



**MIND IN CROYDON**

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN (CHILD PROTECTION) POLICY**

This Policy aims to:

- adopt the highest possible standards and
- take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children with whom Mind in Croydon comes into contact with in the course of its work.

It is impossible to ensure that no child ever comes to any harm while in contact with Mind in Croydon. However implementing this policy and following the guidelines will enable those who undertake work with children for Mind in Croydon to be confident that they have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent harm occurring while being prepared to deal with an incident should it occur.

Mind in Croydon expects all those working with children and young people under the age of 18 years in any capacity – paid or voluntary - to apply this policy.

### **Mind in Croydon's work with children, young people and their parents**

It is important to remember that as someone who works in a paid or voluntary capacity at Mind in Croydon you may come into contact with children in a wide range of situations in connection with any one of our services.

### **To whom does this policy apply**

The policy applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers and contractors.

All those covered by the policy have a duty to do everything reasonable in their power to ensure the safety and welfare of children while they are in contact with Mind in Croydon.

### **Duties**

You are expected to:

- Respect the wishes of a child as you would an adult, you must not impose yourself on them
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child in contact with Mind in Croydon
- Remember that children regard adults as role models and ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach
- Be aware of Child Protection issues in relation to the work you do and do not become complacent and believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Prevent any other member of staff or volunteer from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety
- Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child
- Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused whether by an adult or another child to the Chief Executive or in his absence, the Business Development and Service Delivery Manager
- Not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse any child or young person

## **Responsibilities**

In most instances the children you come into contact with will be accompanied by a parent. However if, due to illness or another unexpected event a member of staff or Mind in Croydon volunteer is left in charge of a child or children, they should act and make decisions in accordance with this Policy and Guidelines. The member of staff or volunteer should maintain appropriate child to adult ratios as required by the relevant local authority. This must underpin your main aim of providing an enjoyable and safe experience for the children.

## **Golden Rule - Safety in numbers**

In all situations we should aim to ensure that no adult is in a one to one situation with a child. Safety in numbers should be the golden rule, whether the numbers are other children or adults.

## **Disclosure**

### Appointments

All staff who come into contact with clients and/or their children are required to apply to The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) prior to appointment.

The appointment will only proceed if:

- the pre-employment checks prove satisfactory and
- the Disclosure provides no cause for concern as to their suitability to work with children. This applies whether the appointment is the result of recruitment or an internal move. Managers must also be mindful of these requirements as the content of posts develop over time and new tasks are assigned.

## **Reporting Allegations of Abuse**

**If you suspect that a child or young person in Croydon may be being abused or neglected, it is vital you report your concerns so that this can be investigated.**

**Contact Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Telephone: 020 8726 6400  
Out of Hours: 020 8726 6400 (ask for out of hours team) Email:  
childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk.** If you consider a child/young person to be at immediate risk, call 999 immediately.

It is to be hoped that you will never have to deal with an alleged incident of child abuse. But it is sensible that you are prepared to do so if necessary and this will be assisted if you have discussed the issue locally.

There are four likely scenarios which you should be aware of and be prepared to deal with if necessary. These are;

- There is suspicion or evidence that a child is being abused by a member of staff or other person associated with Mind
- A child accuses a member of staff or other person associated with Mind of abusing them
- Abuse takes place or is suspected on Mind premises by an individual unrelated to Mind
- A child discloses abuse happening elsewhere e.g. at home

In all cases you must:

- Be prompt, calm, assured and professional
- Keep any details strictly confidential and share only on a 'need to know' basis.

If practicable, junior staff should discuss making a referral with their line manager or another manager within Mind in Croydon although if this would delay the reporting of concerns unnecessarily and potentially leave a child at risk this may not always be possible.

### **Allegations against staff**

Though our focus must be on safeguarding children you must also be aware that allegations of abuse made by children about adults do occasionally happen. Some prove mistaken or, very rarely, malicious. The Policy and Guidelines are there to help you to avoid situations in which well-intentioned actions could be misinterpreted and ensure that you do not find yourself in a situation where an unfounded allegation by a child, young or vulnerable person can be made.

Children have a right to safe services. If you are concerned that a member of staff has behaved inappropriately towards a child, you or your manager must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO is located within children's services and should be alerted to all cases

Local Authorities should have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases. The LADO should provide advice and guidance to senior managers on the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with robustly and quickly as possible. Any allegation should be reported immediately to a senior manager within your organisation. The LADO should be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to employer's attention.

Local Authority Designated Officer  
Telephone 0208 726 6000 Ext 84322  
Email LADO@croydon.gov.uk  
Address 4th Floor, Zone F  
Bernard Weatherill House,  
8 Mint Walk, Croydon,  
CR0 1EA

### **Use of Information relating to children**

Information about children e.g. names and addresses must be treated confidentially.

### **Discussion of the issues**

Open discussion of child protection should be encouraged since this helps to make staff more comfortable with the issues involved. Do not keep it 'under wraps' for fear of upsetting or embarrassing people.