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Name of Procedure: Child Protection Policy Handbook Section & Code: Status: Review by Board Oct 2015 Approved : Review date: October 2016	
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Safeguarding Children (CHILD PROTECTION) POLICY

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Richmond Borough Mind (RB Mind).

The purpose of this policy:

- take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children with whom RB Mind comes into contact with in the course of its work. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;

RB Mind believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

It is impossible to ensure that no child ever comes to any harm while in contact with RB Mind. However implementing this policy and following the guidelines will enable those who undertake work with children for RB Mind to be confident that they have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent harm occurring while being prepared to deal with an incident should it occur.

RB Mind expects all those working with children and young people under the age of 18 years in any capacity – paid or voluntary - to apply this policy.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

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We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

All staff and volunteers, and others this policy applies to, are expected to:

- Respect the wishes of a child as you would an adult; you must not impose yourself on them
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child in contact with RB Mind
- Remember that children regard adults as role models and ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach
- Be aware of Child Protection issues in relation to the work you do and do not become complacent and believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Prevent any other member of staff or volunteer from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety
- Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child
- Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused whether by an adult or another child to the Chief Executive or in her absence, the Operations Manager
- Not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse any child or young person

Responsibilities

In most instances the children you come into contact with will be accompanied by a Parent or teacher. However if, due to illness or another unexpected event a member of staff or RB Mind volunteer is left in charge of a child or children, they should act and make decisions in accordance with this Policy and Guidelines. The member of staff or volunteer should maintain appropriate child to adult ratios as required by the relevant local authority. This must underpin your main aim of providing an enjoyable and safe experience for the children.

Safety in numbers should be the golden rule, whether the numbers are other children or adults.

Disclosure

Appointments

All staff who come into contact with clients and/or their children are required to apply to The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) prior to appointment.

The appointment will only proceed if:

- the pre-employment checks prove satisfactory, and

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- the Disclosure provides no cause for concern as to their suitability to work with children. This applies whether the appointment is the result of recruitment or an internal move. Managers must also be mindful of these requirements as the content of posts develop over time and new tasks are assigned.

Reporting Allegations of Abuse (See Appendix 1)

If you suspect that a child or young person in Richmond may be being abused or neglected, it is vital you report your concerns so that this can be investigated.

If you consider a child/young person to be at immediate risk, call 999 immediately.

In all cases you must:

- Be prompt, calm, assured and professional
- Keep any details strictly confidential and share only on a 'need to know' basis.

If practicable, staff should discuss making a referral with their line manager or another manager within RB Mind although if this would delay the reporting of concerns unnecessarily and potentially leave a child at risk this may not always be possible.

The designated person (Chief Executive) or staff member should contact:

Single Point of Access (SPA)

Richmond SPA: 020 8891 7969

Out of hours: 020 8744 2442

An online SPA referral can be made at

http://www.richmond.gov.uk/single_point_of_access

Follow any advice given by SPA or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

An incident recording form is available to help staff record information and support discussions: www.richmond.gov.uk/safeguarding_incident_recording_form.pdf

It is to be hoped that you will never have to deal with an alleged incident of child abuse, but it is sensible that you are prepared to do so if necessary and this will be assisted if you have discussed the issue locally. Open discussion of child protection should be encouraged since this helps to make staff more comfortable with the issues involved. Do not keep it 'under wraps' for fear of upsetting or embarrassing people.

Potential scenarios which you should be aware of and be prepared to deal with if necessary:

- There is suspicion or evidence that a child is being abused by a member of staff, or concern is raised by another person associated with Mind e.g. a Service User or Carer
- A child accuses a member of staff or other person associated with Mind of abusing them
- Abuse takes place or is suspected on Mind premises by an individual unrelated to Mind
- A child discloses abuse happening elsewhere e.g. at home

Allegations against staff

Though our focus must be on safeguarding children you must also be aware that allegations of abuse made by children about adults do occasionally happen. Some prove mistaken or, very rarely, malicious. The Policy and Guidelines are there to help you to avoid

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situations in which well-intentioned actions could be misinterpreted and ensure that you do not find yourself in a situation where an unfounded allegation by a child, young or vulnerable person can be made.

Children have a right to safe services. If you are concerned that a member of staff has behaved inappropriately towards a child, you or your manager must inform the SPA who will advise, or the SPA will ask the LADO to advise.

The SPA LADO should be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to employer's attention.

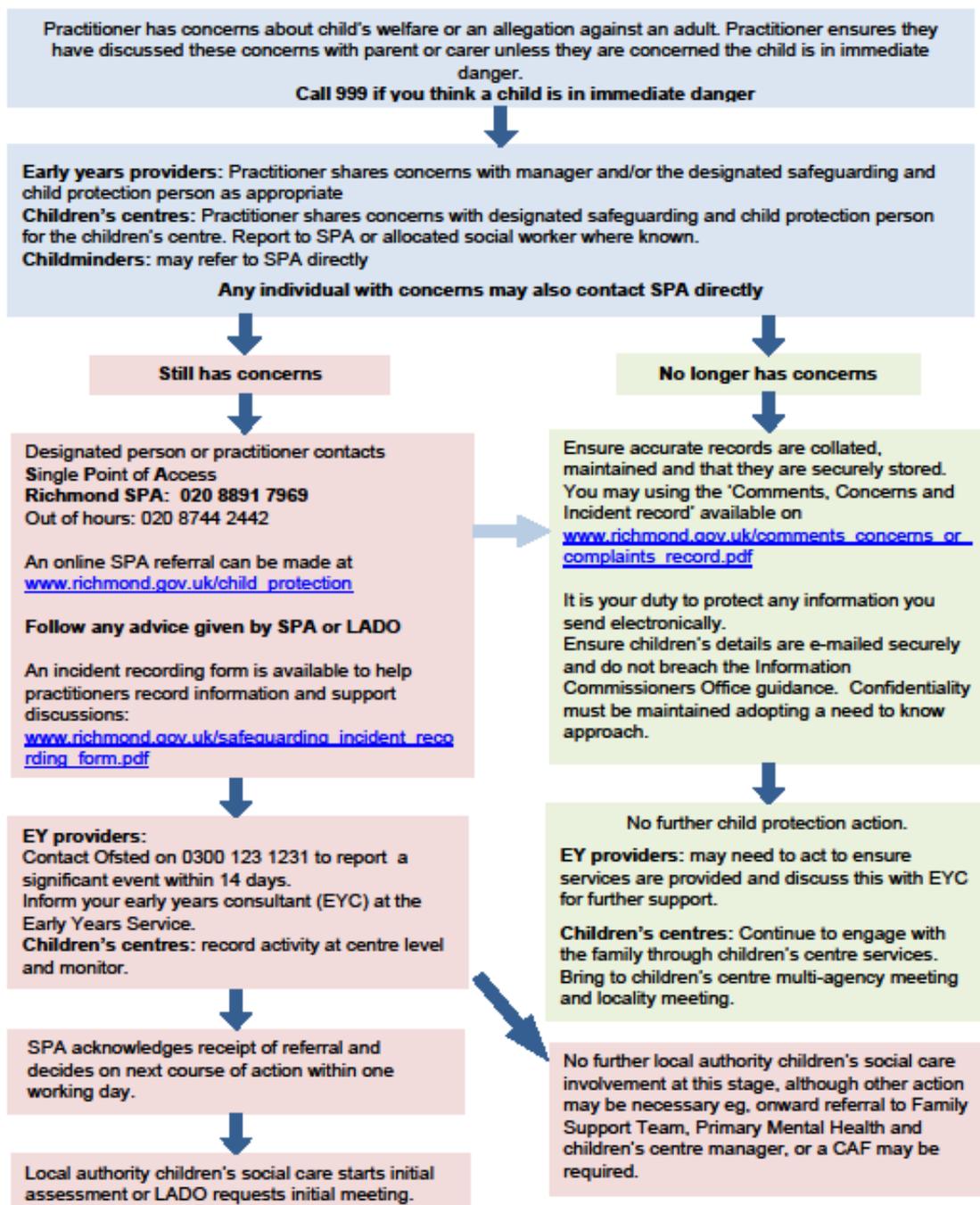
The LADO should provide advice and guidance to senior managers on the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with robustly and quickly as possible. Any allegation should be reported immediately to a senior manager within your organisation.

Use of Information relating to children

Information about children e.g. names and addresses must be treated confidentially. We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.



Safeguarding processes flowchart – Richmond



The Early Years Service is available for advice and support at any point during this process.

This is a reference document that you should adapt for your own provision (updated February 2015)