

# Safeguarding Children & Adults

MILL BANK GROUP

March 2024

## Summary

Members of the Mill Bank Group (MBG) Committee have a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults in our community; to recognise and respond to allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse or maltreatment.

This document explains what safeguarding and abuse mean, and what to do if you become aware of it.

The MBG has two named persons who lead on safeguarding: **Bronwen Pendleton 07505 010861** and **Michael Beazley 0775 682 2995**. Either should be contacted in the event of a concern.

## Part 1 - Safeguarding Children

The MBG is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. We acknowledge our duty to follow agreed procedures in reacting to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Members will respect difference and diversity amongst children and young people.

### Safeguarding means

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### Our principles

- Children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.
- It is better to help children as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging; and
- Children and families are best supported and protected when there is a co-ordinated response from all relevant agencies.

### We will

- Make sure that all members understand their responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- Follow the agreed Child Protection Procedures at all times.

- Make sure that all members understand their duty to report to the Named Person for child protection any concerns about the protection of any child or young person, or a member's conduct towards a child/young person.
- Commit to referring any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Calderdale Children's Social Care Services (MAST) and/or Police).
- Follow any procedures relating to the conduct of members by making a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if concerns about a member are identified.
- Provide opportunities, if or where we provide a direct service, for all members or workers to develop skills and knowledge to protect children and young people.
- Encourage children and young people to express their ideas and views, and know how to make a complaint.
- Encourage parents/carers to be involved in the work of the group to have access to guidelines and procedures.
- Keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people.

## Guidance on Types of Abuse

The following definitions are taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, (2018). They should assist those providing services to children to judge whether a child may be suffering actual or potential harm.

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

### 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**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. 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 and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food and clothing, 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).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Working Together 2018 describes other types of Safeguarding Concerns including: 'Contextual Safeguarding' where children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Where we operate a service, we will ensure that members, whether paid or unpaid, undertake training to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and of the West Yorkshire Consortium Inter Agency Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.

## Procedures: Named Persons for Child Protection

MBG has appointed Named Persons to be responsible for responding to child protection concerns. In their absence, any other member of the Management Committee should be contacted.

The Named Persons for Child Protection are **Bronwen Pendleton 07505 010861 and Michael Beazley 0775 682 2995.**

The responsibilities of the named person are:

- To make sure that members know what to do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.
- To act promptly on any concern about a child/young person make sure that a record is kept, refer on where necessary and follow up to check that the issues are dealt with.
- To pass on information about allegations against members who have contact with children and young people and contact the LADO as required.
- To record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

## What to do if Worried about a Child

In an emergency where there is a threat to life or serious injury **call 999**, if you are concerned that a crime has been committed, **call 101**.

We recognise our duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse and believe that the safety of the child should override any doubts, hesitations, or other considerations. If we see worrying changes in a child's or young person's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, we will:

### Stage 1

- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously
- Notify the Group's Named Person for Child Protection
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child/young person talks about matters that may be indicative of abuse
- Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others, if this indicates they and or other children are at risk of harm
- Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely

### Stage 2

- The Named Person will take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child has been abused or likely to be abused. In this situation the Named Person will contact Calderdale Children's Social Care for advice or to make a referral.

- Call MAST (Multi-Agency Screening Team): **01422 393 336** (in normal working hours).
- Out of hours call the Emergency Duty Team (EDT): **01422 288 000**.

## Managing Allegations Made Against a Member

We will make sure that any allegations made against member will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures. We will:

- Listen carefully to what the child says, but not ask detailed questions.
- Make sure that the child is safe and away from the person against who the allegation is made.
- Inform the named person for child protection immediately. In the case of an allegation involving any of Named Persons for Child Protection, the Chair or Secretary of the Group should be informed, or anyone in a senior position within the Group and believed to be independent of the allegations being made).
- The named person will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO - based within Calderdale Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Services: 01422 394086) to discuss action to manage the immediate situation, followed by a written referral if appropriate. Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency the Police.
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The Named Person for Child Protection within the Group can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the Police and/or Calderdale Children's Social Care.

## Management & Supervision of Volunteers

The MBG does not plan to run direct services. If that changes, we will develop further detailed procedures and structures for the management and supervision of staff in light of the type of work with children and young people.

## Safe Recruitment

In the event that MBG operates a direct service, MBG will follow The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) changes in how to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from those who are unsuitable to work with them.

## **Recording & Managing Confidential Information**

We will:

- Record all concerns/allegations of abuse, harm and neglect. The person who receives the allegation or has the concern will make a written record.
- Respect and store confidential information safely

## **Communicating/Reviewing Policies & Procedures**

We will:

- Communicate our policies and procedures and review them periodically.
- Communicate any changes/amendments with members.

## Part 2 - Safeguarding Adults<sup>1</sup>

The MBG is committed to keeping people safe and will take action in response to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Everyone in the group must be aware of the policy and procedures to help prevent abuse and to know what to do in the event of abuse. The policy applies to management committee members, and anyone working or volunteering on behalf of MBG.

The policy and procedures will help us to follow best practice in helping to prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring. We will support anyone who is experiencing abuse and respond promptly to any allegations or suspicion of abuses.

Adult abuse can take many forms and cause pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Adults at risk may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries. There may be some situations where the person is unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

In accordance with the *Care Act 2014 Safeguarding*, an Adult at risk is defined as;

“An adult at risk is someone with care and support needs who may be experiencing or is at risk of abuse and neglect and who is unable to protect themselves because of their support and care needs.”

We will act to:

- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible.
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or harm.
- Safeguard in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- Keep focused on improving life for the adults concerned.
- Manage our activities in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse.
- Recruit volunteers safely, ensuring checks are made where necessary.
- Supervise, support and train members of the group, so that everyone knows what they should do to help prevent or respond to abuse.
- Comply with the policy and procedures of the Calderdale Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Respect confidentiality, and in most circumstances, gain permission from any adult concerned before sharing information about them with anyone else.
- Report to other agencies without consent if a person is in danger, a child is at risk, or if a crime has been committed.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy and procedures document is based on a template developed by the Calderdale VSI Alliance with Calderdale Safeguarding Board

- Keep our policy and procedures up to date.
- Appoint a Named Person to refer incidents of adult abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Adult Social care).

## **Policy & Procedures**

### **1. Preventing Abuse**

We are committed to safeguards that help prevent abuse taking place, and will treat others with respect. The MBG does not currently operate services, but if that changes, we will follow safer recruitment policies and practices. This may include appropriate DBS (Disclosure & Barring) checks, obtaining references, training, and supervision.

### **2. Recognising the Signs & Symptoms of Abuse**

We will make sure that any members of the group providing a service to adults at risk undertake basic training in the signs and symptoms of abuse. We will appoint a Named Person. We recognise as abuse any action by someone who does or says things to another person to hurt, upset or make them frightened. We recognise that this can happen to anyone who is over 18 years of age, and that abuse can happen anywhere and be committed by anyone.

Forms of abuse can include:

- Physical abuse such as: hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misuse of medication, scalding, inappropriate restraint, hair-pulling.
- Sexual abuse such as: rape or sexual assault; sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not or could not have consented, or to which they were pressurised into consenting or encouraging people to watch inappropriate materials.
- Psychological or emotional abuse such as: threats of harm or abandonment; deprivation of social or any other form of contact; humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, or harassment; verbal abuse; prevention from receiving services or support.
- Financial or material abuse such as: theft; fraud or exploitation; pressure in connection with wills, property, or inheritance; misuse of property, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect or acts of omission such as: ignoring medical or physical care needs; preventing access to health, social care, or educational services; withholding the necessities of life, such as food, drink, or heating.
- Discriminatory abuse such as that based upon a person's race, sexuality, or disability; any other forms of harassment or slurs.
- Domestic violence - all forms of abuse can be experienced in a family setting by a partner, family member, or with someone with whom there is a relationship.
- Institutional abuse and poor practice - disrespect and unethical practice, ill treatment and professional misconduct.



People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff members, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

### **3. Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Adults**

**The designated named persons for Safeguarding Adults are Bronwen Pendleton 07505 010861 and Michael Beazley 077568 22 995.** In their absence, then any other management committee members, or volunteers should contact Gateway to Care directly on 01422 393 000.

The named person will:

- Make sure that everyone knows what to do and who to go to if they have concerns.
- Contact other agencies where necessary and record actions taken.
- Follow up reported concerns, to make sure that issues are dealt with.
- Respect confidentiality by making sure we all follow good practice.
- Support and supervise any members of the group working directly with adults who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse.

### **4. Responding to People who Have Experienced or are Experiencing Abuse**

If an adult makes an allegation of abuse, we will:

- Reassure the person concerned.
- Listen to what they are saying.
- Record what we have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.
- Remain calm and not show shock or disbelief.
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.

We will **not:**

- Investigate or ask detailed or probing questions.
- Promise to keep it a secret.

If we witness abuse or if abuse has just taken place, we will:

- Call an ambulance if required.
- Call the police if a crime has been committed.
- Preserve evidence.
- Keep everyone concerned safe.
- Inform the Designated Named Person.
- Record what happened.

All abuse or alleged abuse must be discussed with the Designated Named Person. If a member of the organisation feels unable to raise this concern with the Designated Named Person (or if they are implicated in the abuse) then concerns can be raised directly with

Gateway to Care direct on 01422 393 000. The alleged victim must be told that this will happen. This stage is called the **reporting a concern**.

If necessary, and where the person consents, or there is a good reason to override consent, such as risk to others, a referral will be made to Gateway to Care.

If the individual experiencing abuse does not have capacity to consent a referral will be made without that person's consent, in their best interests.

The Designated Named Person may take advice at the above stage from Gateway to Care and/or the Safeguarding Adults Team and/or other advice-giving organisations such as the Police.

## **5. Reporting a Safeguarding Adults Concern**

All safeguarding adult concerns should be made by telephone to the Adult Social Care team via Gateway to Care Monday to Friday 9.00am till 5.00 pm

### **Gateway to Care**

Phone: 01422 393 000

Available: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

### **Out of Hours**

To make contact out of normal working hours, call the Emergency Duty Team on **01422 288 000**.

Gateway to Care will then decide if the safeguarding process should be instigated or if other support/services are appropriate. Feedback will be given to the person who raised the safeguarding adults alert.

## **6. Managing Allegations Made Against Member of MBG**

We will respond promptly to any allegation made against members or office holders. If it is thought that a criminal offence has been committed, the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed, we will contact the police immediately.

Safety is paramount, and we will assess risks immediately in case others are at risk from the person alleged to have caused harm. This will include whether it is safe for them to continue in their role whilst the investigation is undertaken.

The Designated Named Person will liaise with Gateway to Care Direct to discuss the best course of action and to ensure that MBG follows any disciplinary procedures in place.

## **7. Recording & Managing Confidential Information**

We will maintain confidentiality wherever possible and only share safeguarding information with others who need to know.

We will record allegations/concerns in a secure safeguarding file. The information must be factual and only record what the person has told us, and what we have seen or witnessed. The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with data protection legislation. Access to the information will be restricted to the Designated Named Person and Chairperson.

## **8. Disseminating/Reviewing Policy & Procedures**

This Policy and Procedures document will be clearly communicated to all members of MBG. The Designated Named Person will be responsible for ensuring that this is done.

The Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures will be reviewed regularly by the Management Committee. The Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Adults will be involved in this process and can recommend any changes. The Designated Named Person will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated all members.

Reviewed and amended by Michael Beazley for the Mill Bank Group, March 2024