

Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy

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Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy	SCAP	1.0	March 2022	March 2023	Initial Version Combining Children and Adults Policy
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Version	Author	Owner	Reviewer	Review Date
1.0	Shaun Polley	Shaun Polley		
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Introduction

Safeguarding is at the heart of all our work with children, young people and adults at risk. Me2 Club has a duty to ensure that it makes arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, and to protect adults at risk from abuse or the risk of abuse.

The legislation and guidance relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk includes the following:

- The Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working together to safeguard children (2015)
- No Secrets (2000)
- The Crime and Disorder Act (1998)
- The Health and Social Care Act (2008)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- The Care Act (2014)
- The Care Standards Act (2000)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)

Purpose and Scope of Policy

Me2 Club is committed to providing a safe environment for all children, young people and adults at risk. This policy is to be used by any member of staff working directly with children or adults at risk. The policy also relates to any volunteer, including Trustees, or support staff of the organisation who becomes involved in or aware of a child or adult protection concern in the course of their work.

All children have a right to protection, and the needs of children with additional needs and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be considered. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults is defined as:

- Protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect;
- Preventing impairment of adult's health or development;
- Ensuring adults are living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

An adult might be considered at risk if they are aged 18 years or over and:

- Has need for care and support (whether or not the local council is meeting any of those needs: and;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of abuse and neglect; and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse and neglect.

Child and adult protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect those who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Effective protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote welfare. All agencies and

individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults so that the need for action to protect them from harm is reduced.

Responsibilities of Me2 Club

Me2 Club is committed to ensuring that in all situations:

- The welfare of the child or adult is paramount
- All children and adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from abuse
- Take all reasonable, practical steps to protect children and adults from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and/or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff and volunteers working for Me2 Club have a responsibility to report concerns to a Safeguarding Officer

When working with children and adults, Me2 Club will work to these six principles:

- Empowerment: People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent, where able
- Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs
- Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need
- Partnership: Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Officers

Me2 Club's Participation Coordinator is the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer. A member of the board of trustees will have a strategic responsibility for safeguarding practice across the organisation and will act as Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer in the absence of the Participation Coordinator in operational matters. Both will be trained to Designated Safeguarding Lead level.

Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer:

Ramona Bridgman; Ramona@me2club.org.uk or 0795 671 3180

Trustee strategic lead for safeguarding and Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer:

Sonia Aulak Chair of Trustees sonia@me2club.org.uk

In addition, the following staff are Safeguarding Officers:

Name	Role	Contact Details
Vicky Fisher	Senior Activities & Volunteers Coordinator	07891 610 130
Nikki Fisher	Activities & Volunteers Coordinator	07535 277 509
Louise Butler	Activities & Volunteers Coordinator	07535 699 840
Ramona Bridgman	Youth Participation Coordinator	0795 671 3180

Definitions of Abuse and Harm

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse is any avoidable act, or avoidable failure to act, which adversely affects the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of a child.

Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 so that it may include, "impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another".

Significant Harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when assessing what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes a single violent incident may constitute significant harm but more often it is an accumulation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, damage or change the child's development.

The concept of significant harm is, therefore, relative to each individual concerned. The determination of what constitutes significant harm in each individual case is made by the Local Authority.

The following are recognised as the areas that children may be in need of or require protection from: Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, including Child Sexual Exploitation, Emotional/Psychological Abuse and Neglect.

Definition of Adult Abuse

Adult abuse is any avoidable act, or avoidable failure to act, which adversely affects the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of an adult at risk.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery can take many forms, including forced sexual exploitation, domestic slavery, or forced labour on farms, in construction, shops, bars, nail bars, car washes or manufacturing. Forced labour is the most common form of slavery in the UK, fuelled by a drive for cheap products and services, with little regard for the people behind them. A growing form of slavery is trafficking into crime. As such, we will be alert to the threats, children and young people may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community. We recognise and take seriously our responsibility to comply with all principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This is reinforced by a wide policy framework, including a whistleblowing policy, recruitment and selection policy, grievance policy and safeguarding policy.

Safer Recruitment Practice

Safer Recruitment practice is an important part of our approach to create a safe environment for children, young people and adults at risk. Our Safer Recruitment practice is used in the recruitment of staff and volunteers with the aim to:

- Deter applications from those that are unsuitable to work with children, young people and adults at risk
- Reject unsuitable applicants through the recruitment process
- Attract the best possible candidates to vacant posts

Staff and volunteers do not begin their role until all required pre-employment or pre-volunteering checks are completed. This includes obtaining a minimum of one satisfactory reference, ideally two,

for volunteers and a minimum of two satisfactory references for members of staff and Trustees. All staff and volunteers will not begin in their role until they have a completed a DBS check and the results returned to Me2 Club.

In the event of a blemished DBS, the information contained will be reviewed by the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer on the suitability of the appointment. The outcomes of this review could be:

- Not making the appointment on grounds of suitability to work with children or adults
- Continuing with the appointment following a risk assessment and plan

Training

All staff and volunteers are required to complete an annual Safeguarding Awareness refresher session. Volunteer Induction training includes Safeguarding Awareness for all new volunteers working with children and young people.

Safeguarding Officers are required to undertake a Safeguarding Level Two training course every three years. This should be completed within three months of joining Me2 Club. Youth Participation Coordinator to undertake Prevent Training every 2 years. Designated Lead Safeguarding Officers are also required to attend Safer Recruitment and Designated Lead Persons training.

Safeguarding Procedures

Generally, concerns will arise in one of three ways:

1. Direct allegations of abuse or neglect
2. Observations or information about children which might suggest they are experiencing, or likely to experience, abuse or neglect
3. More general childcare concerns

If a Me2 Club Volunteer is made aware of a safeguarding concern by a beneficiary or is worried about the welfare of a child or adult, their only duty is to pass that information on to:

- The Activity Leader at the child's chosen activity and;
- A Me2 Club Activities & Volunteers Coordinator/Children and Young People's Participation Coordinator or
- Me2 Club's Chief Executive Officer

Direct allegations of abuse or neglect

If a child or adult makes a direct disclosure to a volunteer, they should immediately inform the Activity Provider and their Activities & Volunteers Coordinator/Youth Participation Coordinator.

If a child or adult makes a direct disclosure to a staff member, the staff member should:

- Tell them they believe them and reassure them that they will not get into trouble for being honest
- Tell them that they have done the right thing in sharing the information and that in order to keep them safe they may have to share this with another professional
- The member of staff should only ask open questions e.g. Who? What? Where? When? How? These questions should be minimal and only asked out of necessity and to clarify the situation. Care must be given to avoid asking leading questions.
- The member of staff should let them speak freely
- The member of staff will not make assumptions and should not make them feel guilty or embarrassed
- The member of staff will write down, as soon as possible, their account using the their language/words

- The member of staff will inform them of the actions they will take, including who they will share the information with
- If necessary, the member of staff should contact the Duty Social Services Team or Out of Hours Emergency Team. They will take advice from Social Services regarding what to do next.
- The staff member will agree what to tell the parents or carers in conjunction with a Designated Safeguarding Officer
- The member of staff will treat this information as confidential and will only share it with authorised personnel

Data Protection

We will treat any personal information by which an individual can be identified (i.e. name, address, email etc.) in accordance with the provisions of UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act (1998/2018), and will not share information with any third party, except where required by law. See additional policy for more detail. This policy is in line with government guidance about confidentiality and these details will be made available to all staff, children, young children, adults at risk, parents and carers. We fully endorse the principle that the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, override any obligations of confidence we may hold to others. No one working, or involved, with our organisation can promise absolute confidentiality. Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a “need to know” basis.

Observations/information about children suggesting abuse or neglect

A volunteer may identify concerns during an activity. In this instance they should speak to the Activity Provider who may contact Social Services.

The volunteer must speak to a member of Me2 Club staff so a formal record can be made.

If a member of staff observes or is made aware of information that might suggest a child or adult is experiencing harm, abuse or neglect, they should consult with their Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer.

General childcare concerns regarding children

Where there are low levels of concerns that a child’s physical or emotional needs are not being met to a satisfactory standard, or other concerns about their safety and wellbeing, these should be raised with an Activities & Volunteers Coordinator or the Youth Participation Coordinator, who will make a formal record of the concerns and decide on an appropriate course of action proportionate to the concerns raised.

Information Sharing

Me2 Club has the responsibility to share information with the Local Authority (LA’s) children’s social care department when we are concerned that a child may be suffering or be at risk of harm. Me2 Club has a duty to share concerns relating to a professional’s conduct towards a child or young person with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). While, in general, we should first discuss any concerns with the family and inform them of our discussion to make a referral to children’s social care, there may be times where we make the decision not to, such as:

- Sharing the information may place a child at increased risk of harm
- Prejudice the prevention or detection of serious crime
- Lead to unjustified delay in sharing information
- Put a Me2 Club employee/worker at risk

Any decision not to inform a child's family should be made in consultation with the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer and the rationale for not disclosing to the family be recorded.

Allegations against Volunteers, Committee or Staff Members

If an allegation is made against a volunteer or staff member by the Activity Provider or parent this should immediately be notified to Me2 Club's Chief Executive Officer, who will discuss a plan of action with the Trustees. If the allegation is against the Me2 Club Chief Executive Officer, it should be passed to the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding.

The Me2 Club Chief Executive Officer will ask the person raising the concern if they have reported their concerns to the relevant Children's Social Care Department. If not, the Chief Executive may advise them to do so. Me2 Club Chief Executive Officer will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Chief Executive will carry out actions proportionate to the situation and concerns raised in order to resolve the concern and ensure that those at risk are safeguarded effectively.

If a member of staff or volunteer does not feel their concerns have been listened to, are worried that repercussions are likely to arise if they do raise a concern, or worried about the safeguarding practice of the organisation they can seek advice through the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice line on 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk

Additional Policies

In addition to this Safeguarding Policy, Me2 Club has the following in policies in place to ensure the safest environment possible for young people:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Confidentiality Policies (Staff, Trustees and Volunteers)
- Complaints Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Grievance Policy

Concerns Regarding a Child's Wellbeing

If a volunteer is worried about the safety or welfare of a child or adult at risk, their only responsibility is to share this information with the relevant Activity Provider and their Activities & Volunteers Coordinator or the Youth Participation Coordinator.

Internally, if staff are concerned about a child's safety or welfare, this should be shared with a Designated Safeguarding Officer. If Me2 Club are aware that a family has a named Social Worker or lead professional, concerns will be passed to them, initially by phone where possible and followed by email. If the family is not known to have a Social Worker, the staff will contact the Duty Social Work Team.

If the member of staff is unsure whether information needs to be passed on, they may contact the NSPCC helpline, or the Duty, Triage and Assessment Team for advice. Where there is uncertainty, Me2 Club will opt to pass on information rather than not.

Designated safeguarding officers will be the main contact for any ongoing child protection procedures, liaising with the staff member as necessary. The designated safeguarding officer may attend multi-agency meetings if required.

The Chief Executive will provide monitoring information on safeguarding incidents to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis. Any safeguarding incidents where there is an organisational failure to

safeguard an individual or an incident that would constitute a critical incident this will be reported to the Trustees immediately.

Staff targeted by perpetrators to gain access to children and young people

Me2 Club recognises that perpetrators may specifically target staff or volunteers in an attempt to groom and exploit them in order to gain access to children and young people. In an event of this nature, the Chief Executive Officer should be informed immediately so that an appropriate safeguarding response can be implemented and the member of staff provided with support.

Safer Practice

Me2 Club works to the following guidelines to promote professional boundaries and a culture of safeguarding:

- Volunteers are instructed to avoid being 1-1 with their children in isolation at all times
- Volunteers should only have contact with their child during the weekly activity. Volunteers should not see or spend time with the child they are matched to outside of these sessions, including on the travel to and from the activity.
- Where it is assessed that a child's support needs create a higher safeguarding risk two volunteers may be matched to support the child
- Volunteers are given guidance around safe personal care for low level needs (e.g. being in earshot of others/asking activity leader for support)
- All contact with children must be age appropriate, situation appropriate and socially appropriate
- All volunteers carry ID cards, with staff contact details

Young Volunteers

Me2 Club is aware of its responsibility regarding the safeguarding of all volunteers particularly those under 18 years of age. Parental consent is required for young volunteer's involvement.

Volunteers are advised to report any concerns regarding interaction with parents to their Me2 Club staff member.

Where to report concerns:

Area	Team	Contact Details
Wokingham	Duty and Triage	0118 908 8002 Triage:Wokingham.gov.uk
Wokingham	Emergency Duty Team (After 5pm or on weekends and bank holidays phone)	01344 351 999
Reading	Single Point of Access (SPoA)	0118 937 3641 cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Reading	Emergency Duty Team	01344 351 999

Other contacts:

Thames Valley Police: 101 to report non-urgent crime or for general enquiries, or call 999 in an emergency.

NSPCC 24 Hour Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Childline 24 Hour Helpline: 0800 1111