



You and Me Counselling

Adult Safeguarding and Protection Policy You and Me Counselling

1. Policy Statement

You and Me Counselling aims to improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families in North East London through counselling, psychotherapy and peer support. We take a holistic approach, working with young people, their families and their support networks, to tackle the root causes of psychological distress through counselling, group therapy, and training. We have a separate policy for Child Safeguarding and Protection.

This safeguarding policy will enable You and Me Counselling to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe adults at risk with whom it works alongside. You and Me Counselling acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

It is important to have policy and procedures in place so that all Trustees, managers, staff, volunteers, service users and carers can work to prevent abuse and know what to do should a concern arise. It is also important that the funders, partners and commissioners we work with have confidence that You and Me Counselling takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously and are aware of our policy and how we are implementing it.

We also recognise we have responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

The policy and procedures have been drawn up in order to enable You and Me Counselling to:

- promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm and abuse occurring;
- ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported; and
- stop abuse or neglect occurring wherever possible
- prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs;
- promote the wellbeing of the adult(s) at risk in safeguarding adults arrangements;
- safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live;
- promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned;
- raise awareness of safeguarding adults to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect;
- provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult; and
- where incidents of abuse or neglect are identified, address what caused the abuse or neglect where possible.

Designated	Name: Elizabeth Dickinson
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Safeguarding Lead:	Contact No: 07485374868 Contact Email: Elizabeth.Dickinson@youandmecounselling.org.uk
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Bolaji Olagunju Contact No: 01708 477663 Contact Email: Bolaji.Olagunju@youandmecounselling.org.uk

2. Definition of adults at risk

The policy and procedures relate to the safeguarding of **adults at risk**. An adult at risk is defined as an individual aged over 18 who:

- has needs for care and support;
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

(Care Act, 2014)

3. Definition of abuse

We recognise that the abuse of adults may take many forms. These include:

- physical abuse
- material or financial abuse
- psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect
- discriminatory abuse
- self-harm
- inhuman or degrading treatment
- inappropriate or excessive restraint and other forms of organisational abuse.

4. Scope of policy

The policy applies to all Trustees, managers, staff, volunteers, service users and carers and anyone working on behalf of You and Me Counselling.

In addition to this policy and procedure, You and Me Counselling has a framework of policies which are designed to ensure emotional and physical safety of service users, staff, subcontractors and volunteers, including our:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Lone Working Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy



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- Equal Opportunities Policy

You and Me Counselling will:

- ensure that all Trustees, managers, staff, volunteers, service users and carers are familiar with this policy and associated procedures;
- work with other agencies within the framework of the Care Act 2014 statutory guidance;
- act within its confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from service users before sharing information about them with another agency.
- pass information to the relevant Authority/Authorities when more than one person is at risk. For example: if the concern relates to a worker, volunteer or organisation who provides a service to adults with care and support needs or children;
- inform service users that where a person is in danger, an adult is at risk or a crime has been committed then a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency without the service user's consent;
- make a safeguarding adults referral to the Local Authority as appropriate;
- endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of adults;
- will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Bolaji Olagunju, understands her responsibilities to refer incidents of adult abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Local Authority).

5. Role of Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead

The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to:

- ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that an adult at risk may be experiencing, or has experienced abuse or neglect;
- escalate any reported incidents of abuse or neglect to Trustees;
- ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred to the relevant authorities where necessary;
- follow up any safeguarding adults referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed;
- manage and have oversight over individual complex cases involving allegations against an employee, volunteer, or student, paid or unpaid;
- consider any recommendations from the safeguarding adults process;
- reinforce the utmost need for confidentiality and to ensure that staff and volunteers are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security. This is because it is around the time that a person starts to challenge abuse that the risks of increasing intensity of abuse are greatest;
- ensure that staff and volunteers working directly with service users who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision;
- ensure that the Deputy Safeguarding Lead is trained and aware of her responsibilities, and able to carry these out;
- ensure staff and volunteers are given support and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998: they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome.

6. Recruitment, Selection and Training of Staff and Volunteers

You and Me Counselling will ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures will take account of the need to protect adults who need care and support, who may be at risk of abuse. References will be



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taken up for all successful candidates and a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) carried out. All employees, volunteers, and Trustees have DBS checks and a register is kept of these. All employees, sessional workers and volunteers will be interviewed; for volunteers, a more informal interview may be appropriate.

New staff and volunteers will have a designated person (supervisor) who will ensure that a proper induction takes place. The supervisor will provide regular support and supervision to the new member of staff and volunteer in all areas of their work including safeguarding. All new staff and volunteers will read and understand this policy as part of their induction process, which also includes an introduction to the charity's values, mission, services, and structure. Staff and volunteers will be able to identify the signs of abuse and will be confident about the steps to take and who to report any concerns.

All staff and volunteers will attend safeguarding training at least annually and when new legislation comes into force. For new starters, until external training is possible, safeguarding training will be cascaded by supervisors/managers at You and Me Counselling using online safeguarding training. Staff and volunteers will keep a check on visitors and guests whether their visit is by invitation or unsolicited. This will ensure that adults at risk are safeguarded at all times.

7. Reporting Procedure

Abuse of vulnerable adults can take many forms including: physical, emotional, sexual and financial. It is vital that staff or volunteers raise any concerns about suspected or alleged abuse in line with the reporting procedure as failure to report concerns may put a vulnerable adult at risk. It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place.

Any suspected or alleged abuse should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will arrange for further information to be gathered as appropriate.

The exact nature of the action taken will be determined by the individual circumstances. This may include the involvement of external authorities, such as Social Services and/or the Police.

All staff, subcontractors and volunteers are required to familiarise themselves with good practice guidelines on the immediate action to be taken following a report of suspected or alleged abuse (see Appendix 1).

Any allegation against a member of staff sub-contractor or a volunteer should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence, a suitable alternative such as a senior manager or Trustee, who will instigate an investigation and take the appropriate action in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

In the case of a report of suspected or alleged abuse made by a vulnerable adult, care should be taken to explain to them the procedure that will be followed. They should be told that You and Me Counselling may need to inform and involve other agencies.



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If a service user of You and Me Counselling makes an allegation about another organisation this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or, in their absence, a suitable alternative such as a Trustee who will instigate the appropriate action.

If it is not possible or desirable to report an incident to the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead - for example, because the allegation is about them - a report should be made to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or if not available then another member of the Board of Trustees.

Participants in You and Me Counselling's groups will be made aware of how to report a safeguarding concern via information in their welcome pack and through information on the You and Me Counselling website.

8. Good Practice

All staff, sub-contractors and volunteers are required to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the Guidelines for Good Practice for working with Service Users (see Appendix 2).

Policy last reviewed: 21 January 2024

Next Review: 24 January 2025

Bolaji Olagunju, Designated Safeguarding Lead on behalf of You and Me Counselling



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Appendix 1

If you believe you or someone else is in immediate danger, do something straight away - contact 999 and tell the operator what is happening.

If you or someone else are not in immediate danger, the following are guidelines on immediate action to be taken following a report by a vulnerable adult of alleged abuse:

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter the adult at risk
- Reassure him/her that you are glad they have told you, and it is not their fault
- Do not promise to keep the information to yourself
- Explain that you need to make sure that they will be safe and may have to pass on the information to somebody trusted to deal with it appropriately
- Listen carefully to what they say and take them seriously
- Allow them to tell you what happened in their own words
- It is important to clarify what you have heard and to establish the basic facts. However, do not ask leading questions or ask them for explicit detail.
- If possible, make notes at the time, explaining to them why you are doing this. If it is not possible to do so at the time, make notes as soon as possible afterwards. All notes should be signed and dated by the staff member or volunteer taking them. The information should include:
 - The nature of the suspected or alleged abuse
 - A description of any visible injury
 - Dates, times and any other factual information.
- You and Me Counselling's Designated Safeguarding Lead should be contacted as soon as practicable on 01708 477633. A decision will then be made on the next steps. If abuse is suspected, the normal procedure will be to contact the Duty Social Worker at the Social Services team where the participant lives. If the participant is in immediate danger, the police may also be contacted. In some settings e.g. care homes, the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the care home will need to be informed. Depending on the nature of the concern, it may be appropriate to involve a family member/carer.



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Appendix 2

Good Practice Guidelines for Working with Service Users

It is recognised that in certain circumstances it may be unavoidable to visit service users at their home. In the event of staff or volunteers visiting a service user at home they must ensure that another person knows where they are going and what time they are expected back.

Service users should never be given access to the home address or telephone number/s of staff or volunteers.

Service users' contact details should never be disclosed to anyone outside of You and Me Counselling without the explicit consent of the service user.



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Appendix 3

Key Adult Safeguarding Contacts within Local Authorities

Details of local Safeguarding Boards

Barking and Dagenham

020 8227 2915

intaketeam@lbbd.gov.uk

Out of hours emergency social work duty team: 020 8594 8356

Havering

Telephone: 01708 433 550

Email: safeguarding_adults_team@haverling.gov.uk

Redbridge

- Complete a [Safeguarding Adult Referral Form](#), available to download as a PDF and e-mail to Adults.Alert@redbridge.gov.uk. A Word version is available via the Redbridge Safeguarding Adults Board [website](#).
- Report concerns to Redbridge Health and Adult Social Services on 020 8708 7333 (Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm). Outside of office hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team on 020 8553 5825.

Waltham Forest

Call 020 8496 3000 at any time

Email WFDLiaison@walthamforest.gov.uk

Online complete this [online referral form](#) to [raise a safeguarding concern](#).

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