

## Safeguarding Policy

We believe that children and young people deserve the very best start in life, and to encourage this, we work with parents and the community in ensuring the rights and safety of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

MumsAid and YoungMumsAid (YMA) operate in accordance with the Ethical Framework defined by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Counsellors and psychotherapists have safeguarding responsibilities towards both mothers and their children, including the unborn child, as do other frontline staff such as the YoungMumsAid Manager, and advocacy and link workers. Many of the young mothers supported by YMA will be considered children themselves (if under 18).

### Respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse

Under the Children's Act 1989, updated 2004, all staff have a responsibility for identifying, referring and supporting children and vulnerable adults at risk of abuse. We acknowledge that abuse can take different forms, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), emotional, sexual and physical abuse, and neglect. Other forms of abuse could include radicalisation and trafficking.

The World Health Organisation defines Child Abuse in terms of four main categories:

- Physical abuse: where children and young people receive physical hurt or injury.
- Emotional abuse: where children and young people are harmed by a constant lack of love and affection, or threats, taunting etc.
- Sexual abuse: where adults seek sexual gratification by using children and young people.
- Neglect: a deficit in meeting a child or young person's basic needs, including the failure to provide basic physical, healthcare, supervisory, nutritional, emotional, educational and /or safe-housing needs.

### The role of the designated person/s

There are three designated people responsible for safeguarding within MumsAid and YoungMumsAid:

- Miriam Donaghy: CEO
- Ann Marshall: YoungMumsAid Manager
- Sam Quinn: EA and HR officer

The designated people have the following responsibilities:

- To ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of safeguarding procedures and that policies are updated as necessary.
- To comply with the London Child Protection Procedures Safeguarding Policy.
- To be able to identify children and vulnerable adults experiencing, or at risk of, significant harm.
- To be available for discussion with staff and volunteers about any cases of suspected abuse or harm.
- To work with parents for the protection of children.

- To make decisions on referral.
- To maintain appropriate systems for record keeping and collation of information.

### **Identification and support of children who may have suffered abuse**

There are three key areas in which staff and volunteers may be involved in safeguarding:

- Making referrals—taking direct action in relation to significant concerns
- Providing information
- Providing a service for parents and vulnerable adults

If a mother being supported by MumsAid or YMA is involved in a child protection process, a counsellor/psychotherapist may be asked to provide information about their involvement with the mother to assist in assessment. The policy regarding information requests from social services is detailed in the subsequent section on 'Sharing information' in Appendix B. Clinical supervision must be used to consider the appropriate response to an information request.

Provision of counselling/psychotherapy may become part of a child protection plan, to support a family and promote the wellbeing of a child. The counsellor/psychotherapist may be withdrawn if the child protection system becomes too complex.

### **Procedures for allegations or complaints against staff and volunteers**

- If an allegation or complaint is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the CEO of MumsAid, Miriam Donaghy, must be informed immediately. The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) must be informed within one working day.
- There should be an initial information gathering process in preparation for deciding the most appropriate action.
- After information is gathered it may, in some cases, become clear that a referral is not necessary.
- The advice from the LADO must be followed throughout the procedure.
- If a referral is not necessary, the incident should be clearly documented, and a clear explanation given to the person who made the allegation or complaint. THIS MUST BE WITH ADVICE FROM THE LADO.
- If the decision is taken to refer the allegation or complaint, MumsAid/YMA would follow the Local Authority advice.
- MumsAid/YMA will not undertake its own investigation as this may compromise the social care investigation.
- Under no circumstances should a member of staff or volunteer be "let go" or encouraged to resign.
- If a member of staff resigns the process of investigation should continue.

### **Staff training**

The welfare of mothers and their children, including the unborn child, should be the primary concern throughout all our work. All staff and volunteers working directly with families will:

- Undergo relevant DBS checks.

- Undertake relevant safeguarding training.
- Receive clinical supervision.

All staff and volunteers will receive up-to-date training in the identification and support of children and vulnerable adults who may have suffered abuse. The designated people for safeguarding—Miriam Donaghy, Ann Marshall and Maggie Carney—will receive training to enable them to meet the responsibilities of the role.

### **Whistleblowing**

We recognise that children and vulnerable adults cannot be protected in an environment where staff and volunteers fail to raise concerns. All staff and volunteers will be made aware of their duty to raise concerns where they exist about the attitudes or actions of colleagues.

All frontline staff operating within MumsAid/YMA, including counsellors and psychotherapists, are bound by the following safeguarding policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of mothers
- Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure
- Code of conduct for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Policy for accepting referrals where children are subject to a child protection plan
- Policy on Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

### **Mobile phones**

All staff are required to turn off mobile phones when working with mothers.

### **Photography**

Photographs can only be taken with a mother's consent. The reason for taking photographs will be fully explained to mothers. MumsAid/YMA will only use photographs for the website, marketing and awareness-raising purposes, and in rare occasions to meet monitoring expectations. Mothers will be required to give written consent that they understand how the photographs will be used and agree to photographs being taken. All photographs will be taken on mobile phones and deleted after the photograph has been used for one of the purposes stated above.

## **Appendix A**

### **Contact details**

If you have any concerns and need to speak to a member of staff at MumsAid please contact:

- **Miriam Donaghy: CEO tel: 07931 740475 | email: miriam@mums-aid.org)**
- **Ann Marshall: Young MumsAid Manager tel: 07421 844733 | email: ann@mums-aid.org**
- **Sam Quinn: Executive Assistant and HR officer tel: 07840 843398 | email: sam@mums-aid.org**

### **Important telephone numbers**

#### **IN AN EMERGENCY, DIAL 999.**

- Greenwich Social Care and Safeguarding: 0208 854 8888
- Greenwich Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 0208 921 3172

#### **Contact details for Royal Borough of Greenwich MASH Team:**

- Duty number: 020 8921 3172
- Consultation line (professionals only): 020 8921 4590
- Out of hours social worker: 020 8854 8888
- Greenwich Safeguarding Board: 020 8854 2226
- Email address for all new referrals: MASH-referrals@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

The MASH operates Monday-Thursday: 9.00am-5.30pm; Friday: 9.00am-4.30pm

Referral information to provide includes:

- Details of an incident and/or other concerns and the source of that information
- Names and dates of birth of child/children
- Family address
- Names of those with parental responsibility for the children
- Anyone else involved in the care of the children
- GP and health visitor
- Schools attended by older children
- Any known movements regarding the family (e.g. working hours)
- How referrer can be contacted

The lack of any of this information will not stop a referral from being made.

#### **Other useful numbers:**

- Urgent medical help (not an emergency): 111
- NSPCC: 0208 800 5000
- Childline: 0208 800 1111
- AAIT Plumstead Police Station: 0208 855 1212

- Greenwich Police Station: 0300 123 1231
- Samaritans: freephone 116 123
- Parent line: 0808 800 2222

## **Appendix B**

### **MumsAid related policies and procedures**

#### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of mothers**

In order to respect the mothers with whom MumsAid/YMA works, and to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place, all frontline staff must:

- Ensure that all mothers are made aware of safeguarding and confidentiality policies.
- Encourage mothers to engage in discussion and listen to their views.
- Discuss any safeguarding concerns with Miriam Donaghy/Ann Marshall/Maggie Carney (the designated people for safeguarding).
- Keep a factual, dated record of concerns (in line with MumsAid's record-keeping procedures).

Where it is considered necessary for the welfare and protection of a mother, information will be shared with the appropriate authority/agency.

Protecting mothers from significant harm is a shared responsibility. In order to fulfill our responsibility in promoting the welfare and safety of mothers, frontline staff will maintain effective partnerships with other appropriate organisations.

#### **Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure**

Where there are concerns for the welfare of children, including the unborn, frontline staff will support and encourage mothers to seek additional support from relevant agencies to meet those needs by:

- Considering information from referrers.
- Discussing support needs for families during supervision.
- Working with mothers to formulate referrals to other professional agencies.

MumsAid/YMA has no statutory remit or role to investigate child abuse. However, the welfare of the child is paramount, therefore MumsAid/YMA does have a responsibility to share information with the appropriate agency.

#### **Sharing information**

The Government provides the following guidance on sharing information:

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a

framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

The Seven Golden Rules to Sharing Information (Information Sharing, updated July 2018 [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

### **Requests to participate in child protection proceedings**

Social services staff may contact MumsAid/YMA to request a counsellor or psychotherapist attend or contribute a report to a Child Protection (CP) conference being held; to comment on their work with a mother whose baby is deemed to be at risk. Careful consideration is required in how to respond to such requests; to meet both our safeguarding responsibilities towards children involved and the need to protect client confidentiality.

**As MumsAid is a small organisation with limited human resources, we are not always able to attend CP conferences. We can comment on client attendance and engagement, and will provide reports, subject to client consent and with sufficient notice.**

### **Responding to concerns**

In line with MumsAid's policy on confidentiality, counsellors/psychotherapists (or other frontline staff) should seek to discuss any concerns with the mother, providing this would not place the child at greater risk. Where possible and appropriate, the mother's agreement will be sought before

making any referral to Children's Services and/or other agencies as part of an assessment to secure further support services. Lack of consent is not a barrier to taking action in response to safeguarding concerns.

**Any concerns about the safety of a child or mother must always be shared. Discuss any safeguarding concerns in the first instance with the MumsAid designated person/s.**

### **In an emergency**

If a child is potentially seriously injured, the priority is to ensure that the child receives medical attention as soon as possible. If it is thought that a crime has been committed, a child is alone or at immediate risk, the police should be contacted without delay.

### **Referring on concerns to the relevant agency**

Children's Services social workers, the police and the NSPCC all have specific powers to intervene when there are concerns about significant harm. If it is considered appropriate to pass on a concern about a mother, baby or child, then a referral will be made in the first instance to the Royal Borough of Greenwich social worker involved with the family. A social worker should always be spoken to directly on the day of referral.

**If you make a referral by telephone, you must confirm it in writing within 48 hours. Children's Services should acknowledge your written referral within one working day.**

If there is no social worker involved with the family, or the social worker is unavailable, then a referral will be made to Greenwich MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub). Concerns can be discussed prior to making a referral, by calling the consultation line. The anonymity of a client can be preserved at this pre-referral stage.

**Policy updated: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

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**Signed:**



**Miriam Donaghy**  
CEO

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