

West Berkshire Mencap abides by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

- We recognise the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation has an equal right to 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

### **Purpose**

We will:

- Protect children and young people who receive West Berkshire Mencap’s services from harm
- This includes the children of adults who use our services
- Provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of West Berkshire Mencap, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

### **Introduction**

#### **Definition of abuse**

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.

Child Abuse: Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child Criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse

Safeguarding children: Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 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

*The 2023 edition of Working Together to Safeguard Children* is central to delivering on the Government’s strategy set out in *Stable Homes: built on love (2023)* which outlines the Government’s commitment to support every child to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home.

### **Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from [nspcc.org.uk/learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning) and [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

West Berkshire Mencap should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as well as vulnerable adults.

### **The Prevent duty**

Some organisations in England, Scotland and Wales have a duty, as a specified authority under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent Duty. These organisations include:

- Schools
- Registered childcare providers
- Local authorities
- Police
- Prisons and probation services
- NHS trusts and foundations.
- Other organisations may also have Prevent duties if they perform delegated local authority functions.

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme.

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

### **Training and Awareness**

West Berkshire Mencap will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its Trustees, Employees, Volunteers and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g. contractors).

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children
- Recognise a child potentially in need of safeguarding and take action
- Understand how to report a safeguarding alert
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy

Similarly, employees and volunteers may encounter concerns about the safety and wellbeing of an adult at risk of abuse. For more information about adults safeguarding, refer to West Berkshire Mencap Adults Safeguarding Policy.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

West Berkshire Mencap expects all employees, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm or contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.

### **Recording and Record Keeping**

A written record must be kept about any concern regarding an child with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

### **Safe Recruitment & Selection**

West Berkshire Mencap is committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices, that reduce the risk of harm to children from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

West Berkshire Mencap has policies and procedures that that cover the recruitment of all Trustees, employees and volunteers.

### **Social Media**

All employees and volunteers should be aware of West Berkshire Mencap social media policy and procedures and the code of conduct for behaviour towards the children we support.

### **Use of Mobile Phones and other Digital Technology**

All employees, trustees and volunteers should be aware of West Berkshire Mencap policy and procedures regarding the use of mobile phones and any digital technology and understand that it is unlawful to photograph children and young people without the explicit consent of the person with parental responsibilities.

Photographs will only be taken of the children with their parents’/ Carers permission. Only the West Berkshire Camera’s or iPads will be used to take photographs of the children in our care. No staff, children, volunteers or visitors may use their mobile phones to take photographs of any children in our care. During the session at the Centre mobile phones will be locked away, we will have one phone (a West Berkshire Mencap phone available where possible) in case of emergencies and this number will be given to all parents / carers / guardians.

### **Identifying an abuser**

Anyone is capable of being an abuser and all West Berkshire Mencap staff should be aware of this. Abusers are likely to be:

- Another member of staff or volunteer
- A family member
- Another service user
- Another professional not employed by West Berkshire Mencap
- A member of the public

### **Identifying Abuse**

Abuse may be witnessed directly or you may be informed about it by the service user or another person (e.g. relative, other professional, other staff member, volunteer etc). Or you may suspect abuse.

West Berkshire Mencap has a zero tolerance policy towards the abuse of service users.

### **Whistleblowing**

It is important that people within West Berkshire Mencap have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistle blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrong- doing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer. There is also a requirement by West Berkshire Mencap to protect whistle-blowers.

### **If you witness abuse**

If the service user is at risk of harm or injury the staff member should intervene to prevent this from happening.

If to do so would put you at risk, then you should contact 999 immediately.

You should then support the service user as soon as is possible, provide the emergency services with all available information and contact your line manager.

If a crime has been committed (or you suspect that a crime has been committed) then you **must** contact the police. Try to ensure that you do not tamper with evidence.

If the service user is not in immediate risk of harm or injury you should intervene to stop the abuse continuing unless to do so would increase the chances of an escalation.

If no crime has been committed, then reassure your service user and report the incident to your manager.

### **If abuse is reported to you by a service user**

- Remain calm
- Listen very carefully to what is being told to you
- Reassure the individual that their concerns are being taken seriously
- Inform them that you will need to tell your manager, unless the manager is the alleged perpetrator of the abuse, in which case tell them that you will inform the Chief Executive of West Berkshire Mencap or the Local Authority
- If the service user says that they don't want the abuse reported, then explain that this is not possible but that they will be protected and supported
- If there is any allegation that a crime has been committed, then contact the police.
- Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence being gathered if a crime has been committed, ensure you protect this evidence by not disturbing it in any way
- If the service user is alleging assault, then wait for the police to arrive before assisting them with changing clothes or personal care such as showering
- At the appropriate time ensure you write a full report of the incident

### **If the abuse is reported to you by a third party**

A third party could be another service user, a family member, another member of staff, a volunteer or even a member of the general public.

- Ensure the person giving you the information that their concerns will be taken seriously.
- Tell the person that you have to inform your manager about their concerns
- If they then wish to withdraw the allegation or ask you not to tell your manager explain that you cannot do this but that (wherever possible) confidentiality will be ensured
- Report the allegation of abuse to either your manager, Chief Executive or Local Authority
- Ensure you write a report of the allegation

### **If you suspect abuse**

You may suspect a service user has been abused or is suffering from on-going abuse but have not witnessed anything or been told about it.

- Report your concerns to your manager

# West Berkshire Mencap

## Policy – Children’s Safeguarding Policy.



- Ensure you write down your concerns ensuring you use facts, log the dates/times.
- Do not give your own opinion but do give as much detail as possible

### Important Contacts:

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Caroline Austin [caz.austin@wbmencap.org](mailto:caz.austin@wbmencap.org) 07977221206

#### Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Julie Chaundy [Julie.chaundy@wbmencap.org](mailto:Julie.chaundy@wbmencap.org) 07989403763

#### Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Portia Tuckfield 01635 41464

Emily Lovelock 01635 41464 (will be taking shift lead at the weekends)

#### Trustee for Safeguarding

Name: Email address: Telephone number: **TBC**

**West Berkshire Council Contact Advice Assessment Service (CAAS) Triage** for all new concerns about a child – professional line 01635 503190 or public line 01635 503090 Mon-Thurs 8.30-5, Fri 8.30-4.30pm. Supplementary information to a telephone referral can be sent via email [child@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:child@westberks.gov.uk) however all new enquiries must be telephoned in the first instance.

**West Berkshire Council Children’s Services out of hours Emergency Duty Service** 24 hour, 7 days a week, including bank holidays **01344 351999**

**Local Area Designated Officer (LADO):** 01635 503153 or [LADO@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@westberks.gov.uk)

**Police Emergency** – 999

**Police Non-emergency** – 101

If, for whatever reason, you are unable to inform your Manager, Safeguarding Officer’s or Safeguarding Leads (or if the / a manager is the perpetrator of the abuse) you should contact the Chief Executive of West Berkshire Mencap:

Sara Vaughan 07426353354

In Sara’s absence please call:

Jane Hall 07810877276 (Deputy CEO)

Tony Ferguson 07770920918 (Deputy CEO)

If you are unable to contact the CEO or her Deputies and the abuse or alleged abuse occurred in West Berkshire then you should contact the CAAS Team (details above)

If the abuse or alleged abuse occurred within another local authority area other than West Berkshire, then the report must be made to that local authority e.g. in Hampshire call 0845 603 5630 (out of hours call 0845 600 4555)

At the appropriate time ensure that you write a full report of the incident using the Incident Report form. This form should be as factual and detailed as possible and should be sent to the relevant local authority safeguarding team.

If the funding authority for the client is different to the authority where the incident occurred and where the incident report will have been sent, then the funding authority should also be notified as a matter of courtesy

## **Safeguarding is Everyone’s Business**

**Any member of staff who suspects that abuse is occurring has a legal responsibility to report it to their manager.**

**Failure to report abuse is a disciplinary matter**

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