



Mind in Haringey

Child Protection Policy

Date: September 2014

MIND IN HARINGEY
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy has been adapted from guidelines issues by The Children's Service in Haringey. The policy reflects the fact that Mind in Haringey provides mental health services exclusively for 16 – 65 year olds; however staff and volunteers may become aware of potential or actual abuse involving children in the course of working with service users.

Mind in Haringey recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004.

1.0 Purpose

- 2.1 This policy aims to clarify the responsibility of staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and to provide practical procedures for staff to describe how these duties should be undertaken at Mind in Haringey by:
- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst present on Mind in Haringey premises or whilst in the care of Mind in Haringey or when in contact with Mind in Haringey service(s)
 - Ensuring that staff/volunteers make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

2.0 Responsibility

- 3.1 It is the duty of Mind in Haringey to provide a named Child Protection lead who can advise staff on how to report suspicions of abuse. Mind in Haringey will ensure that the child protection lead is appropriately trained and has links with Child Protection agencies. The Chief Executive Officer has ultimate responsibility for child protection at Mind in Haringey.
- 3.2 It is the duty of all staff members, including volunteers, to be aware of this policy, to know how to report suspicions of abuse, and how to ensure that Mind in Haringey is a safe environment.
- 3.3 Mind in Haringey may be asked to provide information about a service user that relates to the welfare of a child. Mind in Haringey has a duty to co-operate with Child Protection agencies and to provide this information in accordance with the Confidentiality policy and procedures.

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that

have an adverse impact upon their lives – including domestic violence, substance misuse, bullying, child prostitution and ritualistic abuse. We aim to create a safe environment within which adults can work with the security of clear guidance, and that children or young people who come into contact with our services, even indirectly, are protected.

Under the terms of the Children Act 2004 anyone under the age of 19 is considered to be a child/young person.

These guidelines are for the use of all paid staff, volunteers and visitors. Although Mind in Haringey does not work directly with young people, the organisation recognises that the people to whom we offer a service may themselves have children who either live with them or have young people who visit the projects where service users live or receive services and that are managed by Mind in Haringey. Through the use of these guidelines we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected
- Assist staff and volunteers to better understand and recognise situations of abuse or situations which are potentially abusive
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training
- To set out clear procedures for the recording and referral for investigation, of any reported or suspected instances of abuse

In addition to this policy Mind in Haringey has a framework of policies which are designed to ensure the emotional and physical safety of service users, visitors, staff and volunteers. These include:

- Recruitment policy and procedure
- Confidentiality Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Whistle blowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Disclosure Policy
- Training Policy

All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you should tell the designated child protection officer within your organisation.

Your designated officer is: Anita Hudson (The Chief Executive Officer)

Telephone number: 0208 340 2474

In an emergency situation, contact a social worker directly:

In office hours, either:

The Duty Desk (Haringey) 020 8489 4592 / 5652 / 5762 / 4582 during office hours (Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5pm; Friday 8.45am to 4.45pm)

Out of office hours: The Emergency Duty Team 0208 348 3148

These guidelines are divided into the following sections:

- 1: Recognising signs of abuse
- 2: What to do with your concerns
- 3: Allegations made against staff
- 4: Safe recruitment
- 5: Good practice
- 6: Safeguarding children in Haringey
- 7: Contacts

1: RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

It can often be difficult to recognise abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the Internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a complete stranger.

If you are worried about a child it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer or other adult deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention; this is called fabricated illness or Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy. Symptoms that indicate physical abuse include:

- Bruising in or around the mouth, on the back, buttocks or rectal area
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child
- Bites
- Burn or scald marks; small round burns that could be caused by a cigarette

- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large number of scars of different sizes or ages

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. It usually co-exists with other forms of abuse.

Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention seeking behaviour
- Very low self esteem or excessive self criticism
- Excessively withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness; a 'frozen watchfulness'
- Despondency
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from harm or danger, or failing to access appropriate medical care and treatment where necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination of other forms of abuse. Symptoms of physical and emotional abuse can include:

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Inadequate nutrition, leading to ill health
- Constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food
- Failure to seek or to follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Inappropriate clothing for conditions

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

This may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative, or involve no contact, such as watching sexual activities or looking at pornographic material. Encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways is also abusive. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, any sexual activity- contact or non-contact with a child under the age of 13 is a crime.

Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Allegations or disclosure

- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted diseases; urinary infections
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; inappropriately sexualised play, words or drawing
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Repeated sleep disturbances through nightmares and/or wetting

Older children and young people may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders/obsessive behaviours
- Self mutilation; suicide attempts
- School/peer/relationship problems

Some members of our communities hold beliefs that may be common within particular cultures but which are against the law in England. Mind in Haringey does not condone practices that are illegal or harmful to children. Examples of particular practices are:

- **Forced Marriages**

No faith supports the idea of forcing someone to marry without their consent. This should not be confused with arranged marriages between consenting adults.

- **Under-age Marriages**

In England, a young person cannot legally marry or have a sexual relationship until they are 16 years old or more

- **Female Circumcision**

This is against the law yet we know that for some in our communities it is considered a religious act and a cultural requirement. It is also illegal to arrange for a child to go abroad with the intention of having her circumcised.

- **Ritualistic Abuse**

Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children). What should never be condoned is the use of any physical violence to get rid of the possessing spirit. This is physical abuse and people can be prosecuted even if it was their intention to help the child.

2. WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CONCERNS?

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure about abuse against an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;
- Let them know that you take what they say seriously;
- Do **not** attempt to question or interview them yourself;
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. **Do not promise to keep what they tell you a secret;**
- Inform your designated child protection officer as soon as possible;

- Make a written record of the incident or events. Written record should include the nature of the suspicion or allegation; description of visible injury; dates and times and any other factual information; the distinction between fact, opinion or hearsay. All notes should be signed and dated by the staff member or volunteer taking them.

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your designated child protection officer, who will help you decide what to do.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with social workers (Haringey Children's Service) and the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT). It is normally the responsibility of the designated child protection officer to make a referral to these agencies, but if you judge the situation to be an emergency and/or you require urgent advice in the absence of the designated officer, you must report your concerns directly, using the contacts listed at the back of these guidelines. The Children's Service also employs Child Protection Advisors (CPA's), who you can contact in office hours for further specialist guidance. Contact numbers for the CPA's are included in section 7.

The Duty social worker or CPA will decide whether to inform the child's parents or carers about any concerns. If they decide to pursue a child protection investigation, you should:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, in order to keep the child safe;
- Attend a child protection conference if you are invited. You will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the child, which is why it is important to keep records of your concerns;
- Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences.

3. ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Although Mind in Haringey does not work directly with children or young people staff may come into contact with them if children or young people visit service users in staff based projects or when visiting service users in their own accommodation. It is therefore important to be aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse by children or young people will be made against members of staff. They can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has actually taken place;
- Something happens to a child that reminds them of an event that happened in the past – the child is unable to recognise that the situation and the people are different;

- Children can misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else;
- Some children know how powerful an allegation can be; if they are angry with you about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out;
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

All allegations should be brought to the notice of the designated child protection officer immediately. In cases where the allegation is made against this person, the complainant should approach the Chief Executive Officer. If the Chief Executive Officer is not available the staff member should contact the Chair of Mind in Haringey. Whichever one of these staff that is contacted should:

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and away from the alleged abuser;
- Contact the Children's Service Referral and Assessment Team relevant to where the child lives (see section 7) and take advice from them on next actions to take;
- Following any child protection investigation by the police and children's service, any allegation made against an employee or volunteer of Mind in Haringey should be investigated following procedures laid out in the Mind in Haringey Complaints Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure;
- Consider whether the person has access to children anywhere else and inform the relevant child protection agencies who will decide as to whether those organisations or groups need to be informed;

4. SAFE RECRUITMENT

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff who come into contact with children, both directly or indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed: these guidelines should be read in conjunction with Mind in Haringey's Recruitment Policy and Procedures.

- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment and for the names of two referees. Referees will be asked to comment on the candidates suitability for the post including working with vulnerable people;
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should have a new Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure before they start employment with Mind in Haringey – anyone who refuses to do so should not be employed. All DBS checks will be at Enhanced Level;
- Nobody should start work before references have been received.
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description;

- These guidelines should be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of an induction process.

5. GOOD PRACTICE

- Every organisation who may even have limited contact with children or young people should have a designated child protection officer who must undergo child protection training. It is the responsibility of this person to make themselves available for consultation by staff, volunteers, visitors, service users, children and their families;
- All staff are responsible for children while on premises that have staff based at the project and staff must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to;
- Service users who invite children/young people into a shared project must accompany that young person at all times. If they fail to supervise their young visitor adequately staff (if based at the project) will ask the service user to take the young person out of the project;
- House Rules for residential services should clearly set out if children are allowed in projects and any restrictions placed on their visit.
- All Supporting People funded projects must inform Supporting People of incidents involving allegations of abuse of children/young people either by staff, service users or abuse that happens on premises where service users live or receive services.
- Staff must not be left alone with any young person or child; particularly if visiting a service user's accommodation where a young child is visiting/staying.

6. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN HARINGEY

Haringey Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is responsible for coordinating the arrangements made by different local organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The LSCB coordinates multi-agency training programmes on child protection related topics. The LSCB recommends that all designated child protection officers and senior staff attend one or more of these courses to gain the knowledge necessary to be able to offer advice and consultancy.

Staff Training:

Mind in Haringey will endeavour to ensure that the designated child protection officer avails themselves of the appropriate training course recommended by the LSCB. Mind in Haringey will also endeavour to offer appropriate training to the all managers and staff delivering services.

7. CONTACTS

Haringey Children's Service

Haringey Children's Service (Child Protection Advisors)

East Haringey (North & South Tottenham)
020 8489 5426/5462

West Haringey (Stroud Green, Hornsey, Muswell Hill, Wood Green etc)
020 8489 1061/1866/1192

Local Safeguarding Children Board

020 8489 1470/1472

Haringey Child Abuse Investigation Team (Metropolitan Police)

020 8345 2246

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000