



Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Concerning Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults

1. Introduction

Every child or vulnerable adult deserves to participate in activities where they feel safe and secure. It is parents or carers (if applicable) to have confidence in the individuals that are responsible for these activities, knowing they are trustworthy and committed to ensuring the safety for the vulnerable individuals. However, there are instances where individuals who work or volunteer may pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults, potentially wishing to cause them harms—.

Ment4 has implemented measures to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm. Additionally, safeguarding procedures are in place to prevent workers from being placed in situations where abuse may be alleged. All workers are thoroughly informed about what steps to take if abuse is suspected. Ment4 believes in actively promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, aiming not only to protect them but to also ensure their ongoing safety and well-being.

A Vulnerable Adult, as outlined in the 'No Secrets' government report, refers to an individual “who may be in the need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation”

2. MENT4 Values for Safeguarding Children & Young People

- The primary focus of child protection efforts should always be the well-being and requirements of the child. This principle serves as the foundation for all actions and interventions undertaken in accordance with the London Child Protection Procedures.
- Ensuring the safety of children and young people requires collaborative efforts, with all relevant agencies and individuals taking shared responsibility and cooperating closely. The Children Act 2004 mandates public bodies to exchange information to safeguard the welfare of children and young people, emphasizing the importance of collective action in protecting them effectively.
- Every child and young person deserves the fundamental right to experience nurturing and secure surroundings as they grow up.
- Children and young people are entitled to protection from all forms of abuse, and it is their expectation that adults in positions of authority will make every effort to uphold and safeguard these rights.
- Safeguarding children and young people from abuse is regarded as an integral part of MENT4's overall responsibility.
- MENT4 is obligated to advocate for healthy, non-abusive relationships and foster environments that are free from abuse.
- The foremost responsibility of staff, regardless of their assigned role, is to ensure the protection of children and young people from any form of significant harm.

- MENT4 is accountable for informing parents, children, and young people about its obligation to address and report any safeguarding concerns or suspected cases of abuse that are disclosed or observed.

3. MENT4 Values for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults:

- **Privacy:** The right of individuals to be left alone or undisturbed and free from intrusion or public attention into their affairs.
- **Dignity:** Recognition of the intrinsic value of people regardless of circumstances by respecting their uniqueness and their personal needs; treating with respect.
- **Independence:** Opportunities to act and think without reference to another person, including a willingness to incur a degree of calculated risk.
- **Choice:** Opportunity to select independently from a range of options.
- **Rights:** The maintenance of all entitlements associated with citizenship.
- **Fulfilment:** The realisation of personal aspirations and abilities in all aspects of daily life.
- **Valuing Diversity:** Respect for diverse cultures, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions, ages, genders, and sexual preferences.

MENT4 has a responsibility to inform vulnerable adults and carers (where appropriate), of its duty to follow up any safeguarding concerns and report suspected cases of abuse to the appropriate body, when disclosed or observed.

4. MENT4 Contact with Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults

MENT4 engages directly and indirectly with children, young people, and vulnerable adults through specialized mentoring projects.

5. Preventing Opportunities for Abuse

MENT4's aims to:

- Ensure safe recruitment practices by thoroughly assessing the suitability of both staff and volunteers to work with children and vulnerable individuals.
- Raise awareness of safeguarding issues, providing training and awareness-raising initiatives to empower children and vulnerable adults with the necessary skills to ensure their safety.
- Develop and then implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- Make our Safeguarding Policy easily accessible to all stakeholders and undergoes regular reviews and monitoring to stay abreast of emerging forms of abuse and best practices in safeguarding.
- According to statutory guidance and legislation, it is mandatory for all social care agencies to designate specific individuals who are appropriately trained and informed to handle initial discussions regarding child protection and safeguarding concerns.
- All MENT4 managers will have training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and will be the first point of contact for concerns of abuse etc.

5.1. Safer Recruitment and Supervision of staff/volunteers

- All MENT4 staff and volunteers involved in work with children or vulnerable adults are required to complete a Criminal Records Disclosure application. For positions involving unsupervised

access, an Enhanced Disclosure is necessary, while a Standard Disclosure suffices for roles without such access. Additionally, MENT4 mandates at least two references for every paid or unpaid position. Moreover, all MENT4 workers undergo regular one-to-one supervision sessions and an annual performance appraisal to assess their work and personal development.

- Starting in 2012, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has been central to the government's efforts to enhance the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals within our society. MENT4 will utilize the DBS to verify that staff members intending to work with children or vulnerable adults have undergone appropriate assessments for such roles.
- <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/services/dbs-checking-service/>

5.2. Training & Development

- All MENT4 staff working with children and vulnerable adults must maintain up to date knowledge of Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children and young people through training.
- All MENT4 staff/volunteers will have access to ongoing training opportunities to promote their safeguarding knowledge. This will include basic training on the MENT4 Policy and procedures with access to specific training where necessary.

5.3. Safer Practice in Direct Work

- Except for transportation responsibilities involving young people to and from appointments in cars, no MENT4 staff or volunteer should find themselves alone with a child or vulnerable adult, except in public settings, without notifying others of the purpose or reason for such a circumstance.
- At least one CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) checked worker/volunteer to be present during all direct work.
- All allegations of abuse against a worker, however minor, are reported to the worker/volunteers' line manager.
- All children or vulnerable adults utilizing MENT4 services must have recorded parental, guardian, or next of kin consent where applicable, along with their contact details.
- If any allegation is made against a member of MENT4 staff concerning alleged abuse of a child, the procedure to be followed will be in line with the London Child Protection Procedures 4th Edition see <http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/>
- Risk assessment:

5.4 Safer Practice for Staff who may come into contact with Children and Vulnerable Adults but do not directly work with them.

- All staff in this context to have a Standard CRB check, this would include some administrators and VAC Managers and workers-.
- Where practical no MENT4 member of staff or volunteer will be alone with a child or vulnerable adult without alerting others to the reason

- Safeguarding considerations should be included on the Access & Security Policy for all Voluntary Action Centres

5.5 Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Personal data identifying individuals will be stored securely in personal files or computers owned by the Team Leaders and Director, following the outlined security measures. Mentors will attempt to avoid holding any data that directly identifies mentees, their families, or associates in order to maintain safeguarding measures and protect any information being abused outside the company.
- Any necessary identification of the young person will be minimized through addressing them with acronyms, both through written or digital format, under the guidance of Team Leaders to oblige to safeguarding procedures within MENT4.

6. Definitions of types of Abuse

1.1 Physical Abuse of Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults

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

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

Physical Abuse - Indicators	
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unexplained injuries – bruises / abrasions / lacerations ▪ The account of the accident may be vague or may vary from one telling another. ▪ Unexplained burns ▪ Regular occurrence of unexplained injuries <p>Most accidental injuries occur on parts of the body where the skin passes over a bony protrusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Withdrawn or aggressive behavioural extremes ▪ Uncomfortable with physical contact ▪ Seems afraid to go home ▪ Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably ▪ Wears clothing inappropriate for the weather, to cover body. ▪ The interaction between the child, vulnerable adult, and its carer

1.2 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's or vulnerable adults' health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent/carer failing to:

- ❖ Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter

- ❖ Protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ❖ Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers);
- ❖ Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

Neglect - Indicators	
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unattended medical need ▪ Underweight or obesity ▪ Recurrent infection ▪ Unkempt dirty appearance ▪ Smelly ▪ Inadequate / unwashed clothes ▪ Consistent lack of supervision ▪ Consistent hunger ▪ Inappropriately dressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor social relationships ▪ Indiscriminate friendliness ▪ Poor concentration ▪ Low self-esteem ▪ Regularly displays fatigue or lethargic ▪ Frequently falls asleep ▪ Frequent unexplained absences

1.3. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's or vulnerable adult's emotional development, and may involve:

- ❖ Conveying to children or a vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far 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 or vulnerable adult's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or vulnerable adult participating in normal social interaction;
- ❖ Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;
- ❖ Serious bullying, causing children or vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults;

Emotional Abuse - Indicators	
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor attachment relationship ▪ Unresponsive / neglectful behaviour towards the child's or vulnerable adults' emotional needs ▪ Persistent negative comments about the child or vulnerable adult ▪ Inappropriate or inconsistent expectations ▪ Self-harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low self-esteem ▪ Unhappiness, anxiety ▪ Withdrawn, insecure ▪ Attention seeking ▪ Passive or aggressive behavioural extremes

1.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person, or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual Abuse - Indicators	
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sign of blood / discharge on the child's or vulnerable adult's underclothing. ▪ Awkwardness in walking / sitting ▪ Pain or itching – genital area ▪ Bruising, scratching, bites on the inner thighs / external genitalia. ▪ Self-harm ▪ Eating disorders ▪ Enuresis / encopresis ▪ Sudden weight loss or gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sexually proactive behaviour or knowledge that is incompatible with a child's age & understanding. ▪ Drawings & or written work that is sexually explicit ▪ Self-harm / Suicide attempts ▪ Running away ▪ Substance abuse ▪ Significant devaluing of self ▪ Loss of concentration

1.5 Discriminatory forms of Abuse

This form of abuse involves direct or indirect discrimination against children or vulnerable adults because of their race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, mental health status or age.

Discriminatory Abuse – Examples:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of culturally or gender sensitivity in care practices • Access to services denied due to lack of disability awareness and access needs of members • No attempt to address language barriers • No provision of culturally sensitive food • No awareness of importance of faith festivals etc

7. How to Report Suspected Abuse

Where a worker or volunteer suspects a child or vulnerable adult has or is being physical abused, neglected, emotionally or sexual abused the worker will follow the process below:

1. Practitioner has concerns about a child or vulnerable adult's welfare
2. Practitioner discusses with Ment4 team leader as soon as possible.
3. Practitioner believes the child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger - call the police on 999. If not go to 4.

4. Practitioner / Manager records concerns using as much information as possible such as what was said, what was observed, when, where and who else was there, date, time, and place of disclosure/concerns.

5.

- Ment4 team leader calls the Children, Young People & Learners Safeguarding Referral Team on **020 8726 6400 (24 Hours)**
- or the Adult Abuse Reporting Line 020 8760 5697/off duty number: 0208 726 6500 or the Ment4 team leader wishing to consult on a case of safeguarding vulnerable adults can contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator on **020 8686 4433 ext. 63149** or email at vincent.docherty@croydon.gov.uk

6. Followed up in writing within 48 hours with copy kept in MENT4 Incidents file.

7. MENT4 to review safeguarding practice at a special meeting.

8. Legislation

Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004

In September 2003, the Government set out in the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' its proposals for a radical reorganisation of children's services – from hospitals and schools to police and voluntary groups. Subsequently 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' was issued and the Children Act 2004 was passed. Every local authority will lead on integrated delivery of services for children and young people through multi-agency children's trusts. Local authorities have a statutory Local Safeguarding Children Boards which have replaced the non-statutory Area Child Protection Committees. The London Child Protection Procedures 2007 and the 'Working Together Guidance' 2006 are extremely useful resources when concerned about child abuse and have a section called 'What—to do if?' See: www.londonscb.gov.uk/files/procedures/london_cp_procedures_v.3_print__10.01.08.pdf The children's trusts are a direct response to Lord Laming's report of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, which highlighted the extent to which better working together, and better communication was crucial. Further details from <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>

The 'No Secrets' Guidance, Department of Health 2000

The 'No Secrets' guidance from the government says that all agencies working with vulnerable adults living within the local authority boundary must work together to protect them from abuse. The purpose of the Croydon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures is to ensure that all partner agencies in Croydon work together to safeguard vulnerable adults from abuse. It follows the guidance laid down in 'No Secrets' (DH 2000).

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

In response to recommendation 19 of the Bichard Inquiry Report into child protection procedures following the Soham murders, new arrangements for people whose jobs and voluntary work bring them into contact with children and vulnerable adults (previously referred to as the vetting and barring scheme) is due to be phased in from autumn 2008 under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act.

The Children Act 1989

This act provided legislation to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their need to be protected from harm.

Care Standards Act 2000

A CRB disclosure is required for most roles in organisations providing care or health services regulated under this act. This act also sets out the Protection of Vulnerable Adults scheme. (Please see guidance document for the process of CRB checks)

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Contact: Joanna Joseph

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This Policy is signed on behalf of Ment4 by Luke Peters (Charity Director)

November 2024

A small, square, light-colored stamp or piece of paper with a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'L. Peters'.