



Cassandra Centre

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSON
SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Cassandra Centre
PO Box 59935 London, SW16 3LT

*Commercially Sensitive
This Policy should not be copied or duplicated without the written consent of Cassandra Centre*



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Cassandra Centre herein referred to as (“CC”) is registered Charity committed to supporting Young People who have witnessed and experienced abuse and currently provides a range of services to meet their needs.

CC recognizes that all young people have a right to a safe environment free from abuse and fear. Young people of all backgrounds, religions, and cultures, with or without disabilities, have an equal right to protection from abuse. Therefore, CC will act to protect children from neglect or from physical, sexual, or emotional harm.

This policy is intended to protect children who receive any service from us, including those who are the children of adults who may receive services from us. Under this policy, the term children shall mean any person who is under eighteen years of age. This policy is to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteers or staff, to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.

Children can be vulnerable to different forms of abuse and harm. It is important to recognise that abuse and harm of children can cover a wide range of circumstances and behaviours. For example, children can be at risk of:

- Physical or emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Grooming and exploitation
- Trafficking and modern slavery
- Exposure to or infliction of domestic abuse
- Bullying or cyber bullying
- Exposure to other inappropriate content or behaviour, such as violence or criminal behaviour
- Self-harm
- Faith abuse
- Physical harm when engaging with activities without adequate supervision

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we make. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race,



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religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from any type 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.

Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is an essential responsibility for our Charity. We are committed to ensuring that any child who comes into contact with our services is properly safeguarded. Every person under this policy must ensure that they play an active role in ensuring that children are properly safeguarded.

Where a child is at immediate risk of serious harm, this should be reported to the {Jennifer McDermott} @ Jennifer@cassandracentre.org.uk: +44 7852525468 {Delphine Duff} +44 7737 080604 @ safeguardinglead@cassandracentre.org.uk immediately

Where any child makes a disclosure relating to harm or abuse to an adult within our organisation, it is important to:

- listen calmly and carefully, showing that their views are taken seriously;
- provide an appropriate and honest level of assurance
- avoid interrogating children and asking probing, intrusive and/or leading questions;
- avoid making false promises regarding secrets and confidentiality with the child (because any concern of abuse/harm must be shared with an Allocated Safeguarding Officer and any subsequent safeguarding referral);
- make a confidential written record of the discussion either during the discussion or immediately afterwards. The record should include the key details of the disclosure together with any relevant times, dates, places, and people concerned. Audio and video recordings of children making disclosures should be avoided; and
- refer all relevant information to an available Allocated Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable afterwards, and by no later than the end of the day.

Every person under this policy holds responsibility and we will seek to keep children and young people safe by:



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- remaining alert and aware of possible safeguarding risks to children and taking positive steps to maintain the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with us;
- guarding children against harmful environments with appropriate actions (for example, adequate supervision or ensuring safe environments)
- understanding the duty to report specific concerns (and understanding how these interplays with confidentiality) valuing, listening to and respecting individuals;
- challenging any inappropriate or harmful behaviour of any other adult and reporting this accordingly;
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently while ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place;
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are carried out;
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance;
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions and making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help;
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately;
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that arise;
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance; and



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- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

CC accepts and recognises the responsibility to develop awareness of the issues, that affect young people's well-being, and to create and sustain a safe and secure environment for them. We pledge to evaluate our policy, procedures, and practice periodically: especially after a major incident has occurred and as best practice annually.

CC will endeavour to safeguard young people by:

- following carefully the procedures laid down for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know and involving parents and children appropriately;
- adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers and ensuring safety procedures are adhered to
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers; and

This policy should be implemented in accordance with the guidelines of the Area Child Protection Committee 1974 (ACPC), which coordinate the agencies responsible for ensuring the safety of children at risk.

CC recognises that in all circumstances the health and wellbeing of young people is paramount and children and young people must be protected from harm at all times and believe every child and young person are valued, safe and happy. It is our intention to ensure that children and young people are empowered without fear to inform us if they are suffering.

CC's aim and purpose is for children and young people who use our services or have contact with our organisation feels comfortable and enjoys the safety of our establishment. Success is achieved by having effective child protection procedure and by following national and local guidelines.



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If CC discovers or suspects a child or young person is suffering harm Social Services or the Police will be notified promptly so that they can be protected if necessary and our policies are reviewed at 3 years.

CC supports parents and all relevant agencies in promoting the wellbeing of children relating to:

- (a) physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
- (b) protection from harm and neglect;
- (c) education, training and recreation;
- (d) the contribution made by them to society;
- (e) social and economic well-being.

What constitutes abuse?

The definitions of abuse outlined below are taken from ‘*working together to safeguard children*’ Department of Health 1999.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical abuse

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 or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child in their care. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy.

Emotional abuse

This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person or inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

Emotional abuse may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child although it may occur alone.



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.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

The impact of abuse

The sustained abuse or neglect of children or young people physical, emotional, or sexually can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on the child's self-image and self-esteem, and on his or her future life. Difficulties may extend into adulthood; the experience of long-term abuse may lead to difficulties in forming or sustaining close relationship, establishing oneself in the workforce and to extra difficulties in developing the attitudes and skills needed to be an effective parent.

It is not only the stressful events of abuse that have an impact, but also the context in which they take place. Any potentially abusive incident must be seen in context to assess the extent of harm to a child and appropriate intervention.

For every child, young person, and family there may be factors that aggravate the harm caused to the child and those that protect against harm. Relevant factors include the individual child's means of coping and adapting, support from a family and social network, and the impact of any interventions.

An important point sometimes overlooked is the way in which professionals' response has a significant bearing on subsequent outcomes.



Recruitment of staff

CC recognises that selection and recruitment of staff is crucial in the provision of a safe environment for children. CC has clear guidelines and procedures for interviewing and selecting staff, in particular:

- all staff employed by CC is required to have **an enhanced criminal records bureau** check. A DBS check is required (contact Cataphract dbbs@cataphract.co.uk) This will be obtained prior to commencing employment and renewed every three years.
- references will be taken up on appointment and will include specific reference to previous experience of working with children.
- all staff in contact with children or young people, or in a position to give advice or information, will be required to attend child protection training. This may be in house training or by attendance at a designated course.

Good practice guidelines

It is recognised that victims of abuse will be traumatised and may be depressed and anxious. As such women with children may have greater difficulty in parenting their children and may also prove challenging. To support individuals in developing their capacity to provide good parenting, CC will endeavour to:

- provide clear guidelines and rules in relation to health and safety and supervision of children;
- work with individuals to develop clear safety plans for themselves and their children;
- help individuals develop an understanding of the effects of domestic violence on children and young people and how to mitigate these; and
- support individuals in arranging education for change.



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CC will employ Child Support Workers to provide:

- Play sessions for children and/or mothers with children to develop and extend play skills.
- Quality childcare to allow mothers to have uninterrupted meetings with key workers or other professionals and to avoid exposing children to inappropriate discussions.
- Sport activities for adolescents.
- Access to Psychological services.



KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Named person

Within CC the overall responsibility for Child Protection lies with the Managing Director

Other key staffs are:

Project Managers are responsible for all child protection concerns within the service they manage. All concerns should be referred to the Project Manager who will then decide on the appropriate course of action which may include:

1. Discussion with service users
2. Internal referral for support services
3. Referral to local agencies for support
4. Discussion with Managing Director/NSPCC
5. Referral to Social Services

Operations Managers have a duty to:

1. Ensure there is a telephone number for the Project Manager so that contact can be made in situations where there are child protection issues.
2. Ensure they are familiar with the National Child Protection procedures and guidelines.
3. Ensure that Project Managers have sufficient training and advice.
4. Provide support for the Project Manager dealing with Child Protection issues.
5. Provide feedback where possible to staff who have made a referral to the Managing Director.

Project Managers have a duty to:

1. Ensure that they are familiar with the local ACPC policies and procedures and that guidelines are adhered to.
2. Ensure they are familiar with CC Child Protection Policy and procedures.
3. Develop a working relationship with local child protection services.
4. Discuss concerns regarding children/families with Managing Director.



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5. After discussion with the Managing Director, make referrals to Social Services where there is clear evidence of actual or risk of significant harm to a child or children. Referrals should be made by telephone in the first instance and then followed up in writing within 48 hours.
6. Ensure clear and accurate records are maintained and updated regularly. Unless there is risk of harm to a child or children by sharing information and records. This should be done in a routine and non-judgmental manner. The aim is to empower individuals to safeguard their children and to access support where necessary.
7. Ensure support and supervision is provided for all staff that has had to deal with distressing child protection issues.
8. Ensure appropriate guidelines are readily available such as:
 - CC Child Protection Policy and guidelines.
 - Local ACPC policies and guidelines.
 - What to do if there is suspicion that a child is being abused.
 - Think of all ways to assist a family to increase safety and relevant support to parents and their children.

Cassandra Centre Staff have a duty to:

1. Ensure they are familiar with and that they implement CC Child Protection Policy and procedures.
2. Ascertain from new referrals whether young person or family are known to Social Services and inform the Project Manager if they are.
3. Promote an ethos of positive parenting and behaviour management.
4. Encourage parents to seek appropriate support to safeguard their children.
5. Ensure the risk assessment and support plan encompass the children as well as the parent.
6. Share concerns with service user unless by so doing the child is placed at greater risk, after first discussing with their line manager or in their absence another line manager.
7. Discuss concerns either informally with a colleague or manager (not referring to specific families) or formally with the Project Manager.



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8. Consult with Project Manager in cases where Social Services or other agencies are seeking information about a service user.

Support Workers have a duty to:

1. Develop a working relationship with local child protection services.
2. Develop partnership arrangements with local agencies providing services to young people e.g.: Connexions
3. Discuss initial concerns with the Project Manager who will then make a referral to Social Services if necessary. Referral will be by telephone initially and followed up in writing within 48 hours.
4. Request involvement by Specialist Services where appropriate.

Help Line

In general, Help Line workers have a duty to maintain a high degree of confidentiality. However, in cases where they have reason to believe that there are issues which may lead to ‘*significant harm*’ to the child and/or children, they must act to protect that individual, and this may mean that confidentiality is broken.

If the caller discloses a life-threatening situation or an attack is heard by the worker, the Police and local health professionals should be called – this should be after discussion with the Project Manager if possible. Life threatening situations could be:

- a caller or a child being, at that moment, so physically damaged or disabled that immediate medical treatment is necessary;
- where there is a belief that a call has been interrupted by an adult or other intending to kill or significantly harm the caller or a child; and
- if the caller or any other person is threatening to kill or significantly harm a child.

All cases where there are, or appear to be, serious child protection concerns should be discussed with the Project Manager as soon as possible and preferably before taking further action.

Where there are clear allegations or evidence of actual or potential significant harm to a child or children:

The worker has a duty to:



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- Seek permission for a referral to outside agencies unless this could place the child at further risk.
- Share information about the action that is likely to be taken with the caller, again unless this is likely to place the child at further risk.
- If permission is not given – draw attention to CC policy that the child's welfare is paramount.
- Explain to the caller before they divulge anything further, CC's policy is that a supervisor/manager could divulge information without their permission to a third party if there may be risk to a child or young person.
- Complete accurate records of all child protection issue – these should be completed as soon as possible following an incident and no more than 48 hours later.

Where there are indications that a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm but there is no clear evidence or allegation, workers must:

- Discuss the situation with the Project Manager – this could result in a referral being made depending on the individual circumstances.
- Advise the caller of agencies which could support the service user.



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INFORMATION FOR SERVICE USERS

CC recognizes that all actions taken to promote the wellbeing of children or young people and to safeguard them should be in partnership with parents whose primary responsibility it is to protect their children. All service users will be made aware of CC's Child Protection Policy. CC's commitment to the principle that the welfare of the child or young person is paramount will be highlighted.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Staff may have concerns about a child or young person through witnessing an incident or noticing a pattern of behaviour over time. These may relate to poor parenting or practice or to situations which are likely to lead to immediate harm. In all cases staff has a duty to discuss their concerns and to pass on information to the Project Manager. Where there is clear or immediate risk.

All concerns where there are clear indications that a child or children may be suffering or be at risk of suffering abuse or neglect should be referred immediately to the Project Manager who will refer to Social Services. Social Services will then seek to clarify the nature of the concern and whether immediate action is needed to make them safe from harm.

Where there is a clear allegation or strong suspicion or evidence of abuse there must be no delay in making a referral to statutory agencies.

The immediate safety of the child must be ensured including seeking medical attention if necessary.

Concerns should be discussed with the service user and where possible agreement obtained before making referrals to Social Services unless this places the child at increased risk of significant harm. For example, in cases where the abuse is of a sexual nature or involves the mother's partner and the child is still in contact with him, the child could be placed at greater risk if concerns were discussed prior to referral.

Where a referral is made to Social Services, there should be a clear understanding about who will be taking what action or that no further action will be taken. The decision will be recorded by Social Services and the Project Manager.

Referrals may lead to:

- (a) no further action;



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- (b) to the provision of services or other help (internal or external);
- (c) a fuller assessment of need;
- (d) emergency action to safeguard the child;
- (e) child protection inquiries.

Where there is no clear evidence or allegation

Where there is no clear evidence or allegation, but suspicion exists, that abuse may have occurred a preliminary consultation with the Project Manager should take place without delay. The Project Manager may then discuss with a member of Specialist Services, or Senior Operations Manager.

Where staffs are concerned about the level of risks, it may be helpful in clarifying the issues and deciding on any further course of action, to take general advice on the situation (anonymously) from a local Social Services help line or the NSPCC help line.

Staff should continue to monitor the situation and offer support to the service user in line with the intervention plan/strategies identified.

In All Cases:

Suspicious or allegations should not be discussed with anyone other than those named in the above points.

Written records of all actions and concerns need to be kept accurately, signed, dated and stored in a woman's file once they have been discussed with management.

In most cases, the situation should be discussed with the service user and support offered. Specialist services should be involved in offering advice or support.

If a child discloses abuse or makes an allegation:

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully to what is being said
- Explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Ask open ended questions



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- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing as soon as possible – using the child's own words. Note time, date any names mentioned, to which the information was given and ensure the record is signed and dated
- Report immediately to the Project Manager or if unavailable to the Managing Director

Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so do not do anything that may jeopardize a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate allegations of abuse.

Concerns about staff members

If there are concerns about the behaviour of a member of CC staff in regard to their attitude or actions towards a child or young person, these concerns should be reported without delay to the Project Manager.

If the concerns are about the Project Manager, concerns should be reported to the Managing Director.

Any concerns or allegations will be investigated according to CC's policies and procedures.

Bullying

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated at CC whether it is by an adult to a young person or between service users to staff. All staff and service users are expected to adhere to the Equal Opportunity Policy and anti-discrimination and harassment policies.

WORKING TOGETHER

CC acknowledges the importance of working together with other agencies in order to safeguard young people and to promote their well-being. The most frequent contact with other agencies is with Social Services.

Involvement of Social Services

If a child or young person is already known to Social Services:



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- A meeting should be convened between the named social worker, service user and staff – key worker, project manager and member of specialist services to clarify roles, responsibilities, and channels of communication.
- Any concerns about young person should be reported to the named social worker after discussion with project manager.
- Requests for information from Social Services should be referred to the Project Manager in the first instance.

Core group meetings and child protection conference

Where there are significant concerns about a child or young person, CC staff may be invited to attend a child protection conference and to become part of the core group implementing an action plan which has been agreed.

In advance of attending the child protection conference, there should be a meeting between the key workers and the Project Manager to clarify who should attend and information to be shared.

The key worker or Project Manager will need to meet with the service user before the case conference to discuss the concerns, to help the service user to prepare for the case conference and to explain the position that CC staff are likely to take.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

The decision whether to disclose information may arise in various contexts. You may have a nagging concern about a child or young person that might be allayed or confirmed if shared with another agency. You may be asked for information in connection with an assessment of a child's needs under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 or an enquiry under section 47 of that Act or in connection with court proceedings. In all cases the main restrictions on disclosure of information are:

- Common law duty of confidence
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998

In general, the law will not prevent you from sharing information with other practitioners if:

- those likely to be affected gives their consent;



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- the public interest in safeguarding the child's welfare overrides the need to keep the information confidential
- disclosure is required under a court order or other legal obligation.

For further information see: '*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*'



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy and the procedures and guidelines have been drawn up based on the following pieces of legislation:

The Children Act 1989 and 2004

The Protection of Children Act 1999

Our Duty to Care - The Police Act 1997

The Data Protection Act 1984 and 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998

Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000

Every Child Matters green paper 2003

Every Child Matters: Change for Children 2004

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused:

Children's Services Guidance 2003

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Social Services and Well-being Act 2014



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Office hours

Lambeth	-	tel: 020 7926 6508
Southwark	-	tel: 020 7525 1921
Lewisham	-	tel: 020 8314 6660
Croydon	-	tel: 020 8726 6400
Sutton	-	tel: 020 8770 4343
Merton	-	tel: 020 8545 4226 / 4227
Wandsworth	-	tel: 020 8871 6622

Out of hours Duty Desks:

Lambeth	-	tel: 0207 926 1000
Southwark	-	tel: 0207 525 5000
Lewisham	-	tel: 0208 695 6000
Croydon	-	tel: 020 8726 6400
Sutton	-	tel: 020 8770 5000
Merton	-	tel: 020 8770 5000
Wandsworth	-	tel: 020 8871 6000

Police Child Protection Teams

Lambeth	-	tel: 0207 230 1212
Southwark	-	tel: 0207 378 1212
Lewisham	-	tel: 0208 690 1212



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C CHANGE MANAGEMENT

C1 Responsibility

- C1.1 The Project Director will have responsibility for this procedure and will be the only person with the overall responsibility for reviewing the procedure and submitting any changes for approval by the board.

C2 Procedure reviews

Reviewed by	Date of review	Changes made	Changes approved (trustee.)
J.McDermott	09-03-23	none	
J, McDermott	27-03-24	None	
Jennifer McDermott	03-02-25	Added names and tel numbers of safeguarding lead	

C3 Version control and change history

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Amendment