



Safeguarding Children & Young People

Last Updated: November 2025

Related documents

- Health & Safety At Work Policy
- Implementing Boundaries for Mentors Policy
- Controversial Or Sensitive Topic Policy

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1. Purpose and Principle of policy and procedures

The MENT4 leadership team, and the board of trustees of MENT4, recognise the importance of its obligations to young people (11-18) and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the care of MENT4. The Senior Leadership Team oversee the charity's duty to safeguard and are identified as competent professionals to respond or signpost concerns and/or disclosures. MENT4 has a senior operational team who hold DSL certificates or have undergone adequate safeguarding training. The Safeguarding team ensures safeguarding is prioritised across all of our provisions and services.

MENT4 understands that it is our legal & ethical duty to ensure that we take reasonable actions to reduce the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults. We aim to ensure that the welfare of the children and vulnerable adults we encounter are placed at the centre of the work we always do and exercise our duty of care towards them.

This is underpinned by the following legislation & guidance.

- Working together to safeguard children, 2023
- Safeguarding People for Charities and Trustees, 2018
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Online Safety Act 2023

Senior Leadership Team	Executive Team members; Heads of Service Team members
Safeguarding Team Senior operational team	Heads of Service (senior); Delivery Co-ordinators (Non-senior)
Safeguarding Committee	Minimum - 1 x Board of Trustee; 1 x Executive Team; 1 x Head of Service

MENT4 commits to:

- Valuing, respecting and listening to young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all MENT4 team members.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those affected by abuse in the youth group.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities and other organisations.

2. Contact details

<p>MENT4 Designated Safeguarding Lead Senior Operational & Safeguarding Team member; Safeguarding Committee member</p>	<p>Joanna Joseph – Programme Coordinator & DSL 07443917058 joanna.joseph@ment4.org</p> <p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads on safeguarding across the charity • Overseeing services referrals and tiering • Manages and delegates caseloads • Point of contact for external authorities, partners and agencies • Act as the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead. • Lead and organise regular safeguarding meetings (internally and externally). • Oversee all safeguarding referrals and actions. • Manage complex safeguarding cases. • Coordinate multi-agency safeguarding responses. • Lead serious incident reviews within the charity. • Develop and maintain safeguarding policies. • Ensure compliance with statutory requirements. • Deliver internal and external safeguarding training
<p>MENT4 Executive Senior Leadership Team (overseeing Safeguarding)</p>	<p>Luke Peters – Executive Director (Trustees liaison)</p> <p>Ryan Taylor Hines – Director of Trustees (Safeguarding Committee member)</p>
<p>Croydon Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) <u>Allegations against staff</u></p>	<p>Steve Hall 02082552889 <i>OR</i> 07825830328 steve.hall@croydon.gov.uk</p> <p>Jane Parr (Assistant LADO) 0208 726 6000 (Ext.84343) OR 07985 590505 jane.parr@croydon.gov.uk</p>

	Other email: LADO@Croydon.gov.uk
NSPCC	NSPCC Helpline – 0808 800 5000
Croydon Single Point of Contact for Early Help & Children’s Social Care:	<i>Made up of MASH.</i> For urgent child protection matters needing immediate attention: 0208 255 2888
Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Professionals	SPOC Consultation Line - 0208 726 6464 Out of Hours Emergency Line - 0208 726 6400
Croydon’s Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF)	Following a safeguarding referral call, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must complete a Croydon Local Authority Safeguarding online referral form needs to be completed straight away: Click here for MASH Referral Form Form found on https://my.croydon.gov.uk/MashReferrals
Childline	Call 0800 1111.

3. Introductions

This policy has been designed based on legislation, policy and guidance that seek to protect children in England, which also provides the following explanations and definitions. Further definitions can be found at the end of this document.

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding meaning and terms:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children’s health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes¹.

CHILD PROTECTION	Child protection means safeguarding children from harm. Harm includes violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	Children and Young People will be defined for the purpose of this document as anyone under the age of 21.
STAFF	Staff will be defined for the purpose of this document as anyone employed by MENT4, including Sessional Workers, and Interns.
VOLUNTEER	Volunteer will be defined for the purpose of this document as anyone volunteering for MENT4.
ABUSE	Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. ²
PHYSICAL ABUSE	Physical Abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes hitting with hands or objects, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding or drowning. It’s important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell ³ .
EMOTIONAL ABUSE	Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It’s sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse , which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own ⁴ .
NEGLECT	Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing ⁵ .

¹ NSPCC LEARNING (2019). Safeguarding children and child protection. What is Safeguarding?

² HM Government (2018). Working Together to Safeguard Children. A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

³ NSPCC. What is physical abuse | ⁴ NSPCC. What is emotional abuse. | ⁵ NSPCC. What is neglect. | ⁶ NSPCC. What is sexual abuse.

⁷ NSPCC. What is child sexual exploitation.

SEXUAL ABUSE	<p>When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online. It's never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it's important to make sure children know this⁶.</p>
CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)	<p>Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited they're given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called grooming. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused.</p> <p>Children and young people can be trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. They're moved around the country and abused by being forced to take part in sexual activities, often with more than one person. Young people in gangs can also be sexually exploited.</p> <p>Sometimes abusers use violence and intimidation to frighten or force a child or young person, making them feel as if they've no choice. They may lend them large sums of money they know can't be repaid or use financial abuse to control them. Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender or race. The relationship could be framed as friendship, someone to look up to or romantic. Children and young people who are exploited may also be used to 'find' or coerce others to join groups.</p>
CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION	<p>Child Criminal Exploitation is when a child or young person is manipulated, coerced, or forced into criminal activity by an individual or group for personal or financial gain. This includes involvement in county lines, theft, drug trafficking, or cuckooing (where the child's home is taken over for illegal purposes). Exploitation often involves grooming, threats, debt bondage, or violence.</p>
ONLINE SAFETY	<p>Online Safety refers to protecting children and young people from harm while using digital technologies, including the internet, social media, apps, games, and AI-powered tools. It includes protection from cyberbullying, grooming, radicalisation, exposure to harmful content, misinformation, and image-based abuse (like cyberflashing or coercive image sharing).</p>
DOMESTIC ABUSE	<p>“Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn't just physical violence – domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse”⁷.</p>
FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)	<p>“Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence. There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM”⁸.</p>

⁷ NSPCC (2019). Domestic abuse. What is domestic abuse.

⁸ NSPCC (2019). Female genital mutilation (FGM). What is FGM.

4. Confidentiality

4.1 WORKING IN SCHOOLS

When working in sessions with Children and Young People in Schools, MENT4 staff will follow MENT4's Safeguarding policies and procedures. The MENT4 staff will also be required to complete the Safeguarding online/Disclosure Form (See Appendix A), pass the information onto the Safeguarding Lead at the School, and keep a copy within our online database, which only the Safeguarding Team can action and review.

4.2 WORKING IN COMMUNITY

When working with Children and Young People in the Community, MENT4 staff will let the child or young person know that information will be shared with the MENT4 safeguarding team (and relevant trusted professionals). If a child or young person are deemed at serious risk of immediate harm, they might need to contact emergency services. MENT4 staff should aim to explain why and let the child or young person know what will happen next. MENT4 staff are not to confront the alleged abuser(s). Staff must complete a Safeguarding online/Disclosure Form (See Appendix A), and record everything that the child or young person has said in the disclosure conversation in the child/young persons own words, and pass this onto the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will respond as soon as possible.

5. Specific arrangements for partnership and third parties

MENT4 undertakes partnerships with varying funders and organisations to deliver on services for young people. MENT4 formalises this arrangement through signed agreements and/or successful funding applications. How information is shared with parties can vary and specific arrangements to share safeguarding information of young people will be shared as appropriate. Partners are expected to undertake regular meetings and partnership review meetings to ensure safeguarding obligations are upheld. All data protection and sharing procedures will apply as per the partnership Service Level Agreement.

6. How to respond to a disclosure

6.1 GUIDANCE FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

1. Stay calm and approachable. Try not to be perceived as a person who is shocked.
2. Listen very carefully to what is being said without interrupting.
3. Explain that the information being given by the child or young person may need to be shared and passed on to others. Seek their permission. Do not in any circumstances agree to keep it a secret.
4. Make it clear that you are taking them seriously and acknowledge how difficult this must be.
5. Allow the child or young people to speak at their own pace.
6. Reassure the child or young person that they are doing the right thing in telling you.
7. If you need to ask questions, then only ask questions for clarification (open-ended questions). Avoid asking questions that suggest particular answers or are probing questions (closed questions) – you do not need to know all the details that are a job for the experts.
8. Let the child or young person know what will happen next, who you will report the information to, and what will happen once it has been recorded.
9. Ask the young person what they want to happen as a result of sharing this information with you?
10. Record all the details of what was said using the exact wording of the child or young person on MENT4's Safeguarding online system OR use the Safeguarding Disclosure Form – See Appendix A.
 - A. Do not try to interpret any of the information yourself. Record details such as names

mentioned, dates, times, who the information went to, what action was taken next on the incident/disclosure form. Don't forget to sign it and if appropriate, ask the young person to read it, record any amendments/disagreements and sign it.

If they cannot finish what they are telling you, make them aware that they can always come back and talk to you, or if not, refer them to Child Line – 0800 1111.

6.2 FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING IF SOMEONE IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK

- The severity of the neglect/abuse
- Category of concern: Physical; Sexual; Emotional; Neglect
- The duration & frequency of neglect/abuse
- The age/vulnerability of the child
- The family context and previous history
- Siblings – Are there any other children in the family that may be at risk
- Child's development within the context of family, wider social and cultural environment.
- The adequacy of parental care
- The child's views, wishes, feelings and reactions
- Any special needs such as medical condition, communication difficulty or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family
- The nature of the harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care
- The impact upon the child's health and development
- Associated physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- Reliability of concerns
- Other risk factors: mental health; substance misuse; social isolation.

If, after consultation, it is decided to break confidentiality without permission of the child, the Designated Safeguarding Lead – will carry out the following, see guidance below.

6.3 BREACHING CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDANCE

In exceptional circumstances, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may decide to break confidentiality. It is not MENT4's role to investigate the concerns or to assess whether a child/young person has suffered abuse or significant harm. In making this decision, it will be necessary to consider the following guidance questions (this is not exhaustive):

- Does the child/young person/someone else require immediate protection or medical treatment?
- Is the child/young person at immediate risk of harm?
- Is another child/young person at immediate or potential risk of harm?
- Are there younger siblings in the home that are, or may be, at risk?

- Are there other children/young people that visit the home? [Or setting where the alleged abuse is/has occurred]
- Have there been any previous concerns identified by staff/volunteers?
- Is this historic abuse? [I.e. how long ago did it happen? Are there any concerns that it could still be continuing with other children?]
- How have these concerns arisen? [E.g. disclosure by young person; observation from staff/volunteer; indirectly]
- As the young person told anyone else about the concerns? If so, what has happened as a result of them sharing the concerns?
- Are there any other professionals involved in working with this young person/their family/others? If so, are they aware of the concerns?
- What support network does the young person have?
- What would the young person like to happen next?

7. Responding to allegations of abuse made against a child or young person

7.1 REPORTING CONCERNS

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on **999** as soon as possible, you must also record the allegation using the Safeguarding Disclosure Form (See Appendix A). If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should record the allegations and then share your concerns with MENT4's Safeguarding Team as soon as possible, **please do NOT investigate it**. The child's parents or carers should be told what has happened, as long as it doesn't increase the risk to the child.

The MENT4 Safeguarding Team will do the following:

- Contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence.
- Implement a risk assessment and support plan for all children involved – both the victim(s) and the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made – with a named person they can talk to if needed.
- Contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate.
- Reassure the family that support is available to help them and their child throughout the process.

The Safeguarding Team will ask the child how they would like their parents/carers to be told. You could suggest:

- talking to parents first without the child there, then summarising everything with the child present
- helping the child tell their parents in their own words, with you present for support.

8. Preventing and responding to bullying

8.1 PREVENTING BULLYING

At MENT4, we place an emphasis on the importance of working with children and young people to create a culture where children feel they can tell someone if they have a problem and where it is clearly communicated that bullying will not be tolerated.

This includes:

- Talking to children and young people about healthy relationships to help create positive social norms and challenge unhealthy behaviors.
- Promoting sources of help and information such as ChildLine so children and young people know where to go to get help if they don't feel able to talk to any of the adults working with them.

8.2 RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

When responding to bullying incidents or allegations of bullying staff members and volunteers will take the following steps in line with the Anti-bullying policy:

- Listen to all the children involved to establish what has happened

- Record details of the incident on the Safeguarding Disclosure Form (See Appendix A) and any actions you've taken
- Inform the MENT4 Safeguarding Leads
- Inform parents and carers (unless doing so would put a child at further risk of harm)
- Provide support to the child/children being bullied, children who witnessed the bullying and the child/children who has been accused of bullying
- Ask the child/children who have been bullied what they would like to happen next
- Consider appropriate sanctions for children that have carried out bullying
- Continue to monitor the situation even if the situation has been resolved.

9. Allegations against a staff member or volunteer

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current MENT4 staff member or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place whilst the staff member or volunteer was on shift. Allegations against a staff member or volunteer who is no longer employed by MENT4, and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

CONCERNS ABOUT MENT4 STAFF, VOLUNTEERS OR CHARITY

If you have concerns or allegations against MENT4 staff, please contact:

Contact	Concern or allegations against...
MENT4 SAFEGUARDING TEAM (DSL or SENIOR)	...A member of non-senior, delivery staff or volunteers. Joanna Joseph (DSL) – joanna.joseph@ment4.org
MENT4 EXECUTIVE TEAM	...A member of the MENT4's DSL or Safeguarding Team/Senior team. Luke Peters – luke.peters@ment4.org
MENT4 Trustees	...A member of the Executive Team Ryan Taylor Hines – ryan.hines@ment4.org
CHARITIES COMMISSION	...MENT4 Charity itself. Raising Concerns - Charity Commission for England and Wales (raise concerns via Charity Commission website)

9.1 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the Designated Safeguarding Leads will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer immediately, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

The Safeguarding Leads will take the following steps:

- Contact the police if the child is at immediate risk.
- Immediately seek advice and discuss the allegation with the “Designated Officer” (known as the LADO, Local Authorities Designated Officer) at Croydon local authority.

<p>Steve Hall 02082552889 / 07825830328 steve.hall@croydon.gov.uk</p>	<p>Jane Parr (Ast. LADO) 0208 726 6000 (Ext.84343) 07985 590505 jane.parr@croydon.gov.uk</p>
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- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children’s social care services, where necessary).
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the work is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place.
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within ONE working day along with a main MENT4 contact.
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** regarding the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow.
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer in school or community and/or liaise with the police and/or children’s social care services as appropriate.
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress and consider what other support is appropriate.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children’s social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The Safeguarding Leads will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against staff (where this applies) while investigations are on-going.
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

10. Training

The MENT4 Core Team will ensure all MENT4 Staff Members and Volunteers appointed are trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the principles set out in government guidelines in the publication “Safeguarding People for Charities and Trustees” (GOV.UK 2018). All safeguarding training will take place during induction and/or refreshed if involved in MENT4 for a period of time. MENT4 staff will then receive up to date safeguarding training delivered by MENT4 DSL’s (Level 3 trained) annually. This

will include checking the individual status of all volunteers' who are involved in regulated activity through the DBS. We define the context of regulated activity as being:

- Working in a position of responsibility as a youth worker at youth meetings on a frequent basis
- Working intensively with the youth on three or more consecutive days (e.g. a youth production)
- Volunteering at any residential camps where they are staying overnight

All workers (employees, sessional, volunteers) who wish to join MENT4 are expected to complete an enhanced DBS check. If a volunteer worker refuses to be checked, they will automatically be refused any further involvement with MENT4.

11. Support to those affected by abuse

The MENT4 leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with faith-based and statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to those attending activities that have been affected by abuse.

12. Media consent (Photo, video, audio etc)

MENT4 relies heavily on photography (and videos) to use as promotion and used as ways of communicating to other children and young people, parents/carers and funders. We always ask for parent/guardian informed and written consent to take and use photographs/video on our consent forms and letters for each new activity or event involving children and young people. Where a young person is over the age of 18, we will obtain their informed and written consent on our consent form. All consent forms are stored within our online database.

- **Informed consent** means that a child or other person is made aware of how their image or information (e.g. as part of a case study) could be used by MENT4, that they are not obliged to agree and that if they decline there will be no negative repercussions for them.
- **Written consent** means that there is written evidence of the consent. This can be on the basis of a verbal consent where the person is not literate, but there must still be written evidence that informed consent has been given.

13. Overnight trips away

- Residential trips or camps away are organised by the MENT4 staff members of MENT4. We follow best safeguarding practices to protect children and young people involved in the residential.
- A risk assessment will be done prior to staff/volunteers and young people getting to where the residential will take place. There is always a team that goes up before anyone else
- Boys and girls to have separate dorms.
- MENT4 staff and volunteers not to share a room with a young person unless agreed prior to the residential in the case of a young person needing assistance from a carer.
- There should be an adequate amount of staff and volunteers to a dorm.

This document has been approved by:

Luke Peters
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be the name "Luke Peters".

14. APPENDIX A

Safeguarding Form

All concerns should be recorded as soon as possible after the concern was raised in accordance with MENT4’s Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Information should be provided on this form in a factual manner. Any concerns expressed by young people should be a reflection of what was actually said; do not try and interpret any of the information. Any views, opinions or observations should be recorded clearly identifying this.

Joanna Joseph (DSL) 07443917058
joanna.joseph@ment4.org

BASIC INFORMATION

Date:		Time:	
Location:			
Your full name:			
Your role:			
Name of child/young person:			
Age of child/young person:			

DETAILS OF CONCERN

Details of concerns/incident (do not interpret information – use the same language that was used by the child / young person). Are you reporting your own concerns or those reported from a third party?

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Continue on a separate page if needed.

Who else has the child/young person told? E.g. who else knows of these concerns?

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.....

Please tick to confirm that you have reinforced MENT4’s Safeguarding Children and Young people policy and procedures

ACTIONS TAKEN

What actions have you taken, if any?	
To whom in MENT4 have you reported your concerns?	
Who and when was this information shared?	Date: Time: Staff or Volunteer?
Staff or Volunteer?	

SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY A MENT4 SAFEGUARDING LEAD

MENT4 Safeguarding Lead name:		Signature:	
Date:		Time:	
Outcome:	No further action report to be filed		
	Internal monitoring until...		
	External action and escalation to...		
	Urgent and immediate action to be taken		
Referred or Signposted to:			

This form should be shredded once all relevant information is stored on to MENT4's online safeguarding reporting systems. Please make sure you follow MENT4's Data Protection Policy, Confidentiality Policy and Safeguarding Policy.