

Tower Hamlets Parents Centre

Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures

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1. Safeguarding Children Policy

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from Abuse and Maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's Health or Development
- Ensuring children grow up with the Provision of Safe and Effective Care
- Taking Action to enable all children and young people to have the best Outcomes.

Child Protection is part of the Safeguarding Process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer Significant Harm. This includes Child Protection Procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a Child.

By the very nature of the work undertaken by the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre, Staff and Volunteers will regularly come into contact with children and their families. Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will take every reasonable step to ensure that Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children is embedded in all our activities and contact with children.

Tower Hamlets Parents Centre believes that:

- The Welfare of the child is Paramount;
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, sexual orientation or identity, and religious beliefs have the right to Equal Protection from all types of Harm or Abuse;
- All Staff and Volunteers working with Tower Hamlets Parents Centre have a duty to play an active role in ensuring that Children's Health and Well-being is promoted.
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other Agencies is essential in promoting the Welfare of Children.

A Child is defined in law as a person who is up to the age of 18 years. Therefore, the term 'Child' is used throughout the Policy and Procedure and this includes Young people.

The Purpose of the Policy is:

- To provide Protection for Children who participate in activities provided by the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre.
- To provide Staff and Volunteers with Guidance on Procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a Child may be experiencing, or be at risk of, Harm.

The Policy applies to all Staff, including Employees, Volunteers, Trustees and anyone working on behalf of the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre.

This Policy and Procedures have been drawn up on the basis of Law and Guidance which seeks to protect Children namely:

Children Acts 1989 and 2004

United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991

Data Protection Act 1998

Sexual Offences Act 2003

HM Government (2015) Working Together to Safeguard Children

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Children and Families Act 2014

The Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will seek to Safeguard Children by:

1. Valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
2. Adopting Child Protection Guidelines through Procedures and a Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers;
3. Sharing Information about Child Protection and Good Practice with Children, Parents, Staff and Volunteers and those Organisations with which we work;
4. Sharing information about concerns with Agencies who need to know;
5. Safer Recruitment, Selection and Vetting of Staff and Volunteers;
6. Providing effective management for Staff and Volunteers through Supervision, Support and Training.

This Policy also links to the following other relevant Policies and Procedures:

- Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Staff and Volunteer Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

We are committed to reviewing this Policy every 3 years or sooner if there is a change in Legislation, Guidance or an incident that warrants it. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible for initiating this Review.

2. Code of Behaviour

2.1 Expectations

Tower Hamlets Parents Centre expects all Staff and Volunteers to adhere to its Code of Behaviour. This sets out good working Practices, clear Expectations of Behaviour and reflects Child Centred Principles. Adherence to the Code is one means of Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children that participate in any of our activities.

This Code has been developed to provide you with Advice which will not only help to protect children, but will also help you and your Colleagues identify any Practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false Allegations of Abuse being made against you. Good Practice will also protect the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the Organisation to gain access to Children in order to Harm them.

When working with children for the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre all Staff and Volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of Trust. It is therefore, important that Staff and Volunteers may be seen as role Models by Children and must act in an appropriate manner at all times and follow the Code of Conduct. All members of Staff and Volunteers will be expected to report any breaches of this Code to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at Tower Hamlets Parents Centre.

The Code of Conduct should guide all behaviour in working with Children undertaken by Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Staff and Volunteers. If in doubt, you should always consider how an action or activity may be *perceived* as opposed to how it is *intended*. If it is necessary to Act contrary to it (for example one to one contact with a Child for example) then this should only be done after Discussion, and with the approval of, your Line Manager or Group Leader.

Staff who Breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Disciplinary Procedures.

Any breach of this Code involving a Volunteer or member of Staff from another Agency may result in them being asked to leave. Serious Breaches of this Code may also result in a referral being made to either the Police and/or Children's Social Care.

2.2 Staff and Volunteers should:

- listen to and respect Children at all times, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation;
- treat Children fairly and without prejudice;
- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory;
- always ensure equipment is used appropriately and for the purpose it was designed for;
- ensure that dangerous or otherwise unacceptable behaviour by a Child is challenged;
- ensure that if any kind of physical support is required during any activities, it is provided only when necessary in relation to the Activity;
- report any Incidents in the Case of perceived risk to a Child whom you consider to be in a vulnerable or dangerous situation;

- report all allegations or suspicions of Abuse, including any made against you;
- follow the Procedures for reporting concerns. Never agree to keep any information relating to the Harm of a Child confidential;
- avoid unobserved situations of one to one contact with a Child, If it is unavoidable, always ensure another Adult knows where you are, with whom and why;
- ensure that if you need to comfort a Child who has become distressed, it is important that you do so in a way which is both age appropriate and respectful of their personal space. Never act in a way which may be perceived as threatening or intrusive, ask Children before you act;
- ensure that you address any instances of Bullying between Children in a fair and proportionate manner;
- avoid favouritism, singling out 'troublemakers' and gossiping about children or their parents/carers;
- ensure that their relationships with young people are appropriate to the age and gender of the young person, and take care that your Language or Conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation;
- ensure that the focus of your relationship with a Child you have met through work or volunteering always remains on the work. The aim should never be, or become, to develop the relationship into a long-term friendship. Never invite, or allow, a Child you have met through work into your home or make contact with him or her outside of work, including online Contact.

2.3 Staff and Volunteers should not:

- engage in or allow any Sexually Provocative Games involving or observed by Children, whether based on talking or touching;
- engage in or tolerate any inappropriate Physical Activity involving children, or any Bullying of a Child by an adult or another Child;
- use Sarcasm or Insensitive Comments to a Child;
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive;
- use any Physical Punishment as part of disciplining Children. Shouting at children should also be avoided or used very seldom and only if other alternative forms of Discipline have failed;
- ask Children to keep secrets;
- trivialise Child Abuse or its Effects;
- consume Alcohol or take Drugs during the working day, including any breaks or when in contact with children;
- smoke with or in front of children;
- steal, or condone someone else's Stealing, regardless of the value of an item stolen;
- offer to Transport a child alone in your car unless in an Emergency and having notified your Line Manager;
- make Sexually Suggestive Remarks or Discriminatory Comments to or in front of a Child;
- develop Inappropriate Relationships such as contact with Children that is not part of the work of the Club/Activity and agreed by the Manager or Group Leader. A Sexual Relationship between a Staff Member/ Volunteer and a Child participating in Tower Hamlets Parents Centre activities represent a serious Breach of trust and is not permissible in any circumstances;

- give your personal Contact Details (including mobile number and e-mail address) to a child you have met through work or volunteering. Do not communicate with children you have met through work or volunteering in person or through Personal Social Networking Sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

3. Child Protection Procedures

3.1 Definitions

Abuse and Neglect are forms of maltreatment of a Child. Somebody may Abuse or Neglect a Child by inflicting Harm, or by failing to act to prevent Harm. Children may be abused in a Family or in an Institutional or Community Setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an Adult or Adults or another Child or Children.

There are Four Main Types of Abuse although in reality it is rare for only one type to be present. They are Physical Abuse, Neglect, Emotional Abuse and Sexual Abuse. For more information about the Definitions of Abuse see Appendix 1 which also gives information on other specific Risks such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation and Radicalisation.

Within Tower Hamlets Parents Centre's Procedure for managing concerns about a Child there are essentially Four Key Steps to remember and this Procedure will explain each of those. They are referred to as **the 4 Rs**:

1. **Recognising** Abuse or Neglect
2. Knowing how to **Respond**
3. Knowing how to make a **Referral**
4. **Recording** any Actions taken

3.2 Designated Safeguarding Officer

To assist Staff and Volunteers in their Safeguarding Responsibilities Tower Hamlets Parents Centre has a Designated Safeguarding Officer and a Deputy. The role of the Designated Officer is to:

- Provide Information and Advice on Safeguarding within Tower Hamlets Parents Centre.
- Be aware of the National Guidance on Safeguarding and Child protection.
- Risk assess and make Decisions about appointing someone who has a Criminal Record in conjunction with the appropriate Recruiting Manager.
- Ensure that appropriate information is available when making a Child Protection Referral and that the Referral is confirmed in writing within one working day.
- Liase with Children's Social Care and other Agencies, as appropriate.
- Ensure that an individual Case Record is maintained of the Action taken by Tower Hamlets Parents Centre, the liaison with other Agencies and the Outcome where there has been a Child Protection Concern.
- Advise the Organisation of Child Protection Training needs.
- Support Staff and Volunteers during and after a Safeguarding Incident in the Organisation, and Review the effectiveness of the Policy in Operation.
- Ensure that the Policy and Procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer is Dr Muhammad Abdul Hannan. In his absence the Deputy Safeguarding Officer is Mrs Masuma Akther

The Trustee with designated responsibility for safeguarding is Mr MD. Ghulam Mortuza. His role is to support the Designated Safeguarding Officer and his Deputy; to ensure that Safeguarding Processes within Tower Hamlets Parents Centre are adequately resourced; and to be the Point of Contact for any concerns about the Conduct of the Designated Safeguarding Officer or his Deputy.

3.3 Recognising possible Signs of Abuse or Neglect

Concerns about a Child may come to light in one or more of the following ways:

- A Child may tell you about something that has upset or harmed them, or that has happened to another child
 - Someone else might report that a Child has told them, or they strongly believe a Child has been or is being harmed in some way
 - A Child may show Signs of a Physical Injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
 - The Behaviour or Attitude of a member of Staff, Volunteer, Parent/Carer towards a Child worries you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way
 - You witness worrying Behaviour from one Child to another.
- For details of the Signs of Abuse see Appendix 2.

3.4 Responding to Signs or Suspicions of Abuse of a Child

If a Child is telling you about Abuse that they have suffered or that another Child has suffered, then you should:

- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said;
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets;
- Allow the Child to continue at his/her own pace;
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all time avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer;
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you;
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared;
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the Record is signed and dated.

What you do next?

If you have concerns about a child you should report them to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or their Deputy on the same working day.

The role of the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Designated Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Obtain information from Staff, Volunteers, Children or Parents/Carers who have Child Protection Concerns and to record this information.
- Assess the information quickly and carefully and gather further information as appropriate. It is not his/her job to investigate the matter as this is the role of the Statutory Agencies.
- If s/he is uncertain about what to do she can consult with a Statutory Child Protection Agency such as the local Children's Services Department or the NSPCC to discuss any doubts or worries.
- If s/he considers the matter is a Child Protection Concern s/he should make a Referral to Children's Social Care or the Police within one working day.
- If s/he has made a referral, then s/he should follow up with the Agency after 3 working days if s/he has not received confirmation that the Referral has been acted upon. The outcome should be recorded on the Child Concern Report Form.

In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Officer or if the matter is about a concern to do with the Designated Safeguarding Officer, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer at Tower Hamlets Parents Centre.

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the Child Protection Agencies. This would need to happen in a situation where you cannot get hold of your Manager, the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Designated Safeguarding Officer or another Senior Manager. If for any reason you believe that the Designated Safeguarding Officer has not responded appropriately to your concerns, then you

can also to contact the Child Protection Agencies directly. You can do this by contacting your local Children's Social Care Department or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 500.

3.5 Responding to allegations of abuse against a member of Staff or Volunteer

Child Abuse can and does occur outside the family. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse also occurs within Organisations as well as in other Settings. This could involve anyone working with Children in a paid or voluntary capacity. Abuse which takes place within an Organisation is rarely a one-off event. Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Staff and Volunteers need to be aware of this possibility and consequently that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken. It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a Colleague or Volunteer is, or may be abusing a child, will raise concerns among other Colleagues or Volunteers, including the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters. However, it is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child should be reported immediately. Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will fully support and protect any member of Staff or Volunteer who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a Colleague is, or may be abusing a Child.

You may become concerned about the behaviour of a member of Staff or Volunteer in different ways. For example:

- You observe an adult behaving in a way that is inappropriate towards a Child;
- You observe behaviour which does not comply with the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Code of Behaviour;
- Someone tells you something worrying about a Colleague which suggests they may not be suitable to be working with children;
- You are aware the person is engaging in Criminal Activity.

These Procedures are about managing allegations or concerns about a Colleague or Volunteer. They should be used in all Cases in which it is alleged that a Staff member or Volunteer has:

- (a) Behaved in a way that has harmed a Child, or may have harmed a Child; or
- (b) Possibly committed a Criminal Offence against or related to a Child; or
- (c) Behaved towards a Child in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with Children.

What to do if you have a concern:

1. If a member of Staff or Volunteer has a concern about the Behaviour of a member of Staff or Volunteer s/he should discuss it with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or their Deputy within the same working day.
2. If the concern meets the Criteria above then it must be reported by the Designated Safeguarding Officer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. The LADO will then advise from there onwards if s/he agrees that the concern meets this threshold.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will need to consider who else should be informed both within and external to the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre.

4. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will require a written account from the person making the allegation or concern and a summary of any available additional information including the Names and Addresses of any potential witnesses. Both Documents should be Signed and Dated.
5. If the concerns link to a specific Child(ren) then the Parents or Carers should be informed. Advice should be sought from the LADO as to how this is done and by whom.
6. The fact that a member of Staff/Volunteer tenders his/her resignation or ceases to provide their Services to the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre must not prevent an allegation/concern from being followed up in accordance with these Procedures and a conclusion reached. A so called 'Compromise Agreement' by which an individual agrees to resign and an employer agrees not to pursue Disciplinary Action and both agree to a Form of Words to be used in future references will never be used by Tower Hamlets Parents Centre in situations where there are concerns about their behaviour towards children.

What happens next?

Where there is a Complaint of Abuse against a member of Staff, there may be three types of investigation:

- A Criminal Investigation
 - A Child Protection Investigation or Enquiry
 - A Disciplinary Investigation or Enquiry by the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre
1. The Designated Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with the designated Trustee will decide if the Staff member/Volunteer should be temporarily suspended from work pending Police and Children Social Care Enquiries.
 2. The Staff member/Volunteer should be informed about the Allegation or concern as soon as possible (but not before consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)) and Children's Social Care/Police where necessary, in respect of timing and content.
 3. Irrespective of the findings of inquiries by the Police or Children's Social Care, Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will assess all individual cases under its Disciplinary Procedure to decide if a Staff member or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such cases, Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will reach a decision based upon the information that is available. Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will be advised by the LADO as to when the Disciplinary Enquiry can be started as Criminal Investigations/Proceedings may be pending.
 4. If an allegation/concern is substantiated and the person is dismissed, resigns, or Tower Hamlets Parents Centre decides to cease to use their Services then the LADO with Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will decide whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with a view to the individual being barred from working with children. A specific DBS referral form must to be completed for this purpose. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to complete this Form.

3.6 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Legal Principle that the welfare of the Child is paramount means taking action to safeguard the child is most important. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected, but if doing this leaves a Child at Risk of harm, the Child's Safety has to come first. So, legally, it is acceptable to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child even if the permission of the parent and /or child has not been sought.

Care must be taken to ensure that both adults and children's confidentiality is maintained and that information is handled and disseminated on a *need to know basis* only. Individuals must be confident that information held about them by the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will only be disclosed to others either with their consent or when there is a Legal Duty to do so.

Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will adhere to the Legal Principles when handling personal information, that is: personal information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; accurate, relevant and not held for longer than necessary; and kept securely. The Act allows for the Disclosure of personal information **without consent** of the subject in certain conditions, including for the purposes of the Prevention and Detection of a Crime, for example where there is a Child Protection Concern.

It is normally good Practice to gain Verbal or Written Consent, from a Child or Parent/ Carer before any personal information relating to them is shared with another Organisation (such as Children's Social Care or the Police). However, you do not need to seek consent to share information if it might be unsafe to seek to do so (e.g. seeking consent might increase the risk to the child) or causes an unjustified delay or if it would prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious Crime. When in doubt advice should always be sought from someone experienced in dealing with these issues, such a local Children's Social Care Department or the NSPCC Helpline. In situations where a request is made by another organisation for information about an individual, the relevant manager, group leader and Designated Safeguarding Officer must be informed, and their decision (including the reasons for this decision) should be recorded and stored by him/her.

In all cases where information is shared with a Body outside Tower Hamlets Parents Centre the following information should be recorded:

- date and time;
- summary of information shared;
- who the information was shared with;
- whether you are sharing with or without consent;
- if sharing without consent, whether the child or family were informed;
- how the information was shared and any receipt of it having been received.

For further detail about Information Sharing Principles see Appendix 4.

3.7 Records, storage and retention

Any records in respect of Child Protection Concerns and/or Allegations against Staff or Volunteers must be kept securely as this is sensitive data, not to be widely

shared. Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Staff/Volunteers are expected to ensure all Safeguarding Records are stored securely for example:

- Compile and label hard copy Files carefully.
- Files containing sensitive or confidential Data should be locked away and access to the keys strictly controlled.
- Access to Records needs to be limited to people in named roles who either need to know about the information in those Records and/or who manage the Records/Files.
- If Files are to be stored long term, then arrangements need to be made for the keys to be passed from outgoing Staff to their successors.
- If records are stored electronically then they will be password-protected with only limited Staff having access to them.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will have in place arrangements for ongoing management of the Records including their Review and Disposal.
- Where the concern related to an Allegation or Concern about a member of Staff or Volunteer then the Record is to be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This is because Tower Hamlets Parents Centre may be asked for information in future if someone is seeking a Reference.

3.8 If it's not child protection but you remain concerned

Sometimes concerns about a Child may not be about Abuse. Staff or Volunteers may become aware that a Child or Family need some help in making sure all of a Child's needs are met or to address a particular problem. Examples of this might be where a child is suffering because of Poverty, getting into trouble or has a Disability and needs extra help. In these instances they might be able to receive help under the Common Assessment Framework. This is a shared Assessment Tool to be used across all children's services and supports Tower Hamlets "Family Wellbeing Model". It aims to help early identification of need and promote coordinated Service Provision. More information is available from childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/family-wellbeing-model/. However, unlike in the situation of making a Child Protection Referral, Parents must agree to a referral for a CAF so the Staff must discuss this with Parents first of all and obtain their consent.

3.9 Anti-bullying procedures

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many Forms, but the three main Types Are Physical (e.g. Hitting, Kicking, Theft), Verbal (e.g. Racist or Homophobic Remarks, Threats, Name Calling) and Emotional (e.g. Isolating an individual from the Activities and Social Acceptance of their Peer Group). The damage inflicted by bullying (including Bullying via the Internet) can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable Distress to children, to the extent that it affects their Health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

The Tower Hamlets Parents Centre is committed to providing a working environment that is free from any form of Bullying or Harassment. The Tower Hamlets Parents Centre will not condone Bullying inflicted on or by children. It can be helpful to have a List of Principles for working together in the Group that are negotiated with the

children at the start of the event so you are being clear from the outset about creating a positive working environment in which Bullying is not acceptable.

Any Physical Violence by children on their peers during activities provided by the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre should be stopped immediately. Any Sexist, Racist or other derogatory Remarks should be highlighted as unacceptable. Any such incidents as these should be recorded on the Child Concern Report Form (Appendix 3) and passed to the Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Designated Safeguarding Officer. Where Bullying is occurring outside of Tower Hamlets Parents Centre, the Staff member or Volunteer will discuss the concern with the Designated Safeguarding Officer to decide how best to address the issue.

3.10 Safer Recruitment

Tower Hamlets Parents Centre's Recruitment Processes are designed to ensure that:


- It adheres to current Legislation and Guidance;
- It takes all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from joining the Organisation;
- It recruits, selects and manages Staff in a way that complies with Legislation designed to combat Inequality and Discrimination;
- Ensures that Recruitment and Selection Processes are consistent, safe and transparent;
- Ensures that Candidates are competent and suitable before making them an offer of a job;
- Ensures that new Members of Staff are given a proper induction;
- Creates a Safe Workplace Culture.

This will be achieved by:

1. Planning recruitment appropriately
2. Advertising all Posts through appropriate Media in a way that ensures we attract high quality Candidates from diverse backgrounds
3. Define job roles that clearly identify Safeguarding Responsibilities
4. Ensures that Applications for both paid and Volunteer roles are made using a standard Application Form
5. Involving more than one person to shortlist Applicants for interview
6. Making shortlisting decisions against set Criteria
7. Involving more than one person to conduct Interviews
8. Using a Self-Declaration Process for Candidates to share information in advance of DBS and Reference Checks
9. Obtaining 2 References, necessary Proof of Identity, Right to Work in UK and Original Copies of any necessary Qualifications
10. Ensuring that all Staff and Volunteers have an up-to-date Criminal Record Check where their post is eligible for this
11. Where Applicants have lived abroad for 6 months or more in the past five years, they must provide evidence of a Criminal Record Check from the relevant country.
12. Providing a comprehensive induction process including ensuring that all Staff are made aware of how to keep children and young people Safe in the Organisation.

4.0 Approval

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy was approved and signed on behalf of the Trustees.

Signed: 	Date: 7/11/25
Role: chairman	Date of next Review: 7/11/28

Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which 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

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.

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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. 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 (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The government has issued specific guidance on this issue which can be found at: [Multi Agency Statutory Guidance on FGM](#)

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on specified authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers ... to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty"). ... The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 also places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. Panels assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Schools and colleges are listed in the Act as partners of the panel.

[Prevent Duty guidance](#)

Possible Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

The following signs may be indicators or signs that abuse has taken place although some of these indicators can also be caused by other factors eg a bereavement, family breakdown or illness. It is not the role of staff or volunteers to decide if abuse or neglect has taken place. Rather, if any of these signs are present then these concerns should be shared as outlined in the procedure. In deciding if something may be a concern it is always helpful to think about the child's age, abilities and stage of development too.

Physical Abuse

Physical signs of abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Bruising in children who are not independently mobile
- Cigarette burns, bite marks, broken bones, scalds
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

Changes in behaviour which may indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

Emotional Abuse

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care
- Sudden speech disorders
- Persistent tiredness
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which may indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour eg sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- Obsessions or phobias
- Being unable to play
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm

- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

Sexual Abuse

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which may indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond his/her age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they can not tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way with adults

Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, or stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions
- under nourishment, failure to grow, inadequate care

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Untreated illnesses, not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend medical appointments
- Having few friends
- Being left alone, being unsupervised or being supervised by an unsuitable adult or young person

Additional vulnerabilities

It is also important to be mindful that some children are particularly vulnerable to abuse because of their age or their living circumstances or characteristics. Disabled children are a greater risk of abuse than non disabled children. Children living in adverse parental circumstances may also be more at risk, in particular children living in homes where there is domestic violence, substance misuse and /or severe parental mental illness. Children from particularly isolated or new communities may also be at increased risk of abuse as well as those children who display challenging behaviour.

Private & Confidential
Tower Hamlets Parents Centre Child Concerns Report Form

Details of the Child and their Parents / Carer:		
Name of Child:		
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Age:	Date of Birth:
Parent's / Carer's name(s):		
Home address:		
Your Details:		
Your Name and position:	Your contact details:	Date and Time of incident:
Report:		
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Responding to my own concerns. <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else.	If responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide their Name and Position within the Club/Organisation/Event:	
Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates or other relevant information(including a description any injuries / whether fact, opinion or hearsay):		
The child's account, of what has happened and how:		
Please provide details of the person alleged to have caused the incident / injury including where possible any details:		
Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident(s):		

Have you spoken to the parents? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please provide details of what was said:	
Have you spoken to the child? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please provide details of what was said:	
Have you spoken to the person the allegations are being made against? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please provide details of what was said:	
Further action taken to date (including informing the Designated Safeguarding Officer):		
Have you informed the Statutory Authorities? Children's Social Care: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Police: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Please provide the name of the person and his/her contact number:	
Your signature:	Date:	Time:

Information Sharing Principles

The Government¹ produced a list of 'Seven Golden Rules' to support Organisations and their workers when making decisions about when it is appropriate to share information with others, these are:

- **Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
- **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information, will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
- **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, the lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
- **Consider safety and well-being:** Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
- **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
- **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

¹ HM Government *Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers*

Appendix 5

Useful contacts list

Designated Safeguarding Officer (Tower Hamlets Parents Centre)
Dr Muhammad Abdul Hannan

Tower Hamlets Children's Social Care 0207 364 5006

NSPCC Child protection helpline (24 hour) 0808 800 5000

Police 999

Disclosure and Barring Service: 0300 123 111