

MANOR HOUSE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

1.0 WHAT DOES SAFEGUARDING MEAN?

Safeguarding is a relatively new term which is broader than 'child protection' as it also includes prevention. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'safeguarding' refers to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, well-being, life chances and opportunities of children.

1.1 OUR DEFINITION OF SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding for this policy has been defined as:

- As an agency working with children, young people and their families MHDT will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised;

And

- Where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, MHDT will take appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies as identified in a number of documents including Safeguarding Children (2005), the 2nd Joint Chief Inspectors Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children and the broader definition in Working Together to Safeguard Children – a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, DCFS, March 2010.

1.2 WHO THE POLICY REFERS TO

The term 'children' used in this policy refers to all babies, children and young people i.e. from birth to 18 years.

1.3 SAFEGUARDING IS IMPORTANT FOR MHDT

Safeguarding children is vital for MHDT as its charity trustees have a duty of care towards the children with whom they have contact. Having safeguards in place within an organisation not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but also it enhances the confidence of trustees, staff, volunteers, parents/carers and the general public. Safeguarding children is beneficial to MHDT in many ways – protecting its reputation, helping to effectively meet its objectives and protecting its finances. These safeguards include a child protection policy and procedures for dealing with issues of concern or abuse.

1.4 PROTECTING CHILDREN

MHDT believes that children must be protected from harm at all times.

The protection of children from harm is an issue of national concern, particularly in the light of some recent high profile cases involving neglect and maltreatment of children. It requires an increase in public awareness of the risks to children and what measures can be taken to protect them e.g. information programmes for parents. It means helping to provide better information, advice and support to parents and carers. All information provided by MHDT about safeguarding children will be accessible and in a range of formats so that children and young people are better able to recognise abusive behaviour and know where to seek help. It ensures that any risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised, protecting children from maltreatment, abuse or neglect. It helps to ensure that children are growing up in circumstances that are consistent with the provision of safer and effective care – preventing impairment of the child's health or development. A shift has been made in moving from child protection to safeguarding which is a move from intervention to prevention – addressing children's needs at an early stage rather than when serious problems have developed.

1.5 EFFECTIVE INTER AGENCY WORKING

To be successful this policy requires greater accountability and integration of services – where there are concerns agencies are to take appropriate actions to address concerns, working to agreed policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies, particularly London Borough of Hackney, Hackney Homes and the Learning Trust. This safeguarding children policy is for all staff (paid and unpaid) involved in delivering services at the Community Centre.

1.6 MEETING THE 5 OUTCOMES OF IMPROVING WELFARE OF CHILDREN

The safeguarding policy addresses the 5 outcomes for improving the welfare of children coming from the Children's Act 2004, which are:

1. **Be healthy** – enjoy good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle. Parents and carers receive support to keep their children healthy
2. **Stay safe** – being protected from harm and neglect. Agencies collaborate to safeguard children.
3. **Enjoy and achieve** – getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood. Parents and carers receive support in helping their children to enjoy and achieve
4. **Making a positive contribution** – being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour. Children and young people are supported in developing socially and emotionally.
5. **Achieve economic well-being** – not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life. Action is taken by partners to support families in maintaining their economic well-being.

1.7 PROTECTION FOR ALL

All children must be safeguarded from harm and exploitation whatever their:

- Race, religion, first language or ethnicity;
- Gender or sexuality;
- Age;
- Health, ill-health or disability;
- Location or placement (e.g. living alone in a hostel or residential unit, with their family or foster family, as a tourist in a hotel, etc)
- Criminal or offensive behaviour
- Wealth or lack of it
- Political or immigration status

1.8 OUR PROCEDURES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN

- All trustees, staff and volunteer appointments will be subject to a successful CRB check and that records will be maintained identifying details about these CRB checks
- These records will be regularly reviewed and checks will be renewed when appropriate or required
- MHDT's accessible safer recruitment policy will be followed when making any appointments that have responsibility for working with children
- At least 2 references will be sought for all staff and volunteers working with children and young people and these will be assessed prior to appointments being made
- All new staff and volunteers will be provided with a formal induction programme that identifies, alongside other issues around employment and their position, the requirements of MHDT with regard to safeguarding children.
- This formal induction process will be recorded and new staff and volunteers will sign off on completion of the process.
- A record will be maintained of staff and volunteers who have undertaken this induction training and this will be available and accessible
- Safeguarding training is provided for all staff and volunteers, working in partnership with the Learning Trust and the Children's Centre at an appropriate level for the positions undertaken which will familiarize you with the child protection responsibilities and policies and procedures to be followed if there are concerns about a child's safety and welfare. This training will be undertaken within 6 months

of the post-holder starting work with MHDT and before any inter-agency training is undertaken

- This training will include familiarization with MHDT's policies with regard to complaints handling, whistleblowing, dealing with allegations of abuse, disciplinary procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse and key lead officer for MHDT for safeguarding issues
- Any services provided or agencies working with MHDT will give appropriate priority to safeguarding children. They will share any concerns they may have at an early stage to encourage preventative action to be taken
- Each agency that works in partnership with MHDT will have a safeguarding policy in place and MHDT will ensure that each agency understands its contribution towards safeguarding children, for some this will be identifying and acting on concerns, for others this will be supporting the child once these concerns are identified
- Essential information sharing between agencies is required for all services provided. Where there are any concerns, complaints, whistleblowing or allegations of abuse, these need to be shared with the lead officer for MHDT in the first instance and agreement reached about any action required. A record of any action undertaken will be made and shared as required.

1.8 MHDT'S LEAD OFFICER FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

MHDT's Director is the nominated lead officer for safeguarding children to have the following responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children:

- a. Ensuring that the accessible safer recruitment policy is followed at all times;
- b. Ensuring that all new staff and volunteers are formally inducted and understand their role and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children;
- c. Arranging safeguarding children training for all staff and volunteers;
- d. Monitoring, recording and reporting on whether all staff have received the minimum training required;
- e. Ensuring that all staff are aware of new and existing guidance on safeguarding e.g. City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) information or relevant government legislation;
- f. Ensure that up-to-date information is available in the Community Centre for users, staff and volunteers;
- g. Provide advice and support to any staff, volunteer or user who have a concern about safeguarding a child;
- h. Act as the contact for the complaints policy and whistleblowing policy – which enables staff and volunteers to raise any concerns about a colleague or child in confidence;
- i. Recording all concerns raised by staff, volunteers or other agencies;
- j. Being responsible for responding in a timely fashion to any concerns raised via the complaints or whistleblowing policy;

- k. Acting quickly and effectively with regard to any allegations of abuse made by staff, volunteers or users and take timely action, which will be recorded and reported to relevant agencies as required;
- l. Undertaking referrals in accordance with agreed inter agency working agreement;
- m. Being the contact person for the local Children's Social Services and the Police in relation to all incidents or concerns related to the safeguarding of children or linked to the Community Centre.

Where the MHDT Director is absent from work or unable to act in this capacity for any reason, he/she will nominate a suitable and experienced deputy to act in his/her place for the duration of the absence or incapacity.

1.9 CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

Where there are concerns or worries about a child who appears to be maltreated, abused or neglected, the first point of contact will be the named lead officer – MHDT Director. He/she will assess the allegation and record it. He/she will follow MHDT's disciplinary procedures where there is felt to be substance to the allegation. He/she will make contact with appropriate agencies, either to Children's Services or to the Police Child Abuse investigation team. These may include concerns about a member of staff or a suspicion that an activity taking place in the Community Centre could place children at risk. In any situation where there is a suspicion that there may be abuse the welfare of the child must come first – even where they may be a conflict of interest e.g. where the suspected perpetrator may be a customer, client or employee/employer. All referrals will be treated seriously. It is the responsibility of Children's Services and the Police Child Abuse investigation team to make further enquiries into a child protection referral. They will first decide how enquiries should be pursued. If there is no suggestion that any crime has been committed, it is possible that the matter will be followed up by Children's Services alone.

1.11 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If anyone – staff, volunteers or users - feels that they have not received a good service from MHDT or have any concerns about the standard of service provided – particularly where there are concerns about the safeguarding concerns – the following process should be followed.

- Raise the concern with your manager if you are employed by or are volunteering with MHDT
- Raise the concern with the service deliverer if you are a user of our services
- If you are not happy with the response, raise the issue formally in a letter or email addressed to the MHDT Director (Simon Donovan, MHDT Director, MHDT, Robin Redmond Resource Centre, 440 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2RD or simon.donovan@hackneyhomes.org.uk)
- You will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint being received within one week of receipt of the letter or email
- You will receive a formal response to your complaint within 30 days of its receipt

1.12 LOCAL CONTACT NUMBERS

MHDT'S Lead officer for safeguarding

Simon Donovan, MHDT Director, Robin Redmond Resource Centre, 440 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2RD
Telephone: 020 8356 1797
Mobile Number: 077921 76535

City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB)

CHSCB, Hackney Service Centre, 1 Hillman Street, Hackney, London E8 1DY
Telephone: 020 8356 3661

Police

Hackney Child Abuse Investigation Team, 1 Cam Road, Stratford, London E15 2SY
Telephone: 020 8217 6552 or 999 (in an emergency)

Children's Social Services

Children and Families, Access and Assessment Centre, 1 Hillman Street, London E8 1DY
Telephone: 020 8356 5500 (Duty Main Line for daytime calls)
020 8356 2346 (Emergency Out of Hours calls)

For more information please go to www.hackney.gov.uk/childprotection.htm