



MASTER SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The following are all form part of the Family Friends Master Safeguarding Policy:

Section	Policy	Page
2.1	Child Protection Policy	2
2.2	Staff Check List for Child Protection Procedures	9
2.3	Child Protection Categories	10
2.4	Child Protection Guidelines	13
2.5	Incident Record Log	14
2.6	Incident Record Pro Forma Form	15
2.7	Possible Signs of Child Abuse - Warning Signs	17
2.8	Disclosures - Safeguarding Children (Information for Volunteers)	21
2.9	Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults - Information for Families	26
2.10	Adults at Risk Policy	26
2.11	Coronavirus policy	27
2.12	Contact Information and Useful Numbers	29
Addendum 1	a) Allegations against a child b) How we share this policy	33

Review Cycle:

This policy was last reviewed in **July 2024**.

It is reviewed at least annually or sooner if required by changes in law.

Staff update: **April 2025**

Next scheduled review: **July 2025**.



POLICY 2.1

Child Protection Policy

A. INTRODUCTION

Family Friends is required to comply with child protection legislation, as specified in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2024) 2024. We have a duty to report any concerns to Family and Children's Services, an agency that holds statutory responsibilities for the protection of children. Family and Children's Services has a duty under Sections 47 of the 1989 Children's Act to investigate wherever there is reason to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. At Family Friends we aim to meet child protection legislation by the following actions:

B. POLICY

1. All trustees, staff and volunteers involved with Family Friends must have a new enhanced DBS check carried out or be registered with the online DBS update service, and have the disclosure approved before they commence work with the charity. No volunteers (whether befrienders or mentors) will be placed until their enhanced DBS check has been approved.
2. All trustees, staff and volunteers must produce both a good professional and a personal reference before they commence work with Family Friends. If a prospective volunteer has worked with children in either a voluntary or professional capacity in the last 10 years then they must provide a reference from each organisation. The professional referee must be current or recent and have known them for at least six months. If a professional reference is not available, then three personal references are required (one of which must be a member of a professional body (e.g. medical professional, solicitor, JP, teacher)).
3. For reference and police checking purposes we follow a recruitment policy laid out in our Policy 17 Volunteer Recruitment Policy Flow Chart (including 17.1 Criminal Convictions and 17.2 Length of Time in UK Flow Charts).
4. Services staff at Family Friends must attend regular local borough child protection training (on commencement of work at Family Friends and thereafter every three years). Trustees undertake volunteer training



POLICY 2

provided by Family Friends and must undertake Family Friends or local borough safeguarding training. One trustee shall be appointed as the trustee safeguarding lead (Ros Bowles) who will be required to undertake an appropriate level of safeguarding training.

5. Before recruitment, services staff must demonstrate adequate experience to be working with families and children at Family Friends.
6. It is obligatory that all volunteers recruited by Family Friends must complete the Family Friends volunteer training course before working with a family. Child protection procedures are taught on the volunteer training course. Volunteers are given handouts (including this policy), summarising child protection categories and necessary action if issues arise (handouts are attached here).
7. Family Friends operates a thorough supervision procedure. Office staff supervise volunteers after their weekly visits via telephone or email. Volunteers may be asked to visit the office for one-to-one supervision. Volunteers are encouraged to attend support group meetings. The Co-ordinators and Chief Executive meet weekly to discuss individual cases. However urgent issues or concerns may be discussed outside those meetings.
8. All Volunteers trained volunteers are asked to attend a mandatory x4 sessions a year to keep up to date with their learning and for Family Friends to ensure that their skills are complimentary to our families needs.
9. Prior to commencement of the service all users, children and parents, are informed that any child protection concerns will be reported and also that they should feedback to the office if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer.
10. Volunteers are not required to assess or monitor families, but they must follow the Child Protection Guidelines set out in Policy 2.4 and report any issues or concerns to Family Friends staff immediately. If, during contact with a family, a volunteer has reason to suspect that a child has been or is at risk of being harmed then, in the absence of suitable staff at Family Friends, volunteers can call the NSPCC helpline, or the Duty Officer at Family and Children's Services (emergency only) for advice (see section C of this Policy 2.1).
11. If child protection issues arise, Family Friends' staff will immediately report them to the relevant Family and Children's Services department. If appropriate, e.g. not putting the child at further risk of harm, they will



POLICY 2

do this with the family's permission in accordance with the charity's confidentiality policy.

12. The Family Friends Incident Record Log Policy 2.5 (online) is filled out in conjunction with the Family Friends Incident Record (online) Pro Forma Form AND on occasion when an Incident Record Pro Forma Form is not felt necessary BUT when there are 'concerns' about a child's welfare. If three 'concerns' are logged per family or per individual then Family Friends will consider seeking advice from Family and Children's Services as to whether a referral is appropriate.

"Concerns" are defined by Family Friends as worries about a child's emotional and physical wellbeing where the child is not thought to be at risk of immediate or significant harm but their ability to reach the Every Child Matters outcomes is impaired.

"Incidents" are defined by Family Friends where a child or adult is put at risk of immediate or significant harm.

13. An Incident Record Form Policy for incidents of child protection is filled out by staff at the office after a child protection incident has been disclosed. This is kept electronically on the Family Friends server.
14. The designated staff member to whom child protection issues and concerns should be referred are Bragela Hornal (Operations Manager). If designated staff are unavailable or if someone is unsatisfied with their response, issues and concerns should be addressed to Mel Christodoulou (Chief Executive) at the Family Friends office. Bragela Hornal is the Safeguarding Lead. All child protection issues are reported to and addressed by Bragela Hornal. Bragela Hornal reports all child protection issues and concerns to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive reports necessary issues and concerns to the trustees.
15. Volunteers may only take a child from the family out of the home without the parent present where that child is between the age of 10-16 year and the parent has signed a consent form. Volunteers cannot take out (a) any child unless he/she is expressly specified on the consent form and (b) any child under the age of five. Volunteers may not be left in the home with responsibility for any child with the exception being where they have a consent form for the child and where an emergency necessitates it.
16. At the home visit and subsequent assessment visits, staff assess any issues that might put the child at risk during the befriending process or



POLICY 2

visits outside the home – e.g. allergies of children/medication. Staff discuss how these might be accommodated with the parent, volunteer and child/ren. Staff conduct an additional risk assessment for volunteers taking children out of the home where more than two siblings are to be supported via the Child Mentoring scheme.

17. Volunteers receive training and information on maintaining the safety of children during visits. This includes information on road safety, cooking and appropriate behavior with children.
18. Staff record volunteer and user feedback on a computer log. This allows staff to monitor the progress of the visits and also to review any issues or concerns regarding child protection issues that might have come up from previous visits. The computer is locked with a password in accordance with Family Friends procedures to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.
19. Family Friends has a Code of Conduct for its volunteers. This is made available to service users at the introduction to volunteers so that they can contact the office should any concerns about a volunteer arise.

Family Friends takes very seriously any concerns about the conduct of volunteers, staff or trustees by service users or their parents/guardians. Staff, volunteers and trustees have a duty to report any such concerns should a child disclose that they or another child have been abused or are at risk of harm then reference should be made to advice given in 'Disclosures – Safeguarding Children – Information for Volunteers (Policy 2.8 part of the Master Child Protection Policy).

C. PROCEDURES FOR STAFF/TRUSTEES/VOLUNTEERS/SERVICE USERS IN THE CASE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

If, during contact with a family, Family Friends has reason to suspect that a child has been or is at risk of harm, the Family Friends Staff Checklist for Child Protection Procedures (Policy 2.2) is likely to apply and:

1. Volunteers will inform the designated services staff member at Family Friends at the earliest opportunity.
2. Upon receipt of a child protection concern, staff have the following options:



POLICY 2

- i) Discuss the concern with the Duty Officer or allocated social worker at Family and Children’s Services and make a referral.
 - ii) Discuss the concern, keeping the family’s details confidential, with the local Family Support and Child Protection Adviser, police if an emergency or with the NSPCC. Staff will act on their recommendations.
 - iii) Store a record of the concern (complete Incident Record Log) electronically on the Family Friends hard drive in the folder for that family and monitor and review it on a regular basis.
3. In the absence of suitable staff at Family Friends, volunteers can call the NSPCC helpline, or the Duty Officer at Family and Children’s Services (emergency only) for advice (see contact details below).
 4. Staff and/or volunteers must immediately write an accurate record of their observations on the pro-forma form including any statement made by the child or parent. This record must be signed and dated. Any records that relate to referred cases must be received by Family and Children’s Services within 48 hours of the concern being observed and a receipt/acknowledgement must be received from Family and Children’s Social Services.
 5. Service users or their parents/guardians should contact their designated Family Friends coordinator should they have any concerns that relate to the conduct of a Family Friends volunteer.
 6. Service users or their parents/guardians should contact Mel Christodoulou (Chief Executive) should they have any concerns that relate to the conduct of a Family Friends staff member or trustee.
 7. Staff, volunteers and trustees should immediately report any concerns about a staff member, volunteer or trustee, to the designated staff member(s) or Chief Executive. Allegations should be fully recorded and will be taken seriously.

Useful Telephone Numbers

FAMILY FRIENDS OFFICE	020 4568 8832
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 11 11
FAMILY & CHILDREN’S SERVICES	



POLICY 2

Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Social Services Line 020 7361 3013
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Out of Hours 020 7373 2227
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Family Support Service 020 8753 6600
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Out of Hours 020 8748 8588
London Borough of Brent Social Services Line 020 8937 4300
London Borough of Brent Emergency Duty Team 020 8863 5250

POLICE

Non-emergency (to be put through to your local police station) 101
Emergency 999

POLICY 2.2

Staff Checklist for Child Protection Procedures

If Family Friends becomes aware of a family situation or series of situations which may put a child at risk, Family Friends' staff are legally obliged to report the incident to Family and Children's Social Services/ Police. The Child Protection Policy must be considered and the following staff procedures are recommended:

1. If appropriate, e.g. not putting the child further at risk, inform the family that Family and Children's Social Services/Police will be notified (depending on the level of emergency).
2. Inform Family and Children's Social Services/Police.
3. If appropriate, e.g. not putting the child further at risk, inform the family that Family Friends has spoken to Family and Children's Social Services/Police. Offer to accompany the family to any meetings with statutory services.
4. Inform the volunteer of events.
5. Where the volunteer may be in any danger or may feel uncomfortable visiting the family in the home:
 - i) Ask the volunteer if he/she wishes to continue supporting the family outside the home and ensure the volunteer feels safe and comfortable;
 - ii) Inform both the family and volunteer that visits will need to take place outside of the home until further notice. The volunteer may not pick the family up from the home;



POLICY 2

- iii) Suggest that the volunteer offers telephone support if the family is unable to meet the volunteer;
- iv) Inform the volunteer about further developments;
- v) Offer support from the office to families where the volunteer is withdrawn or does not wish to visit.

6. Record all major events on the Child/Vulnerable Adult Incident Record Pro Forma Form and in the Family Friends Incident Record Log for that family which is stored electronically on the hard drive in the folder for that family.

Family Friends has the right to immediately withdraw support from any family where Family Friends do not feel it is appropriate/safe for the support to continue.

POLICY 2.3

Training Handout

Child Protection Categories

Family Friends has a responsibility to inform volunteers about child protection issues, but we would stress that these situations are rare in the families we take on (our guidelines state that we reserve the right not to work in families where there is active substance/alcohol abuse or domestic violence, severe mental health problems or personality disorders, a child under five with a child protection plan or a child who has a child protection plan for physical or sexual abuse (in the home)).

As a voluntary organisation, Family Friends has a duty to inform Family & Children's services if we have any child protection concerns, and so it is important that volunteers feedback to Family Friends staff if worried. As a volunteer you are not responsible for 'assessing' a family or 'investigating' a child/family.

To have a child protection plan, a child must be at risk from significant harm in one or more categories. The four main categories of abuse are as follows:

1. Physical Abuse

If a child is deliberately hurt causing physical harm such as cuts, bruises, broken bones or other injuries, this would be considered a form of physical abuse. Physical abuse 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



POLICY 2

fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also child abuse and it is against the law. This form of abuse may be more common in some cultures than others.

2. Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse is 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 children 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 the 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, including witnessing abuse. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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.

4. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves persuading, forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, or encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, 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 penetrative (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, witnessing sexual activities, sharing indecent images of children, paying for sexual services of a child, encouraging child prostitution or pornography, 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.

5. Neglect



POLICY 2

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic and essential 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, shelter and clothing (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

POLICY 2.4

Child Protection Guidelines

1. If you are worried about a child's behaviour or injuries but the child may not have said anything to suggest they have been abused, you should:
 - Be approachable, available and prepared to listen.
 - Discuss your concerns with a member of staff.
 - Not rely on someone else to take action – it is the legal responsibility of all adults to report a Child Protection concern.
2. In many proven cases of child abuse, it is often the case that people or individual agencies who have had contact with the victim have held suspicions for some time and not acted on them. Occasionally, this reticence had resulted in a tragedy that could have been avoided.
3. You should remember that once you have reported your suspicions, many other checks will take place by professionals trained in identifying child abuse. The authorities will not blame you if your suspicions are groundless, or be annoyed that you have wasted their time – they would far rather be alerted unnecessarily than to not protect a child who was being abused.
4. If a child is not in immediate danger, call Family Friends staff within office hours. If the child is in immediate danger call Family and Children's Social Services, NSPCC or the Police (telephone numbers in the handbook).

POLICY 2.5

Family Friends Incident Record Log



POLICY 2

To be filled out in conjunction with the Family Friends Incident Record Pro Forma Form AND on occasion when an Incident Record Pro Forma Form is not felt necessary BUT when there are 'concerns' about a child's welfare. If three 'concerns' are logged per family or per individual then Family Friends will consider seeking advice from Family Services as to whether a referral is appropriate.

Concerns are defined by Family Friends as worries about the emotional and physical wellbeing of a child or adult where the child or adult is not thought to be at risk of immediate or significant harm but their ability to reach the Every Child Matters (if concerning a child) outcomes is impaired.

Name of Staff member	Date 'Incident' or 'Concern' logged by Staff member	Is this an 'Incident' or a 'Concern' ?	Was an Incident Record Form completed? Y/N if Yes include form ref number	Nature of Concern. Please give details.	Is this the 1 st , 2 nd or 3 rd concern logged ?	Family Services advice sought Y/N	Referral to Family Services made Y/N

POLICY 2.6

FAMILY FRIENDS INCIDENT RECORD PRO-FORMA FORM



POLICY 2

Your Name:..... Your Position:.....
Organisation:..... Contact Number:.....
Date form completed.....
Child's name:..... D.O.B.:..... Sex: M - F
Child's address:..... Parent/Carer's address:.....
.....
.....
.....
Ethnic Background:..... Disability:.....
Time and date of any incident:.....
Location:.....
Details of incident:.....
.....
.....
Action taken so far:.....
.....

External Agencies Contacted:

Name:.....	Name:.....
Organisation:.....	Organisation:.....
Contact Number:.....	Contact Number:.....
Time and date:.....	Time and Date:.....



Signature:..... Print name:.....

Last updates by staff July 2023

POLICY 2.7

Possible Signs of Child Abuse – Warning Signs

1. PHYSICAL ABUSE

1.1 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),
- Cigarette burns,
- Bite marks,
- Broken bones,
- Scalds,
- Injuries which have not received medical attention,
- Neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care,
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains.

1.2 Changes in behaviour which can also 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.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the parent or carer offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury; parent uses

harsh physical discipline; parent has a history of abuse as a child; describes the child in a negative way such as 'evil'.

2. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

2.1 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.

2.2 Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias,
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration,
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults,
- Being unable to play,
- Attention seeking behaviour,
- Fear of making mistakes,
- Self-harm,
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.

Consider the possibility of emotional abuse when the parent or carer constantly blames, belittles or berates the child; is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems; overtly rejects the child.

3. SEXUAL ABUSE

3.1 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.

3.2 Changes in behaviour which can also 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 their 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,
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money,
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence),
- Acting in a sexually explicit way with adults.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the parent or carer is unduly protective of the child; severely limits the child's contact with children especially of the opposite sex; is secret and isolated; is jealous or controlling with family members.

4. NEGLECT

4.1 Physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children,
- Constantly dirty or smelly,
- Untreated health problems or immunizations e.g. dental,
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight,
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions,
- Failure of child to reach reasonable milestones.

4.2 Environmental signs of neglect may include:

- Consistent dirty and untidy home e.g bedclothes,
- Dangerous items exposed to children/vulnerable adults,
- Lack of basic furniture, furnishings or household essentials that effects living conditions e.g fridge, bed,
- Lack of provision to provide adequate heating, electricity, gas, water.



4.3 Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time,
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments,
- Having few friends,
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised,
- Frequent absences from school or nursery or failure to engage with supporting services when recommended by professionals,
- Parents misuse of drugs and or alcohol.

Consider the possibility of neglect when the parent or carer appears to be indifferent to the child; seems apathetic or depressed; behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner; misuses drugs and or alcohol.

The lists above do not include every sign of abuse, there may be other things you notice. If you have a concern always bring this to the attention of your Coordinator.

POLICY 2.8

**Disclosures- Safeguarding children
(Information for volunteers)**

1. GENERAL

1.1 London Safeguarding Children's Board define a child as someone under the age of 18.

1.2 If you are worried about a child's behaviour or injuries but the child may not have said anything to suggest they have been abused, you should:

- Be approachable, available and prepared to listen.



POLICY 2

- Discuss your concerns with a member of staff.
 - Not rely on someone else to take action – it is the legal responsibility of all adults to report a Child Protection concern.
- 1.3 In many proven cases of child abuse, it is often the case that people or individual agencies that have had contact with the victim have held suspicions for some time and not acted on them. Occasionally, this reticence had resulted in a tragedy that could have been avoided.
- 1.4 You should remember that once you have reported your suspicions, many other checks will take place by professionals trained in identifying child abuse. The authorities will not blame you if your suspicions are groundless, or be annoyed that you have wasted their time – they would far rather be alerted unnecessarily than to not protect a child who was being abused.
- 1.5 If a child is not in immediate danger, call Family Friends and speak to your co-ordinator or another co-ordinator within office hours. If the child is in immediate danger call Family & Children’s Services, the police or, NSPCC helpline for advice (telephone numbers in the handbook).
- 1.6 There may be an occasion where a child discloses something to you that you have concerns about. This is called a Child Protection Concern.
- 1.7 This would include any situation where you felt the child, or another child was at risk of harm from someone or themselves, either inside or outside the home.
- 1.8 As this can be a very difficult experience for you and the child, we have developed this guidance to help you to deal with such a situation. This should be read in conjunction with the rest of the Family Friends Child Safeguarding Policy , especially the section marked Procedures for Staff/Trustees/Volunteers/Service Users in case of suspected abuse.

2. DURING THE DISCLOSURE

Here are some examples of situations that may occur within a disclosure and how to deal with them:

- 2.1 Child asks you to keep a secret for them.



POLICY 2

- The child asks you to keep a secret for them. It could be that their friend cheated on a test, or they have got a surprise for their mum's birthday. However, it could be something more concerning.
- Because of this, if a child asks you to keep a secret you must explain to them that although the things they tell you in your visits are generally just between them and Family Friends, if they tell you anything that you think puts them or another child/young person in danger, or that someone has been harming them, then you will have to tell a member of staff in the office.
- If your child wants to know why you have to call the member of staff, you should explain that we want to make sure that all of the children in Family Friends are safe, and the staff are trained to deal with safeguarding concerns. The staff will then talk with their parent/carer if considered suitable and then forward these concerns onto the relevant body.

Your child can then make the decision whether they want to tell you or not. If they decide not to, then don't push the matter, but reassure them that you are there to talk to if they change their minds. You can also give them the number for Childline 0800 11 11.

2.2 A child discloses that they are being harmed or hurt

- Do reassure them that it was a good thing to tell you.
- Remind them that you can't keep the information confidential.
- Do not say anything that passes judgement on them or the abuser.
- Don't ask leading questions, for example, if your child/young person says "He is always hitting me", don't say "who? Your father?" but instead, ask an open question such as "who is always hitting you?".
- Let them know that the member of staff will notify their parent/ carer before making a referral to Family Services unless to do so might contribute to placing the child at risk of significant harm, or jeopardise any subsequent police/Family Services investigation.
- Although it is better to have the consent of the child before contacting a member of staff this can be overruled if the child is unwilling to be involved letting the office know.

3. IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS



3.1 During office hours:

(a) Call a member of the Services Team

As you would have explained to the child, it's important to call a member of staff straight away if you are visiting within office hours. It is preferable to call the office during the visit. That way, the child can hear everything that you are saying to the member of staff and correct you if they need to. Everything that the child has told you will need to be written down as soon as possible. If appropriate, you can do this with your child. By doing this you can clarify points without being leading, such as asking "You said 'he hit me', who's he?"

(b) Once you have spoken to the Services Team

- A member of staff will give you instructions as to what to do with your child/young person, whether to take them to the police or Family & Children's Services, or whether you should take the child to their home.
- Do continue to reassure the child throughout the process.
- Do not make any promises about being able to make things better, or that we can fix the situation, as this may not be within our control.
- Do not pass judgement on the accused person in front of the child, as it is probable that they will have a close relationship with this person, and may not want to hear it, even if they are being harmed.
- If you are taking the child back home, do not mention the disclosure to the parent/carer, as it will be a very delicate situation. The staff are trained to deal with these situations, and they will speak to the parents as soon as it is deemed appropriate.

3.2 Unable to contact a member of staff:

If you feel that the child is in immediate danger you can call the Police, NSPCC helpline or the Duty Officer at Family and Children's Services for advice. Phone numbers in your training folder and also in the Child Protection Policy.

4. AFTER THE DISCLOSURE



POLICY 2

- 4.1 After the disclosure you may be feeling emotional and want to talk to someone. This is normal.
- 4.2 The Services Team is on hand to talk to you about your feelings. We want to support the family and you through this experience. The organisation will aim to keep you as informed of what is happening as much as is possible, although some information may be confidential, and it may not be possible to provide you with all of the details.

5. WHAT HAPPENS - OVERVIEW

Disclosure

You give Reassurance

You write up notes

In office hours

Out of office hours

You call the office who advise

6.0 CONTINUING THE RELATIONSHIP

- 6.1 In some situations, after a disclosure, it may not be possible for you to continue your relationship with the child.



POLICY 2

- 6.2 If there is a court case as a result of the disclosure, you will be given advice as to how to proceed with the relationship from a member of the Services Team.
- 6.3 Children will often disclose something to someone who they completely trust, so be proud that your relationship has made such a positive impact on their lives, and can help them in such a profound way.

POLICY 2.9

Safeguarding children and Adults at Risk - information for families

1. Every child and adult has a right to feel safe and protected, and Family Friends is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for the families we work with.
2. We will take all reasonable steps to keep families who use our services safe from harm. We are an equal opportunities organisation and do not discriminate on issues such as race, gender, ability etc.
3. To ensure that children using our services are protected we have:
 - Robust recruitment procedures, including vetting of all staff and volunteers.
 - Developed a Child Safeguarding Policy and made all staff and volunteers aware of it.
 - Implemented a training programme for staff and volunteers to ensure they know their responsibilities under our policies and best practice.
 - A complaints procedure for reporting concerns that are raised either by family members, volunteers or staff.
 - Scheduled regular reviews of our Child and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policies.
4. **It is all of our responsibilities by law to protect children and Adults at Risk from harm. Family Friends has a duty to inform the Local Authority if we have any concerns about a child or Adults at Risk, and so volunteers are required to feedback to Family Friends staff if worried.**
5. Organisations working with children and families use the following terms when talking about the most common types of abuse:
 - (a) Physical abuse: this is usually the use of force to cause pain and injury. Signs such as burns, bruising, scratches, accidents which cannot be explained, are common signs of abuse.



POLICY 2

- (b) Neglect: a child or Adults at Risk may not have their basic needs met, such as feeding, help with personal hygiene. As a result there may be a deterioration of health, or in a person's appearance or mood.
- (c) Financial abuse: this is when a Adults at Risk is exploited for financial gain. Often valuables will go missing in the home or there may be a change in the financial circumstances of the adult which cannot be explained.
- (d) Sexual abuse: these are sexual acts which the child or Adults at Risk has not or could not consent to and/or was pressurised or manipulated into consent. Signs may be changes in behaviour or physical discomfort.
- (e) Psychological or Emotional abuse: this can be emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, coercion, harassment, blaming or controlling behaviour, verbal or racial abuse or enforced isolation. Signs may be fear, confusion or disturbed sleep.
- (f) This list does not include everything, there are other types of abuse including domestic abuse, organisational abuse, discriminatory abuse and modern slavery.

If you feel someone is showing signs of abuse,

Please refer the matter to Family Friends on 0204 568 8832

For independent advice you can also contact the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000,

Don't ignore your concerns, though. That could allow any abuse to carry on.

POLICY 2.10

Adults at Risk - Policy and Practice

1. Adults at Risk is defined as a person who: "may be in need of services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness: and who may not be able to take care of him or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."
2. This may include a person who:



POLICY 2

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental disorder including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

3. Statement of Intent

- 3.1 Family Friends is committed to working in a way that protects Adults at Risk from harm. We accept our responsibilities to safeguard the wellbeing of all those with whom we work.
- 3.2 We will exercise our duty of care through raising awareness of situations that cause harm and will follow recommended practice to reduce risk to Adults at Risk.
- 3.3 A member of staff, (Bragela Hornal, Operations Manager), has been appointed to ensure that everyone in the organisation is aware of this policy and set of guidelines and that they are followed.
- 3.4 The policy will be reviewed by the trustees every three years.

4. Selecting Staff and Volunteers

We follow carefully agreed procedures for the appointment of any trustees, staff or volunteers who will have regular contact with Adults at Risk.

- a) Each person who has regular contact with Adults at Risk in the course of our activities completes a volunteer agreement form which outlines their duty to report concerns.
- b) We interview each person to assess their suitability.
- c) We require either one satisfactory professional reference who has known the candidate for at least six months, and one satisfactory personal reference who has known the candidate for two years. If no professional reference is available we will accept three satisfactory personal references, one of which must belong to a professional body. If a prospective volunteer has worked with children in either a



POLICY 2

voluntary or professional capacity in the last 10 years we require a reference from each organisation.

- d) We request an enhanced DBS check for each person who is likely to have regular contact with Adults at Risk in the course of our activities.
- e) No person will be allowed to work alone with Adults at Risk until the DBS check has been satisfactorily completed.
- f) We review the roles of all staff and volunteers at regular intervals.

5. Support and Training

We provide appropriate support, guidance and training for committee members, staff and volunteers.

- a) We give all trustees, staff and volunteers clearly defined roles.
- b) We give all trustees, staff and volunteers information and training as appropriate on the prevention of abuse of Adults at Risk.
- c) We have disciplinary and grievance procedures to deal with complaints and incidents involving trustees, staff and volunteers in connection with the treatment of Adults at Risk.
- d) We have a code of conduct for all our trustees, staff and volunteers.
- e) We give guidance on how to deal with allegations and suspicions of abuse.
- f) We make sure that all staff and volunteers receive regular support and supervision.

6. Involving Service Users

We inform our service users and their families of our policies and procedures regarding the protection of Adults at Risk. We encourage feedback on the activities we provide and how they can be improved.

- a) We provide information as required, which clearly states what abuse is; suitable help-lines and how Family Friends will deal with concerns and allegations.
- b) We inform everyone of whom they can talk to within Family Friends if they have concerns or suspect that abuse is occurring.
- c) One trustee on the board has previously been a recipient of services provided by Family Friends.
- d) We schedule assessments in the homes of service users at regular intervals throughout the programme.

7. Raising Concerns



POLICY 2

We deal with concerns and allegations of abuse sensitively and quickly. Where appropriate, we will share information about concerns with the relevant agencies and involve service users and their families.

- a) Procedures to be followed are detailed in the Child Protection Policy and apply equally to concerns and allegations involving Adults at Risk.

8. Types of abuse

The most common types of abuse are:

- (a) Physical abuse: this is usually the use of force to cause pain and injury, including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions. Signs such as burns, bruising, scratches, accidents which cannot be explained, are common signs of abuse.
- (b) Neglect: This may include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health care and support, the withholding of necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition, heating and help with personal hygiene.. As a result there may be a deterioration of health, or in a person's appearance or mood. Also be aware of self-neglect, covering neglect to one's personal hygiene, health or surrounding and includes behaviour such as hoarding.
- (c) Financial abuse: this is when a Adults at Riskis exploited for financial gain, including theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adults financial transactions or the use of misappropriate of property, possessions or benefits. Often valuables will go missing in the home or there may be a change in the financial circumstances of the adult which cannot be explained.
- (d) Sexual abuse: these are sexual acts which the vulnerable adult has not or could not consent to and/or was pressurised or manipulated into consent. Signs may be changes in behaviour or physical discomfort.
- (e) Psychological abuse: this can be emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming,

controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services of supportive networks. Signs may be fear, confusion or disturbed sleep.

This list does not include everything, there are many other types of abuse, including domestic abuse, organisational abuse, discriminatory abuse, and modern slavery.

9. Signs of abuse

9.1 It's not always easy to spot the signs of abuse. Someone being abused may make excuses for why they're bruised, they don't want to go out or talk to people, or they're short of money. It's important to know the signs of abuse. Then you can gently share your concerns with the person being abused. If you wait, hoping the person will tell you what's been happening to them, you could delay matters and allow the abuse to continue.

9.2 Behaviour signs to watch out for include:

- becoming quiet and withdrawn,
- being aggressive or angry for no obvious reason,
- looking unkempt, dirty or thinner than usual,
- sudden changes in their normal character, such as appearing helpless, depressed or tearful,
- physical signs of abuse, such as bruises, wounds, fractures and other untreated injuries,
- the same injuries happening more than once,
- not wanting to be left on their own or alone with particular people, and
- being unusually light-hearted and insisting there's nothing wrong.

9.3 There are also material signs to watch out for, such as a sudden change in their finances, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings, or getting into debt. Watch out for any official or financial documents that seem unusual, and for documents relating to their finances that suddenly go missing.

If you feel someone is showing signs of abuse, refer the matter to Bragela Hornal, Operations Manager at Family Friends.

You may also be able to talk to the person to see if there's anything you can do to help. If they're being abused they may not want to talk about it straight away, especially if they've become used to making excuses for their injuries or change in personality.



Don't ignore your concerns, though. That could allow any abuse to carry on.

POLICY 2.11

Safeguarding update during the Coronavirus Outbreak

1. Family Friends recognises that the organisation has an important role in supporting service users (families) during the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff and volunteers should exercise their best efforts to provide the safest care and support for families.
2. Staff and volunteers should always operate within their competence and raise any concerns with their coordinator or manager.
3. Staff and volunteers receive training on social distancing and risk management for visits.
4. Family members will also be briefed on the requirement for social distancing and hand hygiene during visits. Appropriate behaviour during video calls is set out in the Family Agreement.
5. Until government restrictions are revised, home visits will not take place unless we are confident that social distancing can be maintained.
6. A risk assessment will take place taking account of
 - the purpose of the visit
 - how challenging this could be for the people involved
 - what impact it might have on the safety of others
 - what information can be ascertained in advance
 - what is known about the health status of everyone in the household or location where the visit will take place
 - what is known about available space in the house or location
 - whether anyone likely to be present has symptoms or a diagnosis of COVID-19
 - whether anyone in the household meets the criteria for shielding



POLICY 2

- has the household understood the importance of infection control, social distancing and the purpose of the visit
 - how the people being visited want the visit to be managed.
- 7.** Where a volunteer or staff member meets a family member outside of the home, they should ensure that they follow social distancing and public health guidelines. They will verify whether anyone in a family household or the household of the staff member or volunteer has symptoms of COVID-19 or is self-isolating, before meeting. The family, volunteer or staff will inform the office if they or anyone in their family household has symptoms of COVID-19 or self-isolating. They will carry out a risk assessment prior to the visit to ensure that social distancing is possible, and the risk of transmission is low. Masks and gel will be carried at all times. Family members will also be asked to carry masks and gel and to ensure social distancing. Staff will record this information.
 - 8.** Family Friends trains volunteers and staff in best practice guidance on conducting video calls and virtual home visits. This includes a checklist to help participants prepare for video calls.
 - 9.** Timely information sharing is particularly important in the current circumstances. Volunteers, staff and families should continue to share information to keep children and adults safe from harm.



POLICY 2.12

Contact Information and Useful Numbers

Useful Telephone Numbers

FAMILY FRIENDS OFFICE	0204 568 8832
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 11 11
FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES	
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Social Services Line	020 7361 3013
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Out of Hours	020 7373 2227
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Family Support Service	020 8753 6600
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Out of Hours	020 8748 8588
London Borough of Brent Social Services Line	020 8937 4300
London Borough of Brent Emergency Duty Team	020 8863 5250

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Contact – RBKC

The LADO for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea:

- RBKC Duty Line: 020 7361 3013 (marked as the designated LADO contact line)

- Email: KCLADO.Enquiries@rbkc.gov.uk

POLICE

Non-emergency (to be put through to your local police station) 101
Emergency 999



POLICY 2

Last updated July 2024

Next review date July 2025



POLICY 2

Legal Framework

This safeguarding policy aligns with the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR



POLICY 2

Review Cycle

This policy was last reviewed in **July 2024**.

It is reviewed at least annually or sooner if required by changes in law.

Staff update: **April 2025**

Next scheduled review: **July 2025**.



Addendum 1.

a. Allegations Against a Child

Where a safeguarding concern or allegation involves a child harming another child:

- The concern should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The same child protection procedures apply as with adults.
- The DSL will assess the risk and may consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Parents/carers will be informed unless doing so would place a child at further risk.
- Risk assessments and safety plans will be created if children remain in contact.

b. How We Share This Policy

We ensure all stakeholders are aware of our safeguarding policy through:

- Volunteer induction and training sessions
- Staff onboarding and team briefings
- Family welcome materials
- Child-friendly Easy Read and visual versions
- Regular updates and accessible formats available upon request