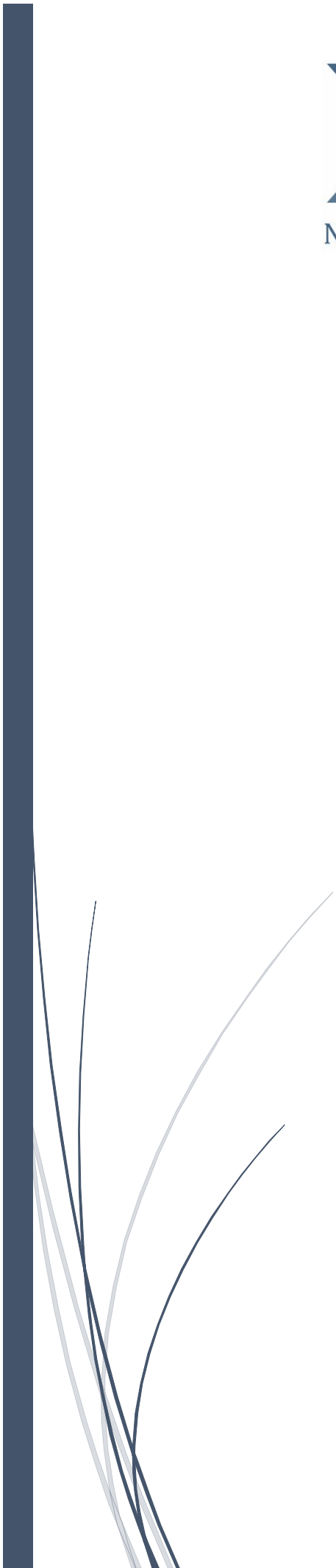




Northern Independent Mediation

Safeguarding Policy

November 2017 Version 1



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Safeguarding Policy

1. Statement of Intent

Northern Independent Mediation believes that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by a commitment to practice which protects them.

2. Legal Guidance

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- The Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2013)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

3. The Purpose of the Policy:

- To provide protection for the children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive Northern Independent Mediations services, including the children of adult members or users.
- To provide staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person/vulnerable adult is paramount;
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Northern Independent Mediation.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting safeguarding guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our Safeguarding Policy and good practice guidance on an annual basis.

4. Designated Senior Person

The Primary Designated Senior Person for Safe Guarding in this organisation is:

[Alexander J McCulloch – Service Director](#)

It is the role of the Designated Senior Person for safeguarding to:

- Ensure that he/she receives refresher training to keep his or her knowledge and skills up to date;
- Ensure that all staff who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding children effectively and that this is kept up to date by refresher training;
- Ensure that new staff receive a safeguarding children induction;
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services;
- Liaise and work with Local Authority Children’s Services over suspected cases of child abuse;
- Ensure that accurate safeguarding records relating to individual children are kept and marked 'Strictly Confidential'.

In addition all enquiries concerning the welfare or safety of a child must go through the Multi Agency Safeguarding

5. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

It is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are seen to be followed up, and that they are examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation concerned.

Discussion should always take place between the Northern Independent Mediation and the LADO when the concern or allegation meets the criteria or there is uncertainty about whether a referral should be made.

The purpose of an initial discussion is for the LADO and the Senior Manager to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action.

6. Types of abuse

All staff should be aware that the main categories of abuse are:

Neglect: 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);
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

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.

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 (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- It may involve serious 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.

7. Guidelines for all Northern Independent Mediation staff

Staff must at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of Northern Independent Mediation.

Respect

Staff are committed to:

- Treating children and young people with respect and dignity;
- Always listening to what a child or young person is saying;
- Valuing each child and young person;
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make;
- Encouraging and praising each child or young person.

By example

Staff will:

- Provide an example, which we would wish others to follow;
- Use appropriate language with children and young people and challenge any inappropriate language used by a young person or child or an adult working with young people;
- Respect a young person's right to privacy.

One to one contact

Staff will:

- Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others. Staff should try to always be visible to others in their contact with children;
- In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible;
- If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts.

Physical contact

Staff should never

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay;
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves. If such an incident arises, for example, where a child or young person has limited mobility, Northern Independent Mediation staff should seek another adult to deal with such an incident;
- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind;

General

Staff should:

- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned;
- Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts; ○ Never allow ourselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes;
- Never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person, even in fun.

Relationships

Staff who are involved in relationships with other members of staff should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within Northern Independent Mediation or the work of Northern Independent Mediation.

Sharing information

Good communication is essential in any organisation. In Northern Independent Mediation every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns, they will be listened to and taken seriously.

It is the responsibility of the management to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between all those involved in this organisation and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.

Children & Young People - Children and young people have a right to information, especially any information that could make life better and safer for them. Northern Independent Mediation will act to ensure they have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints and volunteers will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing.

Parents- Parents / persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation.

We achieve this by • Publicising information on all services • Publishing the named Designated Safe Guarding Person(s) and how to make a complaint on www.essentialmediation.co.uk • Publishing a full copy of the Safe Guarding Policy on www.essentialmediation.co.uk

Staff - As an organisation, which offers support and guidance to children and young people, it is imperative that each member of Northern Independent Mediation is aware of their responsibilities under the Safe Guarding legislation and has a working knowledge of company procedures. Each member of staff will receive updated training in Safe Guarding every three years.

Other Bodies - A copy of our Safe Guarding Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body.

8. Procedures for Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Senior Person. It is the duty of any staff member to:

- Report any concerns about a child being subject to abuse;
- Receive a disclosure;
- Report if they are aware of members or colleagues behaving in an inappropriate manner.

It is important that all staff are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. However, staff do have a duty of care to the child or young person which means they must report any suspicions they may have.

In general there are 3 situations that staff may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:

- Responding to a child or young person disclosing abuse, i.e. they make an allegation of abuse;
- Responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff from your own observation or due to a complaint;
- Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person, i.e. parent, carer, other service user.

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in Northern Independent Mediation has concerns, a record should be made. 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 or person/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, what was said?
- 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. school, designated officer, children's social care
- Has anyone else been consulted?

The designated person will immediately inform the local authority's multi-agency and/or Children Services representative by telephone. **Contact details for each local authority can be found at Appendix 1.**

The telephone referral will be confirmed in writing using the relevant form, within a maximum of 48 hours, ideally 24 hours. This written confirmation will be signed and dated by the referrer.

9. Making a Referral

A referral involves giving Children's Services or the Police information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

- Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made except in the circumstances outlined below under confidentiality (11).
- However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Children's Children Services about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.
- If your concern is about harm or risk of harm from a family member or someone known to the children, you should make a telephone referral to the Children's Services Team in the area where the child resides (See Appendix 1 for the relevant contact details).
- If your concern is about harm or risk of harm from someone not known to the child or child's family, you should make a telephone referral directly to the Police and consult with the parents.
- If your concern is about harm or risk of harm from an adult in a position of trust see guidelines in Section 13.

10. Dealing with Disclosure

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Safeguarding will always have precedence over any other issues;
- Listen to the child, rather than question him or her directly;
- Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what the child says seriously;
- Allow the child to speak without interruption;
- Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question;
- Not overreact;
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement;

- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on;
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell;
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event;
- Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say;
- Contact the Designated Person for advice / guidance. The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral. If Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the member of staff with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant local authority themselves;
- Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

11. Confidentiality

Safeguarding children raise issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff.

Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual children and young people/families shared with staff and professional on a strictly need to know basis.

You **MUST NOT** discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances where:

- sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected
- organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- fabricated or induced illness (previously known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- female genital mutilation is the concern
- there are cases of suspected forced marriage contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk

These decisions should not be taken in isolation. Consult with your senior manager/line manager/designated teacher.

When information is shared it should where possible respect the wishes of the family, be accurate, up to date, necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, shared only with those people who need to know it and shared securely.

If a young person discloses it is important that they know that any information may be referred on. Even when the sharing of the information is not authorised it may be passed on if it is felt to be in the public interest such as preventing other children from harm, to promote the welfare of children or to prevent crime and disorder.

12. Record keeping

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation;
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are need by a court;
- Complete the incident report form recording statements and observations rather than interpretations and assumptions.

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

13. Allegations Involving Staff

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff may have:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates he/she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff then the allegation must be taken seriously. No assumptions must be made and leading questions should not be used. Actions to be taken should include making an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words, including:

- Date and time where the alleged incident took place;
- Brief details of what happened;
- What was said and who was present.

This record should be signed and dated and immediately passed to the designated person for Safeguarding or, if the allegation concerns them both, direct to the LADO.

14. Signed

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy will be reviewed on: 01st November 2018

Signed



Dated: 01/08/2016

Appendix 1

Further Information

Designated Person: Alexander J McCulloch

alex.mcculloch@cloverleaf-advocacy.co.uk Phone 01274-754001

ChildLine - free helpline for children and young people in the UK.

www.childline.org.uk Phone 0800 1111

NSPCC – Information for children and adults

www.nspcc.org.uk/html/home/needadvice/needadvice.htm Phone 0808 800 5000

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org Phone 08457 909090

UK Border Agency (UKBA) Employers helpline 0300 123 4699/Employers Checking service

www.employingmigrantworkers.org.uk

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>

Foreign and Commonwealth website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office> Tel: 020 7008 1500

Home office

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

Immigration, Asylum & Nationality Act 2006 www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk

NSPCC Value based interviews www.nspcc.org.uk

PRADO (Public Register of Authentic Identity and Travel Documents Online)

www.consilium.europa.eu/prado/EN/homeIndex.html

Domestic Violence

Phone c/o 08457 909090