**Safeguarding children and young people policy and procedure**

**Greenwich Mencap**

Greenwich Mencap aims to ensure that children and young people using our services are safeguarded at all times as part of our core business. All workers including volunteers must be aware of their responsibilities in this regard. This Safeguarding Policy must be read in conjunction with Greenwich MencapHealth & Safety (Preventing Accidents) Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy and Anti-bullying Policy.

**1**. **Purpose of this document**

1.1 This document outlines Greenwich Mencap’spolicy and procedure on identifying and responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and young peoplein our care. It urges all workers (staff and volunteers) to be alert and vigilant about such concerns and provides guidance on how to respond to these concerns.

1.2 It’s based on the basic tenet that all children and young people must be safeguarded and protected from harm; and that they have a right to be listened to and heard. Their views, however communicated, should always be respected and taken seriously.

**2. Scope of this Policy**

2.1This policy complies with Greenwich Safeguarding Children’s Board advice and guidance on safeguarding and effective multi-agency working in the light of the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015).

2.2 This Policyapplies to children and young people aged 18 years and under using the services of [Insert the name of your organisation]. All staff employed by [Insert name of your organisation] and volunteers, full or part-time must adhere to this policy. It also applies to contractors undertaking work on behalf of Greenwich Mencap.

**3. Early Help and Intervention**

3.1 This policy recognises that providing help early is more effective in safeguarding children and young people than reacting later.Taking swift and decisive action is important in

preventing significant and lasting harm to children and young people’s welfare and life chances. Getting help early for children and their families helps build resilience within families, preventor reduce the risk of problems escalating.

3.2 As part of this safeguarding policy Greenwich Mencap will ensure that all staff and volunteers working for will have the opportunity to be trained to identify and respond early to abuse and neglect, as well as other risks and challenges faced by children and young people.

3.3 We will share information with statutory agencies, in particular MASH or RBG Families First and Early Help Navigators in order to secure early help for children and their families. If necessary, we will do this by completing an Early Help Assessment (EHA) with support from Early Help Navigators (See Appendix 1 for further information and contact details).

**4. Definition of safeguarding**

4.1 For the purposes of this policywe have adopted the definition used in the Children Act 2004[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance document: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015[[2]](#footnote-2) (paragraph 2),which definessafeguarding and promoting children and young people’s welfare as:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing impairment of children’s health or development
* ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

4.2 The above statutory guidance defines child protection as part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Child protection is the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**5. Aims and objectives of policy**

5.1 The aims and objectives of this policy are:

a) To ensure that needs of children and families are identified early so that help and support can be made available as soon as problems emerge to improve outcomes.

b) To respond to specific child protection concerns about children and young people at risk of significant harm who may need to be referred to Children Services or Police to ensure that children and young people are kept safe. Such concerns include:

* Sexual abuse
* Physical abuse
* Emotional abuse
* Neglect

c) To provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people within the organisation including:

* ensuring all workers are aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people whether or not they work directly with them
* ensuring on-going safeguarding training for staff, volunteers and trustees
* ensuring all staff, volunteers and contractors have complete records of employment checks and are inducted properly in their jobs
* ensuring incidents of bullying and other risks and challenges (see, 4.2 below) faced by children and young people are dealt with effectively
* ensuring health and safety procedures are fully observed to prevent accidents

5.2 This policy recognises that children and young people face many other risks and challenges such as:

* Child Trafficking
* Child Sexual Exploitation
* Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
* Forced Marriage
* Chastisement
* Radicalisation (Prevent)
* Gangs

5.3 All workers must remain alert to these risks and challenges and must treat them as major safeguarding concerns. In most cases, the Police or MASH are the appropriate agencies to report such matters to in order to ensure that children and young people get the right support and help but advice and support can also be sought from other services and agencies (See, Appendix 1 for further details).

5.4 Children and young people may be vulnerable from one or more of the risks identified above. They may also have existing needs. Therefore, staff and volunteers must also be alert to the potential need for help and support. For example, if they:

* are disabled and have specific additional needs
* have special educational needs
* are young carers, looking after an adult or sibling
* are showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviours
* live in difficult family situations that present challenges for them, e.g. parental substance misuse, parental mental health problems, domestic violence or poverty
* have returned home to their family from care
* are showing early signs of abuse and neglect
* are being privately fostered

5.5 Appendix 2 gives the statutory definitions of abuse and the risks outlined in paragraph 4.3. It must be must read in conjunction with this policy.

**6. Role of Staff and Volunteers**

6.1 Everyone who works for or undertake work on behalf of Greenwich Mencap must maintain a proper focus on safeguarding. This must be reflected both in sound individual practice as well as in conduct. They must:

* give highest priority to children’s and young people’s safety and welfare
* recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
* respond appropriately to disclosure of abuse by a child, or young person
* respond appropriately to allegations against staff, other adults and against themselves
* be alert to the risks which abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and young people
* be aware of the role of [Insert name of your organisation] Designated Safeguarding Officer
* be aware of the role of the Greenwich Children Safeguarding Board and
* safeguarding services, including MASH, Family First, Police and Youth Offending Services

**7.** **Listening to Children and Young People**

7.1 Listening to children and young people, and taking their views into account when working with them is an important part of safeguarding. Children and young people must be encouraged to express their views and opinions at all times. They must also be invited to give feedback on the activities and services that they take part in. All complaints by children must be taken seriously and investigated.

**8.** **Responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse**

8.1 Staff and volunteers working directly with children and young people are in unique position to position toidentify any abuse or neglect, or changes in behaviour which may indicate a child or young person may beabused or neglected.Greenwich Mencap staff and volunteers must therefore be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect in their interactions with them.

8.2 Staff and volunteers must report all safeguarding and child protection concerns including any allegations of abuse implicating a worker or another child to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Deputy Designated Child Safeguarding Officer (DDSO) in the absence of the DSO. See below for contact details.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Designated Safeguarding Officer** | **Designated Deputy Safeguarding Officer** |
| Name: Terri Looker  Tel: 020 8854 6261 | Name: Anna-Maria Cahalane-MacGuinness  Tel: 020 8305 2245 |

8.3 It will be the duty of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO) to make immediate contact with the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Children Services for advice on what actions to take. Where an allegation of abuse implicates a member of staff or volunteer, the DSO or DDSO must also inform Quality Improvement Leaders (QILs) in Children’s Services who act as **Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs)**. Contact details for both MASH and QILs/LADOs are contained in Appendix 1.

8.4 If a child or young person is in immediate danger, then they should contact the Police and/or emergency services by dialling 999.

8.5 It is important to remember that it is not the role of Greenwich Mencap, its employees, volunteers or trustees to investigate or to decide whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the above agencies following contact or referral from the DSO or DDSO. Staff, volunteers or trustees must not attempt to carry out their own investigations into allegations that they may have received. It is however important that everyone listens carefully to what children and young people have to say and make careful notes of what has been said before passing on the matter to the DSO or DDSO. See Appendix 2 for further guidance on the procedure to follow in the event of a disclosure.

8.6 If the allegations implicate both the Designated Officer and the Deputy Designated Officer, then the person who has received these allegations should report the matter to another senior manager. This latter should then follow the procedures outlined above. Failing the availability of a senior manager the person concerned can contact the MASH or police directly to express their concerns. This procedure can also be followed, if having reported the matter to the relevant managers a person feels that appropriate actions have not been taken by them.

**9. Resolving inter-agency disagreements**

9.1 Occasionally situations may also arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Such disagreements are most likely to arise for instance around:

* levels of need/thresholds
* roles and responsibilities
* decisions made at a Child Protection Conference or Core Group meeting
* progressing plans
* communication

9.2 In all such circumstances Greenwich Mencap will follow the GSCB inter-agency escalation policy[[3]](#footnote-3). We recognise that it is important that inter-agency disagreements are resolved as quickly as possiblelocally between the parties concerned to ensure children are protected as stage 1 of the process. Disagreements and disputes will only be escalated if these cannot be resolvedat stage 1.

**10. Confidentiality**

10.1 Child protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all.Staff, volunteers and trustees have a professional as well as a statutory responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies (Police and Children’s Services).

10.2 As part of this Policy clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all workers within Greenwich Mencap. All personal information regarding a child will be kept confidential except when it is suspected that a child under 18 years is a victim of abuse.

10.3 If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child/young person sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child’s own sake. However, the child should be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

10.4 Where possible, consent should be obtained from the child before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the child should be the priority.

10.5 Where a disclosure has been made, staff should let the child know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.Staff should assure the child that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why.

The child’s involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feeling taken into account.

10.6 Child Protection issues are highly sensitive and staff who receives information about children or their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. All child protection records must be kept secure.

**11. Duty of Care and Position of Trust**

11.1 In part, the duty of care is exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships. It is also exercised by workers taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of those they are responsible for in the course of their work.

11.2 All Greenwich Mencap workers must understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in their role and must always maintain professional boundaries. They must avoid behaviour which might be might be misinterpreted. Child abuse involving a worker is never acceptable. If concerns arise in this area, this must be recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Officer who will deal with it in accordance with the steps outlined in section 8 of this policy document.

**12. Staff Code of Conduct**

12.1 As an organisation, Greenwich Mencapis committed to supporting all staff and volunteers and ensuring they receive timely supervision, support and training to help them carry out their responsibilities effectively.

12.2 Workers must treat everyone with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions; and avoid behaviours that might be misconstrued or misinterpreted. The following are some examples of “Dos and Don’ts”:

* Consideration must always be given to the number of workers needed to run activities and whether they should be male or female
* Avoid questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games and comments
* Only workers assigned to particular activities must be allowed to participate; other adults must not be allowed free access
* Workers must not exchange personal social media contact details (including social media platforms of any kind such phone numbers and text messages,

Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.)with children and young people they work with, and/or socialise with them outside of work

**13. Safer Recruitment, supervision and training**

13.1 Greenwich Mencapwill ensure all workers, including paid staff and volunteers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with our safer recruitment policy. This includes ensuring:

* there is a written job description/person specification for the post
* those applying have completed an application form and self-declaration form
* safeguarding has been discussed before appointment
* written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate
* a current Disclosure and Barring Service certificate has been obtained, wherever relevant and appropriate
* the person appointed receives a copy of this safeguarding policy as part of the induction for staff and knows how to report concerns
* a probationary period applies for all new recruits
* regular supervision for all staff
* mandatory basic safeguarding training within 6 months of joining and refresher training every 3 years

13.2 Greenwich Mencapwill also ensure that regular contractors attending our premises are aware of this policy and have up to date DBS certificates. Occasional visitors will be accompanied at all times in compliance with this policy and a signing in and out record will be kept of all visitors.

**14. Health and Safety**

14.1 Greenwich Mencapapproach to accident prevention is set out in the Health and Safety Policy. This includes making sure that every activity for children and young people is adequately risk assessed to minimise accidents and other risk of harm; and to maximise

the benefits that children, young people and families get from our services. The Health and safety Policy also ensures:

* Children and young people are not left unattended
* Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment is supervised by trained staff
* Parental consent is obtained as necessary
* Records about children’s allergies, medical problems or any special needs are recorded
* First aid facilities are readily available and adequate
* Equipment is adequate and checked regularly
* There is access to a telephone at all times for emergency calls
* Insurance cover is adequate and cover all necessary activities, transport and public liability

14.2 All accidents however minor must be recorded in an accident book. Workers must have access to a telephone at all times to call for help or to call emergency services if needed.

**15. Bullying**

15.1 Greenwich Mencapdoes not tolerate bullying of any kind, including cyber-bullying. Children can bully each other, be bullied by an adult, and they can bully adults sometimes. We will do our utmost to inform children and young people as well as their parents and carers about bullying and the consequences of bullying and how to report such incidences promptly. There is also an expectation that anyone who knows bullying is happening will report it to the DSO/DDSO, who will take local action as necessary.

15.2 Children who are bullied need protection. However, those responsible for the bullying need to address the reasons for their behaviour and will be encouraged to relate to others in positive ways. Persistent offenders will risk being excluded from our services. Staff and volunteers found guilty of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with organisation’s disciplinary procedures.

15.3 Some common forms of bullying include:

* Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing
* Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, graffiti, gestures, racial taunts, homophobic and sexist remarks
* Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any other use of violence
* Sexually abuse comments or gestures
* Practical jokes which may cause physical or emotional harm even though these may not be intended

**16. E-Safety**

16.1 Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including the use of social media, email and internet have added new dimensions to safeguarding children and young people. Abuse or exploitation via these form of ICT are equally serious and must be reported and dealt with in the same way as more direct methods of abuse identified above. Greenwich Mencapwill work with children and young people as well as parents to keep them safe from on-line abuse and exploitation, including:

* encouraging children and young people to tell someone if anything goes wrong online or upsets them
* educating them so they know about the dangers they can encounter while online

**17. Suggestions and Complaints by Parents/Carers**

17.1 All parents and carers must be made aware of Greenwich Mencapcomplaints procedures. Where they wish to make a complaint or suggestion, they will be taken seriously and Greenwich Mencapwill endeavour to resolve matters promptly. All complaints and suggestions will be followed up by a written response to the issue that has been raised and will be recorded and stored appropriately.

17.2 The above refers to complaints of a general nature only. In case of complaints about safeguarding, workers must follow the procedures outlined above.

**18. Implementation and Monitoring of Safeguarding Policy**

18.1 The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this Safeguarding Policy. This includes ensuring all staff and volunteers receive adequate safeguarding training, ensuring the policy is reviewed and updated annually or as necessary in the light of national and local guidance.

**References, internet links and further sources of information**

A resource that provides the most up to date information on safeguarding policies and best practice:<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

For local information about Safeguarding relating to the Royal Borough of Greenwich please refer to the Greenwich Safeguarding Children’s Board website:

[http://www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk](http://www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/)

**Internet Links**

[www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[www.ceop.gov.uk/reportabuse/index.asp](http://www.ceop.gov.uk/reportabuse/index.asp)

**For Children and Young People**

[www.childline.org.uk/pages/yourplace.aspx](http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/yourplace.aspx)

**Contacts**

Child Line 0800 1111

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

1. The Children Act 2004:www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/part/2/crossheading/general [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Working together to safeguard children, DfE, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-)safeguard-children [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. GSCB Inter-agency Escalation Policy: <http://www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/download/downloads/id/85/gscb_inter-agency_escalation_policy> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)