

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN and VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

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1. Definitions

¹ Safeguarding children is the action we taken to promote the welfare (or wellbeing) of children and protect them from harm. Child protection is part of the safeguarding continuum and focuses on the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

² Child: This policy is in respect of all children. A child includes babies, children and young people from pre- birth up to 18 years. In Scotland, there is a variance to this where a child is someone up to the age of 16 years unless the child is subject to a supervision requirement by a Children's Hearing, in which case they are considered a child until the age of 18 years. See National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 (para 21-24) for more detailed guidance on this

³ An adult at risk is 'any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support' (Care Act 2014 [England]). This definition is broadly consistent with definitions across the devolved nations. This policy is in respect of any adult individual who may lack the mental capacity to make a decision as well as any adult who has capacity but who may be vulnerable at that moment in time, as is often the case during psychological therapy.

2. Overview

2.1 Safeguarding¹ is at the heart of what we do and fundamental to our existence as a charity. We are all ambassadors for MCTC and for safeguarding. Some of our therapists are specialists in working with children and in safeguarding practice, others work only with adults. All clients at MCTC, of whatever age, are potentially emotionally vulnerable, at least during the course of their therapy. Other staff at MCTC seldom meet the public as part of their work. But from the point of view of the public we are all the MCTC, and they expect us to know what to do if they, or we, have concerns about a child².

2.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out MCTC's approach to safeguarding children and adults at risk or vulnerable adults³. It applies to everyone working



and volunteering at MCTC or acting on their behalf and provides the framework to help us safeguard all our clients with commitment and confidence. It describes some corporate and directorate safeguarding responsibilities so that you know who to ask for decisions or advice when you need to.

2.3 In some specific sections, such as Online Safety and Radicalisation, links are provided to NSPCC guidance and advice as this is both clear and comprehensive.

3. Our Approach to Safeguarding

3.1 Principles

Our approach to safeguarding is driven by a number of principles which are informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, relevant legislation and guidance, and by the MCTC's values and understanding of best practice.

- **Principle 1**
All children have a right to protection from harm and abuse, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, identity or additional vulnerabilities.
- **Principle 2**
The best interests of the child are paramount in all considerations about their welfare and protection, including when to maintain confidentiality and when to share information about them.
- **Principle 3**
Children have a right to participate in decisions about their lives. Their views, wishes, feelings and experiences are evident in our work with them.
- **Principle 4**
Concerns or allegations that MCTC staff or volunteers have abused or neglected a child or adult will be managed sensitively and fairly in accordance with these policies, relevant legislation and local procedures.
- **Principle 5**
Working together with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential to promoting children's welfare/wellbeing and ensuring their protection. In some limited circumstances, it will not be appropriate to engage with parents and carers to protect the child.
- **Principle 6**
As part of working together we expect professionals to act on our concerns, and we will escalate our concerns in our efforts to be satisfied that the child has been protected, taking a stand in cases where we consider the protection of the child has not been taken seriously either within MCTC or those investigating child protection.

What to do for Those who do not Work Directly with Children

The child's welfare is paramount and this means that the child's safety and protection must be the most important consideration and take priority over

everything else. These procedures outline what action should be taken if you have concerns about a child's⁴ safeguarding including child protection. The procedures apply to the following individuals: all staff in directorates/teams/services who do not work directly with children or adults at risk, volunteers (including trustees and interns), students, who in the course of their work or volunteering, have information or receive information that gives them cause for concern about a child's safeguarding/child protection. The procedures also apply to sole traders and contractors, including training associates.

What to do for Those Working Directly with Children

The child's welfare is paramount and this means that the child's safety and protection must be the most important consideration and take priority over everything else. These procedures outline what action should be taken if you have concerns about a child's⁵ safeguarding including child protection. The procedures also explain what action should be taken if no satisfactory action has been agreed with the relevant local authority/police or school (as necessary). The procedures apply to the following individuals: all staff and volunteers working directly with children (including trustees and interns), students, who in the course of their work or volunteering, have information or receive information that gives them cause for concern about a child's safeguarding/child protection.

3.2 The 'Building Blocks' of Our Safeguarding Work

MCTC safeguarding comprises the following five areas of activity:

Safe Recruitment

We apply a fair and consistent approach to recruitment to draw our workforce from the widest pool and select the best people on merit. As an organisation committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk we have robust recruitment policies to minimise the risk of engaging anyone, as a staff member or volunteer, who may pose a risk to children.

*Person Responsible: Clinical Director**

Effective Policies, Procedures and Practices

We have safeguarding policies and procedures that set out MCTC's expectations of staff and volunteers. Policies reflect new learning and are consistent with best safeguarding practice and legislation and guidance across the four United Kingdom (UK) nations (England, Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland) and Jersey.

*Person Responsible: Clinical Director**

Competent and Confident Workforce

We provide mandatory safeguarding induction and refresher training. This includes the training and the developing of our workforce within professional regulatory requirements. We ensure that our frontline and specialist staff have

the skills they require, and we support everyone in MCTC to trust their judgement and act on safeguarding concerns.

*Person Responsible: Clinical Director and Business Manager**

Actively Managing Safeguarding Risk

Managing risk is central to how we safeguard children and vulnerable adults. We escalate our concerns as necessary to be satisfied that the child or vulnerable adult has been protected.

*Person Responsible: Clinical Director **

Culture and Values

Safeguarding is at the heart of the culture and values of MCTC. Our culture supports, enables, and mandates our approach to safeguarding. Our values embody our charity and reflect what we stand for.

4. MCTC Policies and Procedures Mandatory Reading

In addition to this policy, all staff must read and understand the following MCTC procedures and online guidance.

PR 1.3 MCTC Complaints Procedure

MCTC's Complaints Procedure ensures that anyone, including a child or vulnerable adult, raising an allegation of abuse or any other form of complaint will be protected and treated fairly and with compassion.

PR3.6 MCTC Assessment and Record Keeping Procedure

This procedure includes guidance and instruction for clear and accurate record keeping for all MCTC clients.

PR4.3 MCTC Grievance Procedure

This procedure offers all staff and volunteers clarity on how to raise an issue of grievance within MCTC.

PR6.1 MCTC Reporting of Sexual Abuse Procedure

This procedure sets out the process for reporting of sexual abuse both within and without MCTC.

PR7.2 MCTC Safeguarding Children Procedure

The procedure includes guidance on professional boundaries for all those who are undertaking any type of work with children for example, in children's services provision (both face to face and online), participation work, schools work etc. The principles within this guidance apply equally to work with adult service users.

PR8.2 MCTC Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Procedure

Anyone who is employed or engaged by or volunteers on behalf of MCTC, regardless of the type or amount of contact they have with adults who are at

increased risk of abuse, has a role to play in safeguarding and protecting them. Everyone must:

- know how to recognise potential abuse of adults at risk
- know what to do when safeguarding concerns arise
- understand what MCTC expects of them in terms of their own behaviour and actions.

PO8.3 Harassment at Work Policy

This policy outlines MCTC's commitment to creating and fostering a culture that promotes respect for each other and values individual differences. There is no place for any form of harassment, victimisation or bullying at MCTC. It applies to all employees, casual/sessional workers, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and trustees.

Practice Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Radicalisation and Extremism

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/radicalisation#heading-top>

Harmful radicalisation and violent extremism is a child protection matter. This guidance provides information about what can make individuals susceptible to radicalisation and extremism, the legal context, risk factors and warning signs, and guidance to support the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk of or engaged with this form of harm or those affected by it.

Online Safety Guidance

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/social-media-and-online-safety>

This guidance is aimed at enabling all staff and volunteers to recognise the risks and potential dangers children and young people can encounter in the online world. It will also help them to monitor their own practices to minimise potential risk to children and young people.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Trustees

Are required to comply with the legal duties of charity trustees in the administration of MCTC's purpose and activities. Trustees have a general duty to take reasonable steps to govern and assess risks to MCTC's activities, beneficiaries, property, work or reputation. It is also the role of Trustees to oversee, champion, and challenge this work in relation to safeguarding.

5.2 Clinical Director and Business Manager

The Clinical Director and Business Manager work closely with the Trustees and carry out the day-to-day running of the organisation.

The Clinical Director and Business Manager act as champions and the conscience for safeguarding in MCTC and oversee corporate safeguarding, ensuring that MCTC complies with legal, professional, and Charity Commission requirements of



good practice. They support practice improvement amongst MCTC Therapists and liaise with the Trustees.

They ensure corporate safeguarding policies, procedures and training are up to date in the light of new legislation, guidance and learning from practice. They are responsible for supporting the development of high quality safeguarding practice and providing professional expertise in matters relating to safeguarding practice. Based on a 'right to know' they are required to flag concerns and gaps in corporate and directorate safeguarding policy and practice when appropriate.

5.3 MCTC's Work in Schools

MCTC offers services to a number of schools each or which has its own Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Any and all safeguarding concerns should be reported to the DSL in the school concerned in the first instance, and to the Clinical Director as soon as possible after that.

Angela
1.6.22

Contact Details – Clinical Director

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Appendix 1

What Constitutes Abuse?

Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 (Section 7)

Section 197(1) of the Act provides definitions of “abuse” and “neglect”: “abuse” means physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse (and includes abuse taking place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place), and “financial abuse” includes, having money or other property stolen; being defrauded; being put under pressure in relation to money or other property; having money or other property misused; “neglect” means a failure to meet a person’s basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person’s wellbeing (for example, an impairment of the person’s health or, in the case of a child, an impairment of the child’s development).

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples for each of the categories of abuse and neglect:

- Physical Abuse – hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medicine, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- Sexual Abuse – rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person has not or could not consent and/or was pressurised into consenting;
- Psychological Abuse – threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks; coercive control is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim;
- Neglect – failure to access medical care or services, negligence in the face of risk-taking, failure to give prescribed medication, failure to assist in personal hygiene or the provision of food, shelter, clothing; emotional neglect;
- Financial Abuse in relation to people who may have needs for care and support:
 - o Unexpected change to their will; - Sudden sale or transfer of home; - Unusual activity in a bank account; - Sudden inclusion of additional names on a bank account; - Signature does not resemble the person’s normal signature; - Reluctance or anxiety by the person when discussing their financial affairs; - Giving a substantial gift to a carer or other third party; - A sudden interest by a relative or other third party in the welfare of the person; - Bills remaining unpaid; - Complaints that personal property is missing;
- A decline in personal appearance that may indicate that diet and personal requirements are being ignored;
- Harm/Abuse outside the family home i.e. Exploitation, Peer on Peer Abuse, Serious Violence, Gang related etc.)

Those working with children, young people and adults must also consider risk and harm through a contextual safeguarding lens as well as the traditional family focused approach.

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, children’s, young people’s and adults’ experiences of harm beyond their families. It recognises that



different relationships are formed in their neighbourhoods, schools and online that can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of such abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Therefore, all practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence outside of the family home contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces, are a critical part of safeguarding practices.

Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of the safeguarding systems in recognition that people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts: their neighbourhoods, schools, parks, town centre.

Therefore, employees and volunteers working for/on behalf of MCTC are asked to think of abuse in the context of place, person (suspected to be of concern), premises (location) and to report it to the named Clinical Director, or in the case of Schools work for the project, the Designated Safeguard Lead in each school.

Should you wish to contact Wirral Gov in confidence, their safeguarding contact details are as follows:

Wirral Central Advice and Duty Team can be contacted in confidence:

- call 0151 606 2006, Monday to Friday 8:50am to 5:00pm
- call 0151 677 6557 all other times and on public holidays
- email: cadt@wirral.gov.uk