

# Open Door Child Protection Policy

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### SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN HARINGEY

*Haringey Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) is responsible for coordinating the arrangements made by different local organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The HSCP will also approach individual organisations as and when their advice and experience in particular areas could be valuable to the production of guidance or information to the public.*

*The HSCP coordinates multi-agency training programmes on child protection related topics; it is recommended that all designated child protection officers and senior officials attend one or more of these courses to gain the knowledge necessary to be able to offer advice and consultancy within Open Door.*

**Open Door** recognises that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone.

**Open Door** recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and the Children and Social Work Act, 2017. The management of suspected and alleged child abuse is a complex matter for voluntary organisations.

**Open Door** is 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, criminal and sexual exploitation.

**Open Door** aims to create a safe environment within which children and young people can thrive and adults can work with the security of clear guidance.

Under the terms of the Children Act 2004 anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.

These guidelines are for the use of all Open Door paid staff, volunteers and visitors. We will make them available to the parents and carers of the children and young people to whom we offer a service. Through them, we will ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected
- Staff are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training

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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.

**Our designated Child Protection Officer is: Julia Britton, Director**  
**See section 7 – Contacts for details and for other relevant contacts**

These child protection procedures will only be effective if all staff and volunteers at Open Door own and understand them. To ensure that safeguarding awareness and knowledge is embedded throughout the organisation, Open Door will undertake the following measures:

- Clearly identify designated child protection officer (CPO) and Senior Official
- Ensure CPO attends training on child protection and updates that training annually
- Ensure all staff have the appropriate level of safeguarding training every 3 years and that a log of training is kept
  - All clinicians (including Honorary Therapists) should have Child Safeguarding training to Level 3
  - All members of frontline support team should have Child Safeguarding training to level 2
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have a copy of child protection procedures including all updates and are familiar with it.
- Ensure that this policy forms part of all staff inductions and that all staff and volunteers know what to do if they have concerns about a child/young person.
- Ensure all existing staff and volunteers who have contact with children have Enhanced DBS Disclosures
- Ensure that new staff/volunteers who have contact with children/young people have Enhanced DBS checks before they start work
- Ensure that there is a single central record of DBS checks made.

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 act 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, burning, scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention; this is called Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) , formerly known as 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 and scald marks; small round burns that could be caused by a cigarette
- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers 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 when necessary. It can exist in

isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse. Symptoms of physical and emotional neglect 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 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. Open Door 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 for someone 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. The same is true should there be emotional abuse of a child/young person believed to be possessed.

## 2 WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CONCERNS

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of 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 are saying 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 secret;**
- Inform your designated child protection officer as soon as possible, by phone, email or in-person. Their details can be found in section 7 of this policy.
- Make a written record of the incident or events.

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 clinical supervisor or designated child protection officer if they are not available who will help you to decide what to do. Supervisors must discuss decisions with the designated child protection officer if they are unsure about a course of action.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the 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).

**In an emergency:** 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 in section 7 of this policy.** The Children's Service also employs Child Protection Advisors (CPAs), who you can contact in office hours for further specialist guidance.

The Duty social worker or CPA will advise you when or 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 or make representation to any subsequent strategy meetings, child protection review conferences, core groups or child in need meetings as appropriate.

### 3 ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Organisations that work or come into contact with children and young people need to be aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse may be made against members of their staff.

Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. 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 or delegated senior clinician. In cases where the allegation is made against this person, the complainant should approach a more senior official or take the following action him or herself:

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and away from the alleged abuser
- Contact the Children's Service Referral & Assessment Team relevant to where the child lives (see section 7)
- **All allegations should be reported without delay to:**  
  
Haringey's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)  
  
Email: [LADO@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@haringey.gov.uk)  
T. 020 8489 2968
- Contact the parents or carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker/officer in charge of allegations
- Irrespective of any investigation by social workers or the police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure; common practice is for the alleged abuser to be suspended from work until the outcome of any investigation is clear
- Consider whether the person has access to children anywhere else and whether those organisations or groups need to be informed
- Act upon the decisions made in any strategy meeting

All incidents should be reported to the Chair of Trustees.

All incidents should be investigated internally after any external investigation has finished, to review organisational practice and put in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again.

## 4 SAFE RECRUITMENT

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed:

- 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
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should have a new DBS disclosure before they start employment – anyone who refuses to do so should not be employed
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and perceptions of acceptable behaviour
- Nobody should start work before references have been received. Referees should be reminded that references should not misrepresent the candidate or omit to say things that might be relevant to their employment
- All appointments to work with children should be subject to an agreed probationary period
- 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.
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## 5 GOOD PRACTICE

- Every organisation working with children 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, children and their families
- All staff are responsible for children while on these premises and must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to
- All staff working with children should receive regular supervision from a more experienced staff member and are required to receive appropriate child protection training

Use of premises by other organisations

- In the event that a room or rooms on the premises are used by other organisations, the letting agreement should ensure that the hiring organisation works to approved child protection procedures and/or that they read and agree to abide by these guidelines.

## 7 CONTACTS

**For Open Door the Child Protection Officer is:**

- Julia Britton, Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist, Director  
Open Door – 020 8348 5947 ext 89  
emergency contact number 077 621 50770

**The Senior Official for purposes of this policy is:**

Judy Shuttleworth, Trustee and Chair of Joint Clinical Committee:

[judyshuttleworth@hotmail.com](mailto:judyshuttleworth@hotmail.com)

**If there are safeguarding concerns, contact Social Services directly:**

- MASH Team (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) 020 8 489 4470 (9.00-5.00pm)
- Emergency Duty 020 8489 0000 (from 5pm)

**Haringey Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) (Metropolitan Police)**

- 020 8345-2246

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

- 020 8489 2968

**NSPCC Helpline - 0808 800 5000**

Signed:



Julia Britton, Director