



CHARITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

SAFEGUARDING POLICY: PROTECTING VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Date reviewed: 1 November 2024



Governance Documentation of East Coast Pride

Safeguarding policy: protecting vulnerable adults and children
East Coast Pride

Version 1.0

Our commitment to safeguarding

Safeguarding is essential to East Coast Pride and sits at the heart of our activities and events. We believe that no one should ever experience abuse, exploitation, or neglect.

We believe it's everyone's responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk from abuse and to act when made aware of the risk of harm.

East Coast Pride recognises it has particular responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of:

- All children who engage in East Coast Pride events/activities, including the children of adults who attend East Coast Pride events.
- All adults at risk who engage in East Coast Pride events and/or activities.

And keep them safe and practice in a way that protects them.

Purpose of policy

East Coast Pride is committed to creating an environment that ensures all those attending or working with it enjoy opportunities to thrive, develop to their full potential, and feel safe from risk of harm or abuse.

The purpose of East Coast Pride's safeguarding policy is:

- To protect children and adults at risk who engage with East Coast Pride events and/or activities through effective safeguarding practices and codes of conduct.
- To uphold safer practices to prevent those intent on harming children and adults at risk from accessing the children or adults at risk who engage in East Coast Pride events and/or activities
- To make sure we effectively recognise, respond, record and report safeguarding concerns or disclosure so that those who engage with us access the safeguards they need if at risk of harm or abuse
- To provide those who work with East Coast Pride, all who engage with East Coast Pride events and/or activities, and the parents and carers of the children who take part in our activities and events the overarching principles that guide our approach to children and adults at risk protection

The policy

The policy and all accompanying procedures apply to all working with East Coast Pride, including management team members, contractors, partners, volunteers, visitors and any other individual who may work with East Coast Pride occasionally.

It is the responsibility of all who work with East Coast Pride to act if there is a cause for concern about a child or an adult at risk or the behaviour of an adult towards a child. They are not responsible for determining what action is required to protect them. Instead, the East Coast Pride Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for deciding whether to escalate a concern to the appropriate authority.

East Coast Pride requires that our partners with whom we contract share our commitment to safeguarding. We will expect them to demonstrate this to us by having their own safeguarding policy and procedures in place that are 'fit for purpose' before any partnership agreement is agreed and continued or that the partners are in agreement to adhere to East Coast Pride's safeguarding policy and procedures while working with East Coast Pride.

East Coast Pride is committed to ensuring all those who work with East Coast Pride (also volunteers and relevant contractors) understand their day-to-day role and safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

Overarching Policy

1. Purpose

Safeguarding is significant to East Coast Pride. We believe that no one should ever have to experience or risk experiencing abuse, exploitation, or neglect. We are committed to proactively safeguarding, taking all reasonable steps to ensure that those who come into contact with East Coast Pride or its activities/events do not, as a result, come to any harm.

This policy relates to East Coast Pride's safeguarding activity. Its purpose is to:

- Protect children and adults at risk who engage with East Coast Pride.
- Make our approach to safeguarding clear to management members, volunteers, supporters, and everyone who participates with us.

2. Scope

These procedures apply to all our work, except where activities and/or events have bespoke safeguarding procedures. All bespoke safeguarding procedures will be agreed upon by East Coast Pride's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

These procedures only apply to safeguarding concerns. If you are unsure whether something is within the scope of these procedures, seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If volunteers, beneficiaries, or public members have complaints about East Coast Pride, its staff or partners that do not relate specifically to the welfare of children and adults at risk, they should follow the procedures set out in East Coast Pride's Complaints Policy.

Compliance with these procedures is mandatory for East Coast Pride's management team members. Committee members must always act in the best interests of East Coast Pride; they are also expected to comply with these procedures.

For partnership organisations:

East Coast Pride has agreements in place with all partners. These require partners to provide the same, or higher, level of safeguarding for children, adults at risk and those coming into contact with the partner as set out in these procedures.

Partners must have their own safeguarding procedures or equivalent documents in place and implement procedures that substantially include the same principles, expectations, and responsibilities as these procedures. Otherwise, they must abide by East Coast Pride's safeguarding procedures, as detailed in this document.

Failure to comply with the East Coast Pride safeguarding policy may be managed in several ways, depending on the nature and consequences of any incident. In some cases, a combination of responses may be required, including:

- Local authority coordinated safeguarding investigation
- Police investigation
- Referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)
- Internal review or cooperation with an external review
- Disciplinary Action and/or termination for management team members and volunteers
- Enforcement Action in accordance with the agreed partnership arrangements (for partners)

All who work with East Coast Pride must act if there is a cause for concern about a child or an adult at risk.

3. Principles, We believe that:

- No one should ever experience abuse, exploitation or neglect.
- It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk from abuse and to take action when made aware of the risk of harm.

In line with UK legislation, East Coast Pride recognises that it has responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of:

- All children who engage in East Coast Pride events and/or activities, including the children of adults who attend East Coast Pride events and/or activities.
- All adults at risk who engage in East Coast Pride events/activities.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child or adult at risk is paramount, including when disclosing confidential information.
- All children and adults at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, racial heritage, nationality, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children and adults at risk are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. Research shows that LGBTIA+ people are at a higher risk of abuse.

4. Our definitions

Child means anyone under 18, irrespective of the age of majority in the country where they live or were born.

Adult at risk means anyone aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs, they are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding means actions we take to prevent harm to children and adults at risk and actions we take to protect children and adults at risk where harm has occurred or is likely to occur without intervention.

East Coast Pride Designated Safeguarding Lead ('DSL'): The East Coast Pride Trustee Board member designated as the contact person for all safeguarding issues.

The DSL will remain accountable for ensuring the safeguarding risk is appropriately managed. Any safeguarding issues in which the DSL is implicated or has a conflict of interest are dealt with by the East Coast Pride Event Director.

'Trustee Board member, volunteer, contractor' means anyone who works for, or is engaged by, East Coast Pride. This can be in a paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time capacity. This includes directly employed contractors, agency staff, consultants, volunteers and equivalentes.

5. Recognising, responding and reporting concerns

East Coast Pride is committed to providing safe, appropriate, and accessible routes for reporting safeguarding concerns. We will respond efficiently and sensitively to all allegations and suspicions of abuse and harm against children or adults at risk.

Recognising a safeguarding concern:

A safeguarding concern may arise in several ways. The following are examples of how a safeguarding concern may come to your attention:

- You may witness abuse or harm taking place.
- A child, adult at risk or other person may tell you that they have suffered abuse or harm or are fearful of suffering abuse or harm.
- You may notice behaviour which gives rise to a suspicion that a child or adult at risk has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Recognising harm or risk of harm can be complicated, and it is not East Coast Pride's responsibility to decide whether harm has occurred. However, it is our responsibility to look out for signs of abuse and harm and act if there are any concerns. You should, therefore ensure that you are aware of the risks of abuse and harm, which include:

- **Physical abuse:** including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint.
- **Domestic abuse:** including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional abuse. It also covers so-called 'honour'-based violence.
- **Sexual abuse:** including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material, abuse of a position of trust.
- **Psychological or emotional abuse:** including belittling, name-calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation and 'conversion' therapy.
- **Bullying, harassment, cyberbullying or discriminatory abuse:** including racist, sexist, biphobic, homophobic, transphobic abuse; abuse based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment; slurs or similar treatment.

East Coast Pride Governance: Safeguarding policy: protecting vulnerable adults and children (ECP-0008)

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Queries: accounts@eastcoastpride.co.uk

Page Number: 7

- **Criminal exploitation:** including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.
- **Financial or material abuse:** including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern Slavery:** covering slavery (including domestic slavery), human trafficking and forced labour. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever they can to pressurise, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse and inhumane treatment.
- **Neglect and acts of omission:** including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth; ignoring medical or physical care needs.
- **Self-neglect:** covering a wide range of behaviour which shows that someone isn't caring for their own personal hygiene, health, or surroundings. It includes behaviour such as hoarding.
- **Institutional or organisational abuse:** including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practices, lack of person-centred care or treatment.
- Female genital mutilation, forced marriage and other 'honour-based' violence.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse can be a one-off incident or repeated, ongoing ill-treatment. People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be relatives, friends, neighbours, or other people.

If you are concerned that someone is at immediate risk of harm, whether because of something you have witnessed or been told, you should take steps to ensure that person is not in immediate danger (for example, by contacting the emergency services). Where possible, seek advice from the DSL, but do not delay taking action to consult the DSL if that may increase the risk of harm.

6. Responding to disclosure of harm or risk of harm:

If someone tells you that they or another person have been harmed or are at risk of harm:

- Listen carefully.
- Avoid asking detailed or leading questions, but do try to confirm basic information about who, when, where, what and whether they are at imminent risk of harm.

Explain to them that:

- You (and East Coast Pride) take what they are saying seriously.
- You will need to share that information with the DSL, who will decide whether the information should be shared with relevant agencies to protect the child or adult at risk.

Do not attempt to intervene directly concerning a safeguarding concern or provide children and adults at risk with personal contact details. This risks further harm, including to yourself.

You should clarify that you will be sharing information with the DSL, who is a trained and experienced person and can take the right actions, including signposting to appropriate bodies and/or specialist organisations that are better able to help.

7. Reporting a safeguarding concern to the DSL:

All volunteers and staff must report any concerns or suspicions of harm or risk of harm as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after being made aware of the concern.

All concerns should be reported to the DSL.

Concerns should be reported to the East Coast Pride Chairperson if the DSL is unavailable. If the DSL is implicated or may have a conflict of interest about the concern, it should be reported to the East Coast Pride Chairperson.

Otherwise, keep the matter confidential and do not seek to investigate the incident or suspect yourself, as you may cause further harm. You should not discuss the matter with anyone else and must ensure that all information is stored securely and following data protection law.

The name of the DSL and East Coast Pride Chairperson can be found in the 'Contact Information' section at the end of these procedures.

8. What happens when you report a safeguarding concern

From the point at which concern is reported, the DSL is accountable for appropriately managing the safeguarding risk.

The DSL will take the following steps (subject to specific advice or guidance provided by the relevant authorities):

- Confirm that the individual(s) involved are safe.
- Address any gaps in the information provided to them, being careful only to seek the necessary information to decide on appropriate next steps.

- Where the concern relates to an adult at risk, check that their views have been sought and recorded and that they are kept informed of any actions we take in response to the safeguarding concern. Where we are taking action that is not in line with the adult's wishes, the DSL is accountable for ensuring the person understands why we are taking that step.
- If the report relates to a third-party organisation, the DSL should, if it is appropriate and safe to do so, notify the safeguarding lead or another appropriate person in that organisation as soon as possible and agree on joint actions.

9. Disclosure and onward referral:

Where there is evidence that abuse or harm has occurred or is at risk of occurring, the DSL will contact the relevant safeguarding authorities to disclose information. In most cases, the relevant authorities will be the Local Authority, though, in some instances, the appropriate authority may provide health services.

If the abuse or harm appears criminal, the DSL will also contact the Police.

Decisions to report to external authorities will be fully risk assessed, and anonymisation or pseudonymization will be considered when necessary.

Reporting will not be avoided because it may harm East Coast Pride's reputation or give rise to litigation. Any concerns concerning data protection will not act as a barrier to reporting, although they will be carefully considered to ensure that the disclosure is made within the legal framework.

Decisions about whether to report concerns to external authorities must be reviewed as a concern is handled in case the provision of additional information indicates that such a decision may need to change.

East Coast Pride will fully cooperate with relevant authorities and provide all reasonably practicable assistance during any external authority's investigation. Staff must not do anything that may compromise the authority's investigation.

Disclosure of suicidal behaviour

Children:

- Where a child clearly expresses suicidal thoughts and intentions and/or discloses recent suicide behaviours, notes will be taken. Where appropriate, this concern will be disclosed to the relevant authority.

- Wherever possible, we will do this with the consent of the child or young person and, where appropriate, their primary caregivers. However, we will always raise a concern and disclose the risk of suicide to the relevant authorities, whether or not consent is given.

Adults:

- Where an adult clearly expresses suicidal thoughts and intentions and/or discloses recent suicide behaviours, they will be considered an adult at risk
- Wherever possible, we will do this with the consent of the adult at risk by supporting them to seek help from mental health services. However, we will always raise a concern and disclose the risk of suicide to the relevant authorities, whether or not consent is given.

Internal investigations & actions

Where there is an external investigation by the Police, East Coast Pride will not conduct any internal investigation until a charging decision is made. However, in the case of allegations against staff or volunteers, they will take steps to protect children and vulnerable adults in the interim. This includes suspending staff or volunteers from their duties where necessary.

In all other cases, having made an onward referral, the DSL will decide whether an internal investigation is needed. This may improve existing practices or take necessary steps concerning poor conduct or failure to follow East Coast Pride Policies and Procedures.

East Coast Pride will, in all cases, consider whether any referral ought to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Severe risk

An individual connected with the organisation's activities and/or events has and/or alleges to have suffered serious harm, for instance:

- An allegation that a staff member has physically or sexually assaulted or neglected a person whilst attending an event and/or activity.
- An allegation that a member or volunteer has been sexually assaulted by another member or volunteer.
- East Coast Pride failed to carry out equivalent checks, which would have identified that a member of staff or volunteer was disqualified in law (under safeguarding legislation) from holding that position.
- A breach in safeguarding policy/procedure presents a risk of legal action.

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Queries: accounts@eastcoastpride.co.uk

Page Number: 11

- And/or High Risk, and there is a likelihood of reputational damage and loss of trust for East Coast Pride.

Immediate escalation to the Trustee Board Team for immediate reporting to authorities.

High risk

- The threshold for Significant harm considered and met; and/or
- Response not in line with policy and procedures and/or
- Risk of reputational damage/loss of trust for East Coast Pride

Immediate escalation to Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Moderate risk

- The threshold for external referral is met. Incident response appropriate.

Actioned by Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Low risk

- The decision not to refer to an external agency was not met. Concern documented and appropriate signposting to support services provided if necessary. Incident response appropriate.

Actioned by Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10. Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained at all process stages when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent management should be shared only because it is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure.

A record of what has been shared should be kept, with whom and for what purpose.

11. Review

We review our safeguarding policy and procedures every year. They will be reviewed more frequently if required because of legal, policy or guidance changes, changes in the nature or mode of delivery, or any learning from safeguarding incidents.

East Coast Pride will ensure this policy is publicly accessible on its website. East Coast Pride will also ensure that this policy is readily accessible to all staff and volunteers.

Chairperson:

Amy Basker

The Chairperson can be contacted using the Contact Us page:

www.eastcoastpride.co.uk/contact

Designated Safeguarding Lead

David Taylor

david.taylor@eastcoastpride.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Bradley Johnson

brad.johnson@eastcoastpride.co.uk

The Chairperson and Designated Safeguarding Lead can be contacted using the dedicated Safeguarding page:

www.eastcoastpride.co.uk/safeguarding

Approved by Trustee Board on 28 October 2024

Next Review date: 1 November 2025



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