



Project 17

St Joseph's Hospice, Mare St,
Hackney, London,
E8 4SA

07963 509 044

info@project17.org.uk

www.project17.org.uk

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedure

Date created: Sept 2014 Last reviewed: Nov 2023 Period for review: Annual

Purpose and scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees and anyone else working for or on behalf of Project 17. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Lone Working Policy and the Confidentiality Policy.

This policy applies where:

- There is a concern that a child or young person may be experiencing abuse or neglect
- There is a concern that a child or young person is experiencing an interference with their human rights as a result of destitution, and there is no alternative statutory or voluntary support available

Project 17 is committed to the protection of all children and young people from harm and abuse. The purpose of this policy is to help staff and volunteers recognise their responsibilities to protect children and young people from harm and to protect children and young people who receive Project 17's services.

We will ensure that the delivery of our service is safe and sensitive through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers, good management, supervision and training.

We give immediate attention to any complaints or concerns relating to children or young people, or relating to our staff or the agencies we work with. We will work within local child protection procedures and share information about concerns with those agencies that need to be made aware, while also involving parents and children appropriately.

'Child' or 'young person' refers to someone under the age of 18. A list of useful definitions can be found in **appendix 1**.

Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of the following law and guidance that seeks to protect children:

- The Children Act 1989

- UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998 (and Data Protection Act 2018 when it comes into force in May 2018)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code practice: 0 to 25 years, 2014
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing services to children, young people and carers, 2015
- Working together to safeguard children, 2018

Equalities statement:

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or gender identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Code of Behaviour - Safe Professional Conduct

Staff and volunteers at Project 17 should show respect and understanding for an individual's rights, safety and welfare at all times.

Staff and volunteers should value and encourage the children and young people they work with. Staff and volunteers should use appropriate language with children and young people, and challenge any inappropriate language used by a child, young person, or adult working with them.

Staff and volunteers should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others. If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts. See the Lone Working Policy for further details.

Some behaviours which are **never** acceptable and could be classified as **gross misconduct** and are against Project 17's policies. A sexual or abusive relationship with a client or client's family member will be considered an act of gross misconduct. Depending on the circumstances, this could also result in a referral to the police.

Staff and volunteers should follow good practice, taking a lead from the conduct of colleagues when necessary, in how they manage personal boundaries and professional norms.

Destitute children unable to access statutory support

Due to the nature of our work, many of our clients have children facing destitution. These children may be at risk of serious harm, and/or face breaches of human rights as a result of destitution (e.g. Art 3 or Art 8 ECHR), but may not be being abused by their parents/guardians. Our advice service aims to reduce destitution by enabling families to access support under s.17 CA 1989.

However, there may be occasions where a family is not eligible for support under s.17 CA 1989. In these circumstances, a child may be destitute and facing a breach of human rights, but unable to access support under s.17. If the worker has fully explored all statutory and charitable support options and found no means of support, a child protection referral is likely to be appropriate and the steps outlined in the following section should be followed.

For example: a client is a visa overstayer with no outstanding immigration applications. She is single with a one year old baby. They are street homeless and do not have enough money for food, milk or nappies. The family has sought immigration advice and has been told that they do not meet the grounds to submit any immigration applications at this time. The client does not want to return to her country of origin. In this situation, the family may not be able to access support under s.17 because the local authority is likely to discharge its duty by advising return to the country of origin. The worker should explore other avenues of support such as friends and family and charities (e.g. hosting schemes). However, if no alternative support can be secured, a child protection referral may be appropriate.

Procedure for identifying and Reporting Safeguarding Issues

Where a child protection concern arises, the worker or volunteer should:

- Listen non-judgmentally and carefully
- Record what has been disclosed as soon as possible, quoting the disclosing person's actual words as far as possible. For more details on what to include in such a record, see appendix 2.
- If informing the disclosing person of your concerns may put the young person at further risk, do not alert them. Otherwise, the disclosing person should be alerted to the nature of concerns and the fact that an external referral may be made.
- If the disclosing person asks that information be kept confidential, explain that there are limits to confidentiality, particularly if there is a protection issue. If it appears a crime has been committed a referral may be made directly to the police.
- Consult with the Director. If agreed, the worker may then discuss the concern with the relevant organisation (e.g. social services), and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
- If the Director is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the worker with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation.

It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to make enquiries into abuse or neglect committed by parents or guardians. This must be left to the police or social services.

Once it has been established that a safeguarding referral is required, the referral should be made within one working day. When making a referral, the Director or the worker should establish with social services what the child and parents will be told. Where possible, the referral should be made in writing. If you make your referral by telephone, confirm it in writing within one working day. Social services should acknowledge your written referral within one working day of receiving it, so if you have not heard back within 3 working days, contact social services again.

The Director, Abi Brunswick, is the Designated Safeguarding Officer and the person with whom safeguarding concerns should be discussed. She can be contacted on 07808 646855 or abi.brunswick@project17.org.uk.

Confidentiality

There is a separate policy for confidentiality and information sharing. Exceptions to the general rules about confidentiality will include situations where a young person or vulnerable adult is subject to abuse or serious harm.

Safe Environment

Creating a safe environment for all clients, including children and young people, will include screening and training of staff, appropriate supervision, audits and reviews of service policy and provision; as well as assessing, where appropriate, other agencies working with children and young people in the area.

Creating a safe environment for staff will include protection both from physical assault and from unfounded allegations. This will mean monitoring of incidents and taking preventative measures. Additional safeguards could include only meeting some clients in public places or within office hours; compliance with systems for logging whereabouts and timetable (see Lone Working Policy for details).

Staff and volunteers working directly with children or vulnerable adults will be required to undergo enhanced DBS checks every 2 years. Staff who do have enhanced DBS checks will not be permitted to be alone with children.

Social services:

The appropriate social services department will depend on the local authority in which the child normally lives, or in which they are currently present.

NSPCC Help line Tel: 0800 800 500 – 24 hours, Freephone

Appendix 1:

Abuse

- 1.3.1 A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

- 1.3.2 Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child; see Fabricated or Induced Illness Procedure.

Emotional abuse

- 1.3.3 Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:
- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
 - Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction;
 - Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic violence and abuse;
 - Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger;
 - Exploiting and corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

- 1.3.4 Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- 1.3.5 Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- 1.3.6 In addition; Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under s5 Sexual Offences Act 2003. See Part B1, Practice Guidance.

Neglect

- 1.3.7 Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- 1.3.8 Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.
- 1.3.9 Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to:
- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
 - Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);

- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

1.3.1 It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic
0 emotional, social and educational needs.

1.3.1 Included in the four categories of child abuse and neglect above, are a
1 number of factors relating to the behaviour of the parents and carers which have significant impact on children such as domestic violence. Research analysing Serious Case Reviews has demonstrated a significant prevalence of domestic abuse in the history of families with children who are subject of Child Protection Plans. Children can be affected by seeing, hearing and living with domestic violence and abuse as well as being caught up in any incidents directly, whether to protect someone or as a target. It should also be noted that the age group of 16 and 17 year olds have been found in recent studies to be increasingly affected by domestic violence in their peer relationships.

1.3.1 The Home Office definition of Domestic violence and abuse was updated in
2 March 2013 as:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial;
- Emotional.

1.3.1 Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person
3 subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim."

Appendix 2:

Procedure for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse:

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone at Project 17 has concerns, a record should be kept. If the person is a client, the record should be kept in the case management database. If the person is not a client, the information must be taken and stored separately. It should include:

- Name of child or young person
- Age
- Home Address (if known)
- Date of Birth (if known)
- Name/s and Address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
- Telephone numbers if available
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details
- What has prompted the concerns? Include dates and times of any specific incidents
- Has the child or young person been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details
- Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? e.g. school, designated officer, social services etc
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- Any other information

REPORTING PROCEDURES

