investigation by the Police
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

If a suspended person is to return to work, Accuro will consider and provide appropriate help/support e.g. phased return and/or provision of a mentor and how to manage the person's contact with any children who made the allegation.

Resignations & Compromise/Settlement Agreements

All investigations into allegations should be completed and the outcome recorded, regardless of whether the person involved resigns her/his post, responsibilities or position of trust, even if the person refuses to co-operate with the process.

'Compromise or settlement agreements', where a person agrees to resign without any disciplinary action and with an agreed future reference, must not be used in these cases.

Registered Bodies

In relation to staff/volunteers working on projects that fall within the remit of any registered body, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must inform the appropriate body of any action taken under these child protection procedures.

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4. Contact Telephone Numbers

Accuro Designated Safeguarding Lead

Accuro (main office)	01279 871133 or 870297
Out of Hours	07856 544543
CEO	01279 871133 / 870297

Accuro Safeguarding Officers

Operations Manager	01279 871133 / 870297
Saturday Play Club Co-ordinator	01279 871133 / 870297

Child Protection Agencies – Family Operations Hub (formally Essex Social Care and previous to that, Social Services)

Family Operations Hub (for Referrals)	0345 6037627
Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)	0845 6061212

If there is an immediate risk of harm to a child, contact Police on 999.

Essex Duty LADO:	03330 139797
NSPCC	0808 8005000

Other Agencies

Childline (Children's Advice Line)	0800 1111
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