

# Citizens Advice Wandsworth safeguarding children policy



This is a standard BMIS policy

Reviewed May 2019, next scheduled for review May 2020.

**This policy should be kept alongside, and read with, CAW's Safeguarding procedure**

## Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to all paid staff and volunteers at Citizens Advice Wandsworth including senior managers and trustees. It also applies to anyone working on behalf of Citizens Advice Wandsworth.

## Why do we have a policy?

We have a policy to:

- protect children and young people who receive Citizens Advice Wandsworth services. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- detail what Citizens Advice Wandsworth will do to keep children safe and how we will deal with any concerns we have regarding a child's safety
- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to children's safeguarding and child protection

It's important we have a policy because in the course of their day-to-day work within Citizens Advice Wandsworth it's likely that staff and volunteers will come into contact with children. In some instances this will be incidental contact, for example when an adult client brings their children along to an advice appointment.

There may also be situations when staff and volunteers at Citizens Advice Wandsworth provides advice or services to clients who are children.

Citizens Advice Wandsworth aims to keep children safe and prevent them from harm. We are committed to:

- having sound recruitment practices
- ensuring all staff and volunteers have an understanding and awareness of children's safeguarding
- ensuring all staff and volunteers know how to raise safeguarding concerns and feel confident doing so

# Our legal and membership duties

It is a requirement of Citizens Advice membership that Citizens Advice Wandsworth acts within the relevant laws and regulations to safeguard clients from harm and abuse.

Although there are no specific mandatory regulations in the UK requiring staff and volunteers at Citizens Advice Wandsworth to report suspicions of child abuse to the authorities, there are some expectations that are set out in legislation and guidance.

Sections 11 and 12 of the [Children Act 2004](#) places a statutory duty on agencies to co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the introduction to the government guidance 'Working together to safeguard children' state that "Everyone who works with children - including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early years professionals, youth workers, police, Accident and Emergency staff, paediatricians, voluntary and community workers and social workers - has a responsibility for keeping them safe".

Other relevant legislation in relation to children's safeguarding includes:

- The Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice 0-25 years. This is statutory guidance for organisations that work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (HM Government 2014)

## Who is protected by this policy?

Safeguarding and child protection applies to all children and young people under the age of 18. This includes our clients and the children of our clients.

Citizens Advice Wandsworth recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse
- Some children are especially vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues

# What do we mean by safeguarding?

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 hardship. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

## What is child abuse?

Citizens Advice Wandsworth follows guidance on child safeguarding and child protection set out by the NSPCC, who are a leading child safety charity.

The NSPCC have extensive information on [child abuse, the different types of abuse and signs and symptoms of child abuse](#).

Below is a summary of the main types of child abuse. Further information on signs and symptoms of abuse can be found on the NSPCC website.

Type of Abuse	Detail of abuse
Domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can apply to different types of abuse that occur either in a relationship or between family members.</li><li>• Can also occur in teenage relationships</li><li>• If children witness domestic abuse this is considered child abuse</li></ul>
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can be physical but can also occur online</li><li>• Involves a child being forced, persuaded or coerced into taking part in sexual activities</li><li>• Can include being made to watch sexual acts or material</li></ul>
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where a child's needs are not met on an ongoing basis</li></ul>
Online abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abuse that occurs online and through social media</li></ul>
Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where a child is hurt or injured deliberately</li></ul>
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This can sometimes come under the heading psychological abuse</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It involves neglecting a child's emotional needs or mistreating a child emotionally</li> <li>● Can include verbal abuse, ignoring or belittling a child or frightening them</li> </ul>
Child sexual exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When a child is exploited sexually for gain. The gain could be financial, but it can also be for power or status</li> </ul>
Female genital mutilation (FGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The ritual removal of some or all of the female genitalia for non-medical reasons</li> </ul>
Bullying and cyberbullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can occur in a number of locations as well as online</li> <li>● Is normally ongoing for a long period of time</li> </ul>
Child trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children are trafficked by being recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, mistreated or sold</li> </ul>
Organisational abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can occur in various settings such as a hospital or care home</li> <li>● This type of abuse can be one-off incidents as well as ongoing patterns of abuse</li> </ul>
Grooming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can occur online and through social media as well as in real life</li> <li>● Abusers can be strangers or someone known to the child</li> <li>● The abuser works to gain the child's trust so that they can abuse or exploit them sexually</li> </ul>
Harmful sexual behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This includes when a child displays a range of sexual behaviour including inappropriate touching, the use of sexually explicit words or phrases, using sexual violence or threats, and sex with other children or adults</li> </ul>

The NSPCC identifies several situations of increased risk of harm:

- deaf or disabled children
- children affected by previous experiences, level of dependency, communication needs or other issues

## Radicalisation and safeguarding

If you are concerned about a child becoming radicalised, follow the stages in our safeguarding procedure. Citizens Advice Wandsworth does not have a statutory duty in this area but it's important to keep people safe.

The government has a counter-terrorism strategy that includes supporting vulnerable people to prevent them being drawn into terrorism. You can read [more detail on this strategy](#).

All staff and volunteers at Citizens Advice Wandsworth will be mindful of radicalisation and report any concerns using our safeguarding adult and children policies.

## Confidentiality and safeguarding

Confidentiality is one of the founding principles of Citizens Advice. It is important that our clients can trust us and know that the information they disclose to us is treated in confidence.

If a person aged under 18 is the client of Citizens Advice Wandsworth then the details of the advice given to them should remain confidential, even if their parent asks.

However, if an adviser has suspicions or has information disclosed to them about a child being abused, they have a responsibility to take action. The welfare of the child is paramount in these situations.

Where a member of staff or a volunteer has a suspicion that a child is being abused or has information disclosed to them alleging abuse, they should follow the steps in the safeguarding procedure.

Citizens Advice Wandsworth are legally required to report any incidents where a member of staff or a volunteer is disciplined or dismissed for inappropriate behaviour with or against a child.

## Screening of staff and volunteers

Advisers whose work is specifically targeted at children or working in premises such as schools, Sure Start and youth projects must obtain an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check and it is unlikely that any head teacher or centre manager will allow anyone from the local Citizens Advice onsite without prior screening.

The DBS has advised that it is extremely unlikely that any Citizens Advice role would be entitled to a 'Barred List check'.

For more information on screening and DBS checks speak to your manager or see the BMIS items: Disclosure and barring: Citizens Advice service policy and Getting a DBS check - the process.

It is not legally permissible to have enhanced checks on other staff in the local Citizens Advice. However, chief officers may choose to ask some staff to undergo a basic check.

Anyone with a conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult, whenever it was committed, is not considered suitable to work or volunteer within the service and must not be taken on by a local Citizens Advice. Any other convictions must be considered on an individual basis. See the separate BMIS item on ex-offenders.

# Training staff and volunteers

Thorough induction training will be provided to ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of good safeguarding practice alongside the service's core values and confidentiality. Staff and volunteers will be given regular supervision and have their training needs assessed.

Appropriate safeguarding training is available to all staff and volunteers. This may be in the form of:

- policy awareness sessions delivered internally
- briefing sessions by local authority or other relevant authority
- attendance at training arranged through partner agencies

## If a staff member or volunteer is removed from their role

If a staff member or volunteer is moved or dismissed from their role because of safeguarding concerns arising from their actions or inactions, Citizens Advice Wandsworth has responsibilities as a regulated activity provider to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service. Citizens Advice Wandsworth will follow the [guidance set out by the Disclosure and Barring Service](#).

## Developing new services

Any new services in development will take account of the need to safeguard children. This may be achieved by:

- risk assessment of proposed activities
- agreeing safeguarding measures with partner organisations including information sharing protocols
- seeking specialist advice, for example from the local safeguarding children board

## Appendix 1: Safeguarding behaviours for working with children

This awareness of safeguarding and child protection will be demonstrated through the following behaviour and actions:

- Staff will not look after children out of the sight of a parent or carer who is seeking advice.
- Staff will be aware that a person under the age of 18 is legally a child, even if they look and express themselves like an adult.

- Where possible, activities that involving a child working with an adult will take place in a room which can be easily observed by others. This needs to be balanced with client confidentiality.
- An adviser will always make their Advice Session Supervisor aware when a child is being interviewed alone.
- An adviser will never visit a child in their home unaccompanied. The adviser will ensure that a parent or guardian is present.
- Staff and volunteers will never transport a child in their car unless prior arrangements have been made or in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency, where this is appropriate.
- Citizens Advice Wandsworth will employ sound recruitment practices which aim to prevent anyone considered to be a risk to children from working within the service.
- Staff and volunteers will comply with the requirements of Citizens Advice DBS policy, and the appropriate level of DBS check will be completed for staff and volunteers where it is required.
- Staff and volunteers will take care not to make any comments which may be interpreted as sexual in nature, to a child.
- A child will never be allowed into a staff member's home.
- Staff and volunteers will not engage in any physical games with a child – apart from structured sports activities which may be part of a community event etc.
- Staff and volunteers will not engage in sexually provocative games.
- Staff and volunteers will not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- If a child is distressed, comfort will be offered with words rather than by touching them.
- The content of conversations will be professional and pertinent to the advice giving process.
- Staff and volunteers will not let allegations that a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Staff and volunteers will not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- Staff and volunteers will not take photographs of children.