



Registered charity no. 1162002

Safeguarding Policy - Vulnerable Adults

Introduction

The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Victims 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 victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this information to others.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all Maxability staff, volunteers, and members are clear about their responsibilities.

Definition

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited whether in the short term or for sustained periods of time.

Everyone may be vulnerable at some time in their life therefore vulnerability **may** include any individual, at any time, who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has mental health issues (including dementia)
- Has a physical or sensory impairment
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance mis-user
- Is homeless

However, this list is not exhaustive.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- a) Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
- b) Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism
- c) Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- d) Financial abuse e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money from benefits, pensions, or savings etc.
- e) Neglect or acts of omission e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
- f) Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- g) Personal exploitation – involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- h) Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions
- i) Institutional abuse e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity

Reporting Procedures

If the allegation or suspicion of abuse is discovered or suspected it should be reported to a member of the Maxability committee as soon as possible. The committee member will then inform the member responsible for adult protection (or in their absence, another delegated member).

The committee member responsible for adult protection must make a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse (see appendix 1) and assess the situation with the Maxability Chair and Secretary. They will then carry out a risk assessment and contact Adult Social Services.

If the allegation of abuse has been made in confidence, an attempt should be made to gain the consent of the individual involved to make a referral to another agency. However, the gaining of the consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on. Consideration needs to be given to:

1. The scale of the abuse
2. The risk of harm to others
3. The capacity of the individual to understand the issues of abuse and consent

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to Social Services then it should be reported.

In emergency situations (e.g. where there is the risk or occurrence of severe physical injury), where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health or safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, the relevant emergency services must be contacted.

Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

Responsibilities

All staff, volunteers, and members have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions that they might have concerning adult abuse.

The committee members responsible for adult protection are **Suzanne Smedley and Catriona Rubens**

Disclosure and Barring

All newly recruited staff and volunteers who will have contact with Maxability's clients must be registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Please refer to 'DBS Employer and Volunteers Guidance'

Legislation

This policy is informed by, and adheres, to the Barnet Multi-Agency Adult Protection Policy and Procedures, and to the following legislation:

NHS and Community Care Act 1990

Mental Health Act 1983

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Care Standards Act 2000

Care Act 2014

And all other relevant Acts of Parliament.

Agreed by Trustees April 2021

Maxability Adult Abuse Incident Report Form

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Briefly describe what happened (include times and dates):

Names and contacts of witnesses:

Name of person completing form:

Date:

Name of Manager responsible for investigation:

Date:

Action taken:

Children and Young People Safeguarding and Protection Policy

Child Protection Statement

As a charitable organisation, the wellbeing and safety of children and young people accessing Maxability's services is a core priority. Maxability provides educational and therapeutic art classes and tuition to members of the community, including children and young people, in the London Borough of Barnet.

Maxability is committed to ensuring the highest standards of child and young people protection and safeguarding to the children and young people who come into contact with Maxability's services.

Introduction

Maxability provides art, education and therapeutic services to children and young people under the age of 18. Some of these children and young people may have additional needs, such as a physical or learning disability.

Maxability believes that all children and young people have the right to lead lives free from abuse and the risk of harm. Maxability is an organisation where children and young people can flourish, have positive experiences and stay safe.

We recognise that it can be very hard for children and young people to speak out about abuse or neglect. Maxability aims to be a safe place where children are supported to raise concerns and make disclosures.

The staff, volunteers and trustees at Maxability have a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and young people, to keep them safe and to provide Maxability's services in a way that protects them.

Aim of Policy

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive Maxability's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the tools they need to address any safeguarding or welfare concerns about a child or young person.

- To set out Maxability's clear procedures for reporting any concerns about the welfare of a child or young person, and to ensure that staff, volunteers and trustees are clear about their responsibilities.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Maxability, including managers and the board of trustees, paid staff and contractors, volunteers and students.

Concerns About a Child's Welfare and Wellbeing

Children and young people are at particular risk of abuse and harm, including:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse, sexual exploitation
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Child trafficking
- Female genital mutilation

Spotting Signs of Abuse

Children and young people accessing Maxability's services who have been abused may want to tell someone but may not have the exact words to do so.

They should be supported by Maxability to make any disclosures about abuse, to ensure that Maxability is a safe space where they can speak about any concerns.

All staff members, volunteers and trustees must be alert to possible signs of abuse, neglect or concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing, such as:

- Expressions of fear about a person or place.
- Knowing about or being involved in 'adult issues' which are inappropriate for their age or stage of development (e.g. alcohol, drugs and / or sexual behaviour).
- Angry outbursts or aggressive behaviour.
- Signs that the child or young person is withdrawn, nervous, anxious, clingy or depressed.
- Signs of self-harm or thoughts of suicide.
- Bruising or unexplained injuries.
- Spending longer in the toilet or bathroom.
- Unexplained difficulties walking, standing or sitting.
- Possible signs of neglect including hunger, poor hygiene, inadequate clothing, untreated injuries, health or dental problems, and signs of an unsuitable home

environment. • Indications that the child has been left alone or unsupervised for long periods or at a young age.

- Use of inappropriate sexual language or indications of sexualised behaviour that is inappropriate for the child's age or stage of development.
- Signs that the child or young person has been involved in crime.

This is not an exhaustive list.

All staff, volunteers and trustees must take a proactive approach to child safeguarding. Significant or unexpected changes in a child or young person's physical or emotional wellbeing, or behaviour, must be treated as a potential safeguarding concern.

Reporting Procedures

Staff and volunteers should never wait until a child or young person tells them directly that they are being abused before taking action. Instead, they should ask the child if everything is okay and discuss the concerns with Maxability's organisation's designated safeguarding lead or contact the NSPCC helpline **(0808 800 5000)**.

Waiting for a child to be ready to speak about their experiences could mean that the abuse carries on and they, or another child, are put at further risk of significant harm.

Staff and volunteers should respond to concerns about a child and young

person by:

1. Reporting to the child protection lead or a committee member as soon as

possible.

2. Fill in Maxability's safeguarding reporting form. Keep accurate and detailed notes of any concerns, including any conversations with the child. Be as factual as possible.

3. Emergency situations:

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, the Maxability staff member or volunteer must contact the emergency services on 999.

4. Maxability's child protection lead will then complete a risk assessment. If the

child protection lead is not available, this should be completed by the deputy lead, or the board member responsible for safeguarding.

Maxability staff, volunteers or trustees may seek confidential assistance with the risk assessment by:

- Contacting the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk to assist with the risk assessment.
- Using the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's online portal to assist charities to manage allegations of abuse or harm: <https://safeguarding.culture.gov.uk/>

5. The child protection lead must consider if a referral to an outside agency should be made to:

The local child protection services in Barnet

Monday– Friday (9am – 5pm): Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on **020 8359 4066**. Outside these hours: Barnet emergency duty team on **020 8359 2000**.

If a referral is made to the child protection services, Maxability's child protection lead, or the person at Maxability making the referral, should complete the Barnet safeguarding concern [referral form](#). They should try to complete this within 48 hours of the concern.

Child protection services in another Borough

For example, if the concern is about a child or young person who lives in another borough, or if the concern is about potential abuse or neglect in another borough.

The police

By calling 101 unless the child or young person is at risk of immediate harm.

The child's school or college

If the concern relates to the child's treatment or wellbeing at the school or college.

Maxability's child protection lead, or the person making the referral, must keep a clear record of all referrals made to outside agencies.

6. The child or young person's consent:

Children should be given the opportunity to decide whether they agree to their personal information being shared with any outside agency by Maxability. If a child doesn't have the capacity to make their own decisions, Maxability should ask their

parent or carer (unless doing so would put the child at risk of harm).

No staff or volunteer at Maxability should ever promise to a child that they will be able to keep concerns about abuse or welfare secret.

If consent is refused or if you're unable to seek consent, Maxability can still share information with relevant professionals if this is in the public interest. This includes protecting children from significant harm and promoting the welfare of children.

7. Support for the child or young person:

The staff member or volunteer reporting the concern, or Maxability's child protection lead, should speak with the child or young person, listen to their views, and gently explain the action they are taking.

If a child discloses that they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in speaking out. The staff member or volunteer should tell the child that abuse is never their fault.

They can support a child or young person who makes a disclosure by doing the following:

- **Show the child they care and help the child to open up:** Give the child their full attention. Keep body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them that their feelings are important. Phrases such as *'you've shown such courage today'* help.
- **Take time and slow down:** Respect pauses and don't interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. It may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.
- **Show the child they understand and reflect back:** Make it clear they are interested in what the child is saying. Reflect back what the child has said to check their understanding and use the child's language to show it's their experience.

Maxability should also provide the child concerned with the contact details of:

- The NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111

8. If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue to Social Services, it should be reported.

Disclosure and Barring Service

All newly recruited staff and volunteers who may have contact with Maxability's clients must be registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before they begin to work or volunteer with Maxability.

Responsibilities and Contact Details

All staff, volunteers, trustees and members of Maxability have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions or concerns that they might have about a child or young person's welfare.

Nominated child protection lead: Suzanne Smedley

E-mail: suzanne@maxability.org.uk

Deputy child protection lead: Anita Woolf

E-mail: anita@maxability.org.uk

Trustee responsible for safeguarding coordination: Catriona Rubens

E-mail: catrionarubens@gmail.com

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is informed by, and adheres to, the [Barnet Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub guidance](#), and to the following legislation and guidance:

The Department of Education's guidance '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)' The Department of Education's guidance '[Information Sharing](#)'

The Charity Commission's [guidance on safeguarding](#)

Children Act 2004

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Data Protection Act 2018

And all other relevant Acts of Parliament