

MADCAP

Child Protection Policy

MADCAP is committed to the principle that the welfare of children is paramount, and as such is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children entrusted to their care and protecting them where necessary.

MADCAP believes that every child regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. In our organisation, if we have suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional well being, we will take action.

Child Protection is the responsibility of every adult who has involvement with children.

1. Executive Summary

This child protection policy endorsed by MADCAP demonstrates the importance that the MADCAP places on the protection of children who participate in all levels of the Services and its member organisations. MADCAP is committed to ensuring that children are safe and that their experiences are enjoyable.

MADCAP is committed to implementing this Policy by:

- Disseminating appropriate child protection policy guidance to raise awareness of the issues and procedures with staff, volunteers, parents, and young people.
- Implementing sound recruitment procedures for new staff
- Promoting good practice to protect all people involved in the Service
- Encouraging all staff and volunteers to attend Child Protection training
- Implementing systems and procedures to deal with complains and allegations
- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and its impact on the Service
- Maintaining a positive profile for child protection work.

2. Definition

2.1 Child Protection

The intention of the Children's Act 1989 is to ensure that the welfare and development needs of children are met, including their need for protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The Human Rights Act 1998 gives the right for children and young people to express and have their views taken into account on any issues or decisions that affect them.

2.2 Child Abuse

“Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s), or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child)”

Reference “Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility.”

This is a very open definition that encourages us to be open minded and think about what child abuse is. For those working in the field of Child Protection the definition is broken down further into Categories of Abuse, namely:

Physical Injury: Any significant harm caused to the child, or the failure to prevent it.

Sexual Abuse: This is sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. This might be full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling. Showing children pornographic magazines or videos is also a form of sexual abuse.

Emotional Abuse: This is the severe emotional ill treatment or rejection of a child, which can lead to them suffering harm. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment, but emotional abuse can take place in isolation.

Physical Neglect: For example, the failure to protect the child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, which leads to a child suffering harm.
Non-organic Failure to Thrive (non-medical reason)

3. What are the signs of Abuse?

Below are a number of signs of abuse. However, they are only indications that abuse **might** have taken place. Most symptoms can have many reasonable explanations which account for them. However, if you do suspect abuse you must act.

3.1 Neglect

Physical Indicators

Loss of weight

Unattended medical needs

Persistent hunger

Self inflicted wounds

Inappropriate clothing

Behavioural Indicators

Tired or listless

Constantly asks for food

Frequently absent or late

Running away

Child seems happy with you, but not with parent.

3.2 Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

Unexplained bruises
(In various stages of healing)

Welts, human bite marks

Unexplained burns/immersion marks

Unexplained fractures

Lacerations or abrasions

Complaining of soreness

Behavioural Indicators

Changes in behaviour

Aggressive behaviour

Severe tantrums

A don't care attitude

Fear of returning home

Fear of one particular adult

3.3 Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

Soreness or bleeding in throat,
anal or genital areas

Frequent urine infections

Stomach pains for no medical reason

Isolated

Poor eating, nightmares

Behavioural Indicators

Frequent masturbation

Aggressive and inappropriate sex play

Withdrawal

Mistrustful of adults

Becomes hysterical when nappy changed or
other clothing removed

3.4 Emotional Abuse

There are unlikely to be physical symptoms of emotional abuse.

Behavioural Indicators

Lagging development

Sudden speech disorders

Has few friends

Seems out of control

Over reaction to mistakes

Extremes of passivity or aggression

Appears depressed

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Responsibilities

MADCAP will:

- Encourage all staff and volunteers within MADCAP to have up to date policies and checks.
- Accept the moral and legal responsibilities to endorse and implement procedures to provide a duty of care for young people, safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people and disabled adults
- Recruit, train and supervise its employees/volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect young people from abuse, and themselves against false allegations
- Require staff/volunteers to adopt and abide by the MADCAP Objectives, and the Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Treat everyone with respect
- Remember that some issues are confidential
- Ensure that all activities have more than one adult present or at least within sight and hearing of others.
- Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement a MADCAP disciplinary and appeals procedure

4.2 Principles

The guidance given in the child protection procedures is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of young people (the Children's Act 1989 defines a young person as under 18 years) and disabled adults is the primary concern.
- All young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

- It is the responsibility of child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns.
- All incidents of suspicious poor practice and allegations should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

4.3 Procedure

All volunteers and staff are encouraged to share concerns with the Trustee Board member who has agreed to monitor child protection issues. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or we have serious doubts about the child's safety, we will contact Social Work Services or Police immediately. If our concerns are more general about a child's welfare, then we will discuss these with our Trustee Board child protection monitor, who would then make a referral to Social Work who will make the arrangements. It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately. All volunteers and Staff will follow the procedures below:

- 1) Upon receipt of any information from a child or if suspicious, it is necessary to record what they have seen, heard or know accurately at the time the event occurs
- 2) Share their concerns with the monitor for the service and agree action to take.
- 3) Always REFER never INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse.

Both the local area Social Work Office and the Police Office telephone number are to be found in the telephone directory.

Social Work Office	01908 253 169	Emergency	01908 265 545
Police Station	01908 686 000	Emergency	999

Child protection policy approved by MADCAP Board of Trustees April 2004