

Safeguarding children and young people policy and procedure

Autistic Inclusive Meets

Autistic Inclusive Meets aims to ensure that children and young people using our services are safeguarded at all times as part of our core business. All workers including volunteers must be aware of their responsibilities in this regard. This Safeguarding Policy must be read in conjunction with Autistic Inclusive Meets Health & Safety (Preventing Accidents) Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy and Anti-bullying Policy.

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Created by: Emma Dalmayne

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Reviewed by:

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1. Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This document outlines Autistic Inclusive Meets policy and procedure on identifying and responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and young people in our care. It urges all workers (staff and volunteers) to be alert and vigilant about such concerns and provides guidance on how to respond to these concerns.
- 1.2 It's based on the basic tenet that all children and young people must be safeguarded and protected from harm; and that they have a right to be listened to and heard. Their views, however communicated, should always be respected and taken seriously.

2. Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy complies with Greenwich Safeguarding Children's Board advice and guidance on safeguarding and effective multi-agency working in the light of the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015).
- 2.2 This Policy applies to children and young people aged 18 years and under using the services of Autistic Inclusive Meets. All staff employed by Autistic Inclusive Meets and volunteers, full or part-time must adhere to this policy. It also applies to contractors undertaking work on behalf of Autistic Inclusive Meets.

3. Early Help and Intervention

- 3.1 This policy recognises that providing help early is more effective in safeguarding children and young people than reacting later. Taking swift and decisive action is important in

preventing significant and lasting harm to children and young people's welfare and life chances. Getting help early for children and their families helps build resilience within families, prevent or reduce the risk of problems escalating.

3.2 As part of this safeguarding policy Autistic Inclusive Meets will ensure that all staff and volunteers working for will have the opportunity to be trained to identify and respond early to abuse and neglect, as well as other risks and challenges faced by children and young people.

3.3 We will share information with statutory agencies, in particular MASH or RBG Families First and Early Help Navigators in order to secure early help for children and their families. If necessary, we will do this by completing an Early Help Assessment (EHA) with support from Early Help Navigators (See Appendix 1 for further information and contact details).

4. Definition of safeguarding

4.1 For the purposes of this policy we have adopted the definition used in the Children Act 2004 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance document: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 (paragraph 2), which defines safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare 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

4.2 The above statutory guidance defines child protection as part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Child protection is the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

5. Aims and objectives of policy

5.1 The aims and objectives of this policy are:

a) To ensure that needs of children and families are identified early so that help and support can be made available as soon as problems emerge to improve outcomes.

b) To respond to specific child protection concerns about children and young people at risk of significant harm who may need to be referred to Children Services or Police to ensure that children and young people are kept safe. Such concerns include:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

c) To provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people within the organisation including:

- ensuring all workers are aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people whether or not they work directly with them
- ensuring on-going safeguarding training for staff, volunteers and trustees
- ensuring all staff, volunteers and contractors have complete records of employment checks and are inducted properly in their jobs
- ensuring incidents of bullying and other risks and challenges (see, 4.2 below) faced by children and young people are dealt with effectively
- ensuring health and safety procedures are fully observed to prevent accidents

5.2 This policy recognises that children and young people face many other risks and challenges such as:

- Child Trafficking
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Chastisement
- Radicalisation (Prevent)
- Gangs

5.3 All workers must remain alert to these risks and challenges and must treat them as major safeguarding concerns. In most cases, the Police or MASH are the appropriate agencies to report such matters to in order to ensure that children and young people get the right support and help but advice and support can also be sought from other services and agencies (See, Appendix 1 for further details).

5.4 Children and young people may be vulnerable from one or more of the risks identified above. They may also have existing needs. Therefore, staff and volunteers must also be alert to the potential need for help and support. For example, if they:

- are disabled and have specific additional needs
- have special educational needs
- are young carers, looking after an adult or sibling
- are showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviours
- live in difficult family situations that present challenges for them, e.g. parental substance misuse, parental mental health problems, domestic violence or poverty
- have returned home to their family from care
- are showing early signs of abuse and neglect
- are being privately fostered

5.5 Appendix 2 gives the statutory definitions of abuse and the risks outlined in paragraph 4.3. It must be must read in conjunction with this policy.

6. Role of Staff and Volunteers

6.1 Everyone who works for or undertake work on behalf of Autistic Inclusive Meets must maintain a proper focus on safeguarding. This must be reflected both in sound individual practice as well as in conduct. They must:

- give highest priority to children's and young people's safety and welfare
- recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- respond appropriately to disclosure of abuse by a child, or young person
- respond appropriately to allegations against staff, other adults and against themselves
- be alert to the risks which abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and young people
- be aware of the role of Autistic Inclusive Meets Designated Safeguarding Officer
- be aware of the role of the Greenwich Children Safeguarding Board and safeguarding services, including MASH, Family First, Police and Youth Offending Services

7. Listening to Children and Young People

7.1 Listening to children and young people, and taking their views into account when working with them is an important part of safeguarding. Children and young people must be encouraged to express their views and opinions at all times. They must also be invited to give feedback on the activities and services that they take part in. All complaints by children must be taken seriously and investigated.

8. Responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse

8.1 Staff and volunteers working directly with children and young people are in unique position to position to identify any abuse or neglect, or changes in behaviour which may indicate a child or young person may be abused or neglected. Autistic Inclusive Meets staff and volunteers must therefore be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect in their interactions with them.

8.2 Staff and volunteers must report all safeguarding and child protection concerns including any allegations of abuse implicating a worker or another child to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Deputy Designated Child Safeguarding Officer (DDSO) in the absence of the DSO. See below for contact details.

Designated Safeguarding Officer	Designated Deputy Safeguarding Officer
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Name: Emma Dalmayne Name: Makeba Garraway

Tel: 07464 614 137 Tel: 07961 960 574

8.3 It will be the duty of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO) to make immediate contact with the **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** in the Royal Borough of Greenwich Children Services for advice on what actions to take. Where an allegation of abuse implicates a member of staff or volunteer, the DSO or DDSO must also inform Quality Improvement Leaders (QILs) in Children's Services who act as **Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs)**. Contact details for both MASH and QILs/LADOs are contained in Appendix 1.

8.4 If a child or young person is in immediate danger, then they should contact the Police and/or emergency services by dialling 999.

- 8.5 It is important to remember that it is not the role of Autistic Inclusive Meets, its employees, volunteers or trustees to investigate or to decide whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the above agencies following contact or referral from the DSO or DDSO. Staff, volunteers or trustees must not attempt to carry out their own investigations into allegations that they may have received. It is however important that everyone listens carefully to what children and young people have to say and make careful notes of what has been said before passing on the matter to the DSO or DDSO. See Appendix 2 for further guidance on the procedure to follow in the event of a disclosure.
- 8.6 If the allegations implicate both the Designated Officer and the Deputy Designated Officer, then the person who has received these allegations should report the matter to another senior manager. This latter should then follow the procedures outlined above. Failing the availability of a senior manager the person concerned can contact the MASH or police directly to express their concerns. This procedure can also be followed, if having reported the matter to the relevant managers a person feels that appropriate actions have not been taken by them.

9. Resolving inter-agency disagreements

9.1 Occasionally situations may also arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Such disagreements are most likely to arise for instance around:

- levels of need/thresholds
- roles and responsibilities
- decisions made at a Child Protection Conference or Core Group meeting
- progressing plans
- communication

9.2 In all such circumstances Autistic Inclusive Meets will follow the GSCB inter-agency escalation policy. We recognise that it is important that inter-agency disagreements are resolved as quickly as possible locally between the parties concerned to ensure children are protected as stage 1 of the process. Disagreements and disputes will only be escalated if these cannot be resolved at stage 1.

10. Confidentiality

- 10.1 Child protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all. Staff, volunteers and trustees have a professional as well as a statutory responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies (Police and Children's Services).
- 10.2 As part of this Policy clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all workers within Autistic Inclusive Meets. All personal information regarding a child will be kept confidential except when it is suspected that a child under 18 years is a victim of abuse.
- 10.3 If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child/young person sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's own sake. However, the child should be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.
- 10.4 Where possible, consent should be obtained from the child before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the child should be the priority.
- 10.5 Where a disclosure has been made, staff should let the child know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result. Staff should assure the child that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The child's

involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feeling taken into account.

- 10.6 Child Protection issues are highly sensitive and staff who receive information about children or their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. All child protection records must be kept secure.

11. Duty of Care and Position of Trust

11.1 In part, the duty of care is exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships. It is also exercised by workers taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of those they are responsible for in the course of their work.

11.2 All [Insert the name of your organisation] workers must understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in their role and must always maintain professional boundaries. They must avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted. Child abuse involving a worker is never acceptable. If concerns arise in this area, this must be recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Officer who will deal with it in accordance with the steps outlined in section 8 of this policy document.

12. Staff Code of Conduct

12.1 As an organisation, Autistic Inclusive Meets is committed to supporting all staff and volunteers and ensuring they receive timely supervision, support and training to help them carry out their responsibilities effectively.

12.2 Workers must treat everyone with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions; and avoid behaviours that might be misconstrued or misinterpreted. The following are some examples of “Dos and Don’ts”:

- Consideration must always be given to the number of workers needed to run activities and whether they should be male or female
- Avoid questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games and comments
- Only workers assigned to particular activities must be allowed to participate; other adults must not be allowed free access
- Workers must **not** exchange personal social media contact details (including social media platforms of any kind such phone numbers and text messages, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.) with children and young people they work with, and/or socialise with them outside of work

13. Safer Recruitment

13.1 Autistic Inclusive Meets will ensure all workers, including paid staff and volunteers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with our safer recruitment policy. This includes ensuring:

- there is a written job description/person specification for the post
- those applying have completed an application form and self-declaration form
- safeguarding has been discussed before appointment
- written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate
- a current Disclosure and Barring Service certificate has been obtained, wherever relevant and appropriate
- the person appointed receives a copy of this safeguarding policy as part of the induction for staff and knows how to report concerns

a probationary period applies for all new recruits

13.2 Autistic Inclusive Meets will also ensure that regular contractors attending our premises are aware of this policy and have up to date DBS certificates. Occasional visitors will be accompanied at all times in compliance with this policy and a signing in and out record will be kept of all visitors.

14. Health and Safety

14.1 Autistic Inclusive Meets approach to accident prevention is set out in the Health and Safety Policy. This includes making sure that every activity for children and young people is adequately risk assessed to minimise accidents and other risk of harm; and to maximise the benefits that children, young people and families get from our services. The Health and safety Policy also ensures:

- Children and young people are not left unattended
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment is supervised by trained staff
- Parental consent is obtained as necessary
- Records about children's allergies, medical problems or any special needs are recorded
- First aid facilities are readily available and adequate
- Equipment is adequate and checked regularly
- There is access to a telephone at all times for emergency calls
- Insurance cover is adequate and cover all necessary activities, transport and public liability

14.2 All accidents however minor must be recorded in an accident book. Workers must have access to a telephone at all times to call for help or to call emergency services if needed.

15. Bullying

15.1 Autistic Inclusive Meets does not tolerate bullying of any kind, including cyber-bullying. Children can bully each other, be bullied by an adult, and they can bully adults sometimes. We will do our utmost to inform children and young people as well as their parents and carers about bullying and the consequences of bullying and how to report such incidences promptly. There is also an expectation that anyone who knows bullying is happening will report it to the DSO/DDSO, who will take local action as necessary.

15.2 Children who are bullied need protection. However, those responsible for the bullying need to address the reasons for their behaviour and will be encouraged to relate to others in positive ways. Persistent offenders will risk being excluded from our services. Staff and volunteers found guilty of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with organisation's disciplinary procedures.

15.3 Some common forms of bullying include:

- Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing
- Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, graffiti, gestures, racial taunts, homophobic and sexist remarks

- Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any other use of violence
- Sexually abuse comments or gestures
- Practical jokes which may cause physical or emotional harm even though these may not be intended

16. E-Safety

16.1 Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including the use of social media, email and internet have added new dimensions to safeguarding children and young people. Abuse or exploitation via these form of ICT are equally serious and must be reported and dealt with in the same way as more direct methods of abuse identified above. Autistic Inclusive Meets will work with children and young people as well as parents to keep them safe from on-line abuse and exploitation, including:

- encouraging children and young people to tell someone if anything goes wrong online or upsets them
- educating them so they know about the dangers they can encounter while online

17. Suggestions and Complaints by Parents/Carers

17.1 All parents and carers must be made aware of Autistic Inclusive Meets complaints procedures. Where they wish to make a complaint or suggestion, they will be taken seriously and Autistic Inclusive Meets will endeavour to resolve matters promptly. All complaints and suggestions will be followed up by a written response to the issue that has been raised and will be recorded and stored appropriately.

17.2 The above refers to complaints of a general nature only. In case of complaints about safeguarding, workers must follow the procedures outlined above.

18. Implementation and Monitoring of Safeguarding Policy

18.1 The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this Safeguarding Policy. This includes ensuring all staff and volunteers receive adequate safeguarding training, ensuring the policy is reviewed and updated annually or as necessary in the light of national and local guidance changes as advised by GAVS Children and Young People Development Officer (See Appendix 2 for contact details).

18.2 Further and ongoing advice on the implementation of this policy can be sought also from the GAVS Children and Young People's Development Officer. GAVS will monitor the implementation of the Policy by its member organisations as part of the Health Checks for member groups and the GSCB's Section 11 audit.

References, internet links and further sources of information

A resource that provides the most up to date information on safeguarding policies and best practice: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

For local information about Safeguarding relating to the Royal Borough of Greenwich please refer to the Greenwich Safeguarding Children's Board website:

<http://www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk>

Internet Links

www.ceop.gov.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.ceop.gov.uk/reportabuse/index.asp

For Children and Young People

www.childline.org.uk/pages/yourplace.aspx

Contacts

Child Line [0800 1111](tel:08001111)

NSPCC [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000)

Essential Contact Information for reporting and managing allegations of abuse/concerns

1. Contact Details of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Woolwich Centre, First Floor, 35 Wellington Street,
London, SE18 6HQ

Consultation line for workers: [020 8921 2267](tel:02089212267)
Telephone number for referrals: [020 8921 3172](tel:02089213172)

Referrals or other communications via secure e-mail:
initial.response@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or faxed to
[020 8921 3180](tel:02089213180).

Referrals outside office hours are handled by the Out
of Hours Social Worker who can be contacted on [020
8854 8888](tel:02088548888).

2. If you have a concern involving an **allegation against staff or volunteer**, consult with the **Quality Improvement Leaders on telephone number [0208 921 3930](tel:02089213930)**. If appropriate you may be requested to complete a referral form and this should then be sent by email to childrens-LADO@royalgreenwich.gov.uk. The Quality Improvement Leaders are also available for advice on a range of safeguarding issues including:

- Child Protection, Looked after Children**
- Child Sexual Exploitation**

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders).

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC is a local, multi-agency victim-focused meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic violence and abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies). assessment)

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

3. Contact for advice and guidance on Early Help

Early Help within Children's Services provides a range of information, support and advice to families with children and young people aged between 0-19 or to 25 years old for disabled young people. In addition Early Help can provide information and advice to a range of practitioners, including voluntary sector workers about services and Early Help Assessments.

Consultation line for general advice and guidance: [020 8921 4590](tel:02089214590) (1pm to 4pm)

Early Help Navigators: [020 8921 6921](tel:02089216921)

4. Contact Details for advice on concerns about possible involvement of young people in gangs and gang related crime or to refer a young person to Serious Violence Youth Panel:

Bernie Bristow

Group Leader-Targeted Youth Support, Prevention and Diversion

Youth Offending Service

Royal Borough of Greenwich

Landline: [020 8921 4733](tel:02089214733)

Mob: [07970 239 278](tel:07970239278)

Email: bernie.bristow@royalgreeniwch.gov.uk

5. Contact Details for advice on concerns about possible risk for young people from radicalisation and terrorist activity:

Adam Browne

PREVENT Coordinator

Safer Communities Team

Community Services

Royal Borough of Greenwich

Landline: [020 8921 8324](tel:02089218324)

Mobile: [07791 701 077](tel:07791701077)

Email: adam.brown@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Working together to safeguard children 2015)

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

Physical Abuse & Chastisement

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

The physical punishment of children is still a common parenting practice in the UK. However, there are signs that public attitudes towards physical punishment are changing, with its use becoming more controversial and less widely accepted. This change in perceptions may be due to the recognition of physical punishment as a human rights issue and its consequent prohibition in an increasing number of countries, as well as a growing body of research suggesting that physical punishment is at best an ineffective form of discipline and at worst, harmful for children's health and development.

Protection from physical punishment in all settings, including in the family home, is a basic human right of every child and is enshrined in international human rights law. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and regional instruments place an obligation on ratifying states to ensure that their citizens are protected from physical punishment and other cruel and degrading treatment.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child

opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

This is a form of sexual abuse where children / young people are sexually exploited for various reasons such as money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. If concerned that a child or young person is or may be sexually exploited, refer immediately to MASH team and also contact the Safeguarding Lead for CSE on [0208 921 4435](tel:02089214435) for consultation /complete Part 1 of the CSE MAP referral form and email it to CSEMAP@royalgreenwich.gov.uk at least one week before the meeting. The referrer will need to attend the meeting to present the case to the panel.

Child Trafficking

Trafficked children are coerced or deceived by the person arranging their relocation. They are forced into exploitation by the trafficker or person under whose control they are delivered or sold. Most but not all children are from overseas. Any child transported for exploitation is considered to be a trafficking victim.

Child Trafficking links with other forms of exploitation such as child sexual exploitation, trafficking of adults, gangs and criminal activity (begging, theft, tending illegal cannabis farms, benefit fraud) and economic exploitation at home or in a work place.

Child Trafficking is also linked to inter-country adoption, private fostering and unaccompanied children.

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is defined as that marriage which is conducted without the valid consent of at least one of the parties and where duress is a factor; it is different from a consensual 'arranged' marriage. Duress cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds, and forced marriage is an abuse of human rights.

Forced marriages of children must be regarded as a child protection issue. You would not contact the parents in this situation and you should make a direct referral to the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team who will liaise with social care. For further advice contact the Forced Marriage Unit on [020 7008 0230](tel:02070080230) or [020 7008 0151](tel:02070080151) www.fco.gov.uk

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against girls and women. FGM is typically performed on girls aged between 4 and 13 years of age. In some cases it is performed on new born infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy.

Greenwich has a very diverse population. There are a significant number of girls who come from communities where Female Genital Mutilation has been traditionally practiced.

FGM is illegal in the UK and carries a custodial sentence. The FGM Act 2003 makes it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.

It is now mandatory for any NHS healthcare professionals to record within a patient's clinical record and report cases of FGM in the under 18 to the police. It is also mandatory for all acute hospitals, mental health services and GP to collate and submit data about the number of patients identified with FGM to the Department of Health.

Everyone working with children and young should be alert to the risk of FGM and must report any suspicion and concern about a child or young person being at risk or being a victim of FGM to MASH and/or the Police.

Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) is cared for by an adult who is not a relative for more than 28 days, by private arrangements between the parent and the carer. This is different from children in the care of a local authority.

The Children Act 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005, and associated statutory guidance, introduced measures to strengthen and enhance the fostering notification requirements within the 1989 Act whereby Local Authorities are required to take a proactive approach to identify private fostering arrangements in their area. The aim was to improve compliance with the legislative framework and therefore improve the arrangements for safeguarding children in private fostering arrangements.

Arrangements for the regulation of private fostering originate from concern following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. Victoria was privately fostered by her great aunt. Arrangements were codified in the Children Act 2004. Following this, the Children (Private Arrangement for Fostering) Regulations 2005 set out the duties of local authorities in their arrangements for private fostering, and national minimum standards for local authorities were published in 2005.

Prevent

The Prevent Strategy was reinforced by the Prevent and Channel statutory duties set out in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015). This strategy sets out how the UK Government aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Prevent aims to deliver early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risks of radicalisation and being drawn into terrorist-related activity. Channel is a supportive multi-agency process, designed to safeguard those individuals who may be vulnerable.

Channel works by identifying individuals who may be at risk, assessing the nature and extent of the risk, and where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to their needs. A multi-agency panel, chaired by the local authority, decides on the most appropriate action to support an individual after considering their circumstances.

Anyone who becomes aware of a young person who is at risk of radicalisation or who may be about to commit an act of terrorism must contact the Prevent Team and/or Police; or the MASH.

Gangs

A gang is usually considered to be a group of people who spend time in public places. This group of people see themselves and are seen by others as a noticeable group. Members of the group engage in a range of criminal activity and violence.

They may also have any or all of the following features:

- identify with or lay a claim over territory
- are in conflict with other, similar gangs

However, if the majority of offending is of a lower non-violent level then they would be considered a peer group not a gang.

A criminal network (which is different to a gang) is a group of individuals involved in persistent criminality for some form of personal gain. This includes profit and/or to gain or demonstrate status) which is causing significant harm to the community, for example:

- a group that keeps breaking the law to make money
- this law-breaking is causing harm to the community
- or, this law-breaking is a problem internationally (e.g. people trafficking)
- violence is used in order to make money (e.g. to scare people into giving them money)
- they are running an illegal business (e.g. drug trafficking)

Domestic Violence

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.

It can happen in any relationship, and even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people. Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships. In relationships where there is domestic violence and abuse, children witness about three-quarters of the abusive incidents. About half the children in such families have themselves been badly hit or beaten. Sexual and emotional abuse is also more likely to happen in these families.

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that children are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously. This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation is made that a child has been abused or when there is a suspicion that a child has been abused. Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the child.

If the complainant is the child, questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged and leading questions should be avoided. The use of leading questions can cause problems for the subsequent investigation and any court proceedings.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information. Use the child/young person's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child/young person was trying to say.

Record any discussion or actions taken within 24 hours. Details must include as far as practical:

- Name of child or young person
- Age
- Home address (if known)
- Date of Birth (if known)
- Name/s and address of parent/s with parental responsibility
- Telephone numbers if available
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details.
- What has prompted the concerns? Include dates and times of any specific incidents.
- Has the child or young person been spoken to? If so, record details.
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
- Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? E.g. Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

All records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet. Only the designated persons will have access to these files.

Responding appropriately to a child making an allegation of abuse

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.

- 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 what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.