

# Bridging the Gap Islington/Bridging the Gap Mentoring Safeguarding Policy

## Short Summary

*'Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.'*

*Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Department of Health, updated February 2017*

The official guidance sets out 10 main types of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Domestic violence
- Modern Slavery
- Self-neglect

You should also be aware of

- Radicalisation
- Drug trafficking (County Lines)
- Befriending for exploitation
- Forced Marriage

But abuse or neglect can take many forms so you need to be aware of the individual circumstances of each person.

If you are concerned that a child may be neglected or harmed – e.g. because an adult leaves them alone or is not in a fit state to care for them, you should report this to your supervisor who will discuss how to proceed.

What are the possible signs of abuse?

Abuse and neglect can be difficult to spot. You should be alert to the following possible signs of abuse and neglect:

- Depression, self-harm or suicide attempts
- Difficulty making friends
- Fear or anxiety
- The person looks dirty or is not dressed properly,
- The person never seems to have money,

- **The person has an injury that is difficult to explain (such as bruises, finger marks, 'non-accidental' injury, neck, shoulders, chest and arms),**
- **The person has signs of a pressure ulcer,**
- **The person is experiencing insomnia**
- **The person seems frightened, or frightened of physical contact.**
- **Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour**
- **The person is withdrawn, changes in behaviour**

**You should ask the person if you are unsure about their well-being as there may be other explanations to the above presentation.**

### **Aims**

Bridging the Gap Mentoring provides support and encouragement for people at risk of homelessness or with experience of the criminal justice system or substance misuse. Many of the people we support may be at risk of abuse or neglect or may have suffered from abuse or neglect in the past.

Bridging the Gap Mentoring will not tolerate the abuse of adults in any form and is committed to safeguarding anybody at risk of harm. All staff and volunteers are expected to follow this policy. The key objectives of this policy are for all employees and volunteers of Bridging the Gap Islington to:

- Have an understanding of adult safeguarding.
- Be knowledgeable about their responsibility to safeguard adults.
- Take the necessary actions where an adult with care and support needs is deemed to be at risk.

This policy sits alongside the following policies designed to protect volunteers and staff from harm

- The Health and Safety policy`
- Mentor do's and don'ts
- Mentor and service user Expectations
- Risk Assessments are included as appendices of the Health and Safety policy. They will be reviewed at any time when this Safeguarding policy is altered

This policy is based on:

- The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance.
- London Safeguarding Adults policy and procedures.
- Islington Safeguarding Adults Board's local procedures and appendices.

The Care Act 2014 sets out that adult safeguarding duties apply to any adult who:

- Has care and support needs, and
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- Is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect, because of those needs.

### **Principles**

All adults should be able to live free from fear and harm. Bridging the Gap Islington aims to ensure that people get the help and support they need to stop abuse.

This policy outlines the steps Bridging the Gap Mentoring will take to safeguard people if they appear to be at risk of abuse or neglect. It also defines the roles and responsibilities of Bridging the Gap trustees, staff and volunteers in working together with other professionals and agencies to promote people's welfare and safeguard them from abuse and neglect.

Bridging the Gap Mentoring will ensure that decisions made will allow adults to make their own choices and include them in any decision making. Bridging the Gap Mentoring will also ensure that safe and effective working practices are in place.

An adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including their mental or physical abilities, sensory loss or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but may be unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

Bridging the Gap Mentoring adheres to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work [See Care Act Guidance](#)

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

Staff and volunteers should reflect the six principles in their work , whilst ensuring the adult with care and support needs is involved in the decision making processes and informed consent is obtained.

Bridging the Gap Mentoring will ensure that any safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk. Partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. We will be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions.

### **Making Safeguarding Personal**

Bridging the Gap Mentoring believes in Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP). Making Safeguarding Personal means a case should be person-led and outcome-focused. The individual should be involved in identifying how best to respond to their safeguarding situation by giving them more choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

Bridging the Gap Mentoring will ensure that adults are involved in their safeguarding arrangements and each individual is supported on a case by case basis. As adults may have different preferences, histories and lifestyles, the approach should be unique to each individual, taking their needs and wishes into account.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

## **Safeguarding Lead and Deputy**

The details for the Bridging the Gap Mentoring Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead are as follows:

### Safeguarding Lead

Robin Latimer      [robin@bridging-Mentoring.org.uk](mailto:robin@bridging-Mentoring.org.uk)      07956440309

### Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Sharmila Rajaratnam      [Sharmiraja45@gmail.com](mailto:Sharmiraja45@gmail.com)

07470444712

All staff and volunteers should contact the Safeguarding Lead in the first instance for any concerns or queries related to safeguarding. If they are unavailable please contact the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

A note of the concern should also be made as soon as possible after a mentor or staff member is aware of the concern. The standard form in Appendix 2 may be helpful. This information should be sent to the Safeguarding Lead.

The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Lead include:

- Making decisions around notifying external services of safeguarding concerns.
- Deciding what actions to take in response to a safeguarding concern.
- Keeping safeguarding policies and procedures up-to-date and accessible.
- Promoting a safe environment for adults accessing the service, volunteers and staff.
- Ensuring volunteers and staff have up-to-date safeguarding adults training.

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

All staff, volunteers and trustees should follow Bridging the Gap Mentoring's confidentiality and data protection policies which set out when and how information should be shared.

If someone is believed to be at risk of immediate harm it may be necessary for mentors or staff to share information with the relevant authorities. If possible a mentor or volunteer should seek advice from their supervisor and a staff member should discuss the situation with the Co-ordinator. Also, if possible the person whose information needs to be shared should be informed and, unless there is a definite likelihood of immediate harm, their consent should be sought.

Bridging the Gap Mentoring will share information as described in the London Multi-agency safeguarding policy and procedures.

If any volunteer or staff member has behaved in a way that presents a risk to people with care and support needs while working with Bridging the Gap, this information will be shared with the Disclosure and Barring Service

## **Recruitment and Selection**

All Bridging the Gap staff and volunteers who may be in contact with people with care and support needs will be required to disclose any convictions and to have the information confirmed by a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

All Bridging the Gap staff who may be in contact with people with care and support needs will have to provide independent confirmation of any relevant qualifications before starting work with Bridging the Gap

If any staff member or volunteer discloses a conviction, this will not necessarily disbar them from working with Bridging the Gap Mentoring. The Co-ordinator of Bridging the Gap Mentoring will consult with trustees with relevant experience in order to make a decision about whether the conviction poses a risk to people with care and support needs. The reasons for any decision will be recorded in the files concerning the staff member or volunteer.

### **Training, Awareness Raising and Supervision**

Bridging the Gap Mentoring ensures that all staff and volunteers receive training on safeguarding adults. Safeguarding is included in the initial training given to volunteers. Bridging the Gap Mentoring continues to explore and develop further training and supervision to ensure that our safeguarding policy is understood and followed by staff and volunteers. This will include using relevant external training where it is available.

All staff and volunteers will be required to confirm in writing that they have received and understood training on Bridging the Gap's Safeguarding policy

### **Children's Safeguarding**

Bridging the Gap Mentoring does not work with people under the age of 18 but staff or volunteers may get information that causes them to be concerned about a child's welfare. For example, if a mentee discloses they have been looking after a child whilst under the influence of a substance which would have affected their ability to look after the child.

Staff and volunteers should record this information and seek advice from their supervisor or the Safeguarding lead. The concern should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead.

The Safeguarding Lead may seek expert advice either from the NSPCC Helpline or from Islington Social Services. They may initially seek advice without disclosing the identities of the people concerned. If so advised, the Safeguarding lead should inform the people concerned and formally report the concern to the relevant Social services. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for recording the concern, the action taken and any reasons.

## **The Safeguarding Procedure**

If a volunteer, staff member or trustee has a safeguarding concern they should follow the process outlined in the appendix. This includes:

**Reporting and discussing** the concern with your mentor supervisor and/or the safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

**Recording the concern** by writing a brief accurate account of the concern and passing the record to your mentor supervisor and/or to the safeguarding lead.

**Remember, do not promise confidentiality**, it may be necessary to share the information with external agencies such as adult social services.

**Look for patterns of abuse** as incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and may affect one or more people. Accurate recording of information will assist staff and volunteers in recognising patterns of harm.

The Safeguarding Lead will make the decision about sharing safeguarding concerns externally taking into account:

- The adult's wishes and preferred outcome.
- Whether the adult has capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety.
- The safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs.
- Whether there is a person in a position of trust involved.
- Whether a crime has been committed.

## **The Police**

Bridging the Gap Mentoring's policy is not to report crimes to the police unless there is a likelihood of danger or future harm to anyone. However, abusers often repeat the abuse in other situations, so the safeguarding lead should report the crime if it seems likely that the abuse may be repeated. (subject to the consent of the victim provided they are adult and capable of making a decision)

The Safeguarding lead will follow this policy in deciding whether to report the concern to the following people:

- o (the police if a crime has been committed )and/or
- o Islington's Access & Advice Team (part of adult social services) for possible safeguarding enquiry
- o relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Charities commission
- o service commissioning teams
- o family/relatives as appropriate (seek advice from adult social services)

The designated safeguarding lead should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring.

## **What are your roles and responsibilities?**

This policy is available on the Bridging the Gap Mentoring website.

<https://www.bridging-Mentoring.org.uk/policy-for-mentors/> Staff and volunteers are encouraged to read this policy and required to follow it.

All volunteers, staff and trustees are expected to report any concerns to the Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation is against a Bridging the Gap Mentoring member, worker, volunteer or trustee, seek advice from the Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Lead, seek advice from Islington's Access & Advice Team.

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person who raised the original concern. Feedback should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the Data Protection Act. If the police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

Once Adult Social Services are notified, a 4-stage safeguarding adults process is followed. For more information about this process refer to the London Safeguarding Adults Procedures. Should a safeguarding concern progress to this stage, the local authority will decide on who will lead the enquiry. Bridging the Gap Mentoring will only conduct its own safeguarding enquiry if asked to do so by the local authority.

Staff and volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

## **Complaints and Whistleblowing**

Bridging the Gap Mentoring promotes transparency and honesty. All staff and volunteers should be honest with service users and other people if events do not work out as expected and apologise if necessary, when things go wrong.

If anyone is unhappy with a decision about a safeguarding concern they are encouraged to raise the issue through the process described in the complaints policy. At first, the issue should be discussed verbally with relevant staff and then, if necessary, the formal written procedure should be followed.

If anyone believes that Bridging the Gap Mentoring is acting inappropriately or too slowly in relation to a safeguarding concern, they should raise the issue directly with Islington Adult Social Services (see contact details below).

Bridging the Gap Mentoring will support staff and volunteers who, in good faith, whistle-blow in relation to any safeguarding concern in the public interest and will, so far as is possible, protect them from any adverse consequences such as reprisals or victimisation.

## **Useful Contacts**

**The contact details for the Safeguarding lead and Deputy are given on page 2**

If your concern relates to an adult at risk of harm or abuse, contact Islington Access & Advice Service (first point of contact for adult social services) on 020 7527 2299 or look at <https://www.islington.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/abuse#>. They should be able to advise on Safeguarding contacts in other boroughs if necessary.

## Useful Links

Care Act- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

London Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures -

<http://londonadass.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/LONDON-MULTI-AGENCY-ADULT-SAFEGUARDING-POLICY-AND-PROCEDURES.pdf>

Islington Safeguarding procedure:

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/support-for-professionals/information-for-professionals>

Carer and Support Statutory Guidance -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/506202/23902777\\_Care\\_Act\\_Book.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506202/23902777_Care_Act_Book.pdf)

Prevent: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

For further guidance on information sharing and safeguarding see:

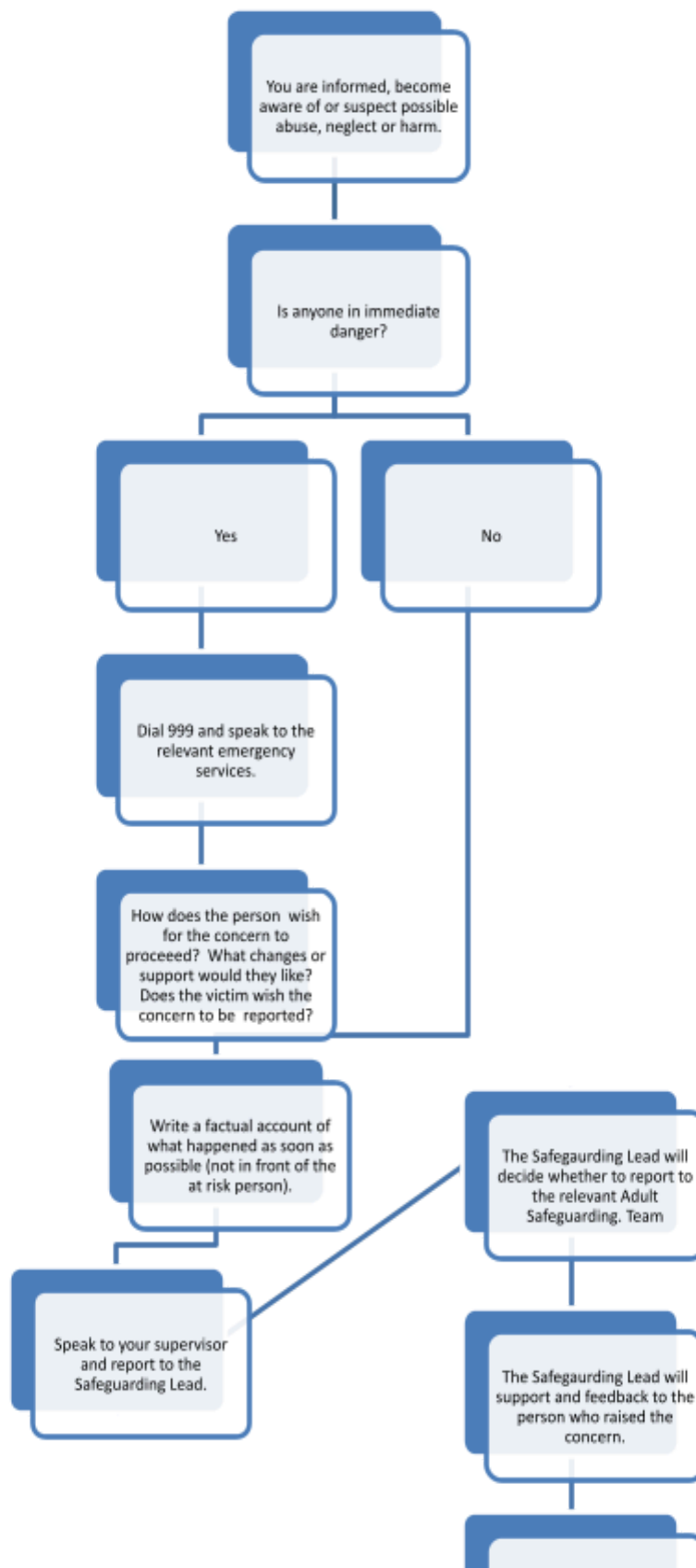
<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/sharing-information/keymessages.asp>

Version 6

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**If possible**

- Stay Calm
- Listen patiently
- Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you

- Explain your next steps to them

**You should not:**

- Appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry
- Press the individual for details
- Make comments or judgements other than to show concern
- Promise to keep secrets
- Confront the abuser





	<p>Yes / No / Was not able to ask</p> <hr/> <p><b>Are there any extra risk factors which may relate to the individual concerned? (Please circle)</b>  Pregnancy / Age / Mental Capacity / Social Isolation / Lack of Technology / Physical Health / Mental Health/ Substance Use / Other</p> <p>If other, please state:</p>
<p><b><u>Details of Other Agencies Involved</u></b>  <i>(please state all known agencies involved)</i></p>	<p><b>1. Agency Name:</b>  In what capacity are they involved?</p> <p>Are they aware of the concern?</p> <p><b>2. Agency Name:</b>  In what capacity are they involved?</p> <p>Are they aware of the concern?</p>
<p><b><u>Actions</u></b></p>	<p><b>What action(s) have you taken?</b>  Reported to police / Called an ambulance / Signposted to an external agency / GP / MIND / Samaritans / Asked them to keep their mobile charged / Other</p> <p>If other, please state:</p>
<p><b><u>Reporting</u></b></p>	<p><b>Have you reported this concern to:</b>  Your supervisor <input type="checkbox"/>  The safeguarding lead for Bridging the Gap Islington <input type="checkbox"/>  Other people (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p>