

Mapping for Change CIC - Safeguarding Children Policy

This policy demonstrates Mapping for Change CIC's commitment to ensuring the safety of all children who participate in its activities. It outlines the organisation's duty to act appropriately in response to allegations, reports, or suspicions of abuse.

While not all representatives of Mapping for Change will work directly or unsupervised with children, all staff, volunteers, and management must be familiar with the policy, understand appropriate boundaries of behaviour, and adhere to the procedures established to prevent and report abuse.

This policy applies to all individuals working on behalf of Mapping for Change CIC, including:

- Managers and management committee members
- Paid staff and sessional workers
- Volunteers and agency staff
- Students and anyone representing or working with Mapping for Change CIC

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, Mapping for Change CIC commits to:

- **Promoting safety** in the management of services to prevent abuse.
- Ensuring that **roles and responsibilities** regarding safeguarding are understood by everyone, with appropriate training to help recognise, identify, and respond to signs of abuse, neglect, and other safeguarding concerns.
- **Taking appropriate action** when incidents or concerns about abuse arise, and providing support to individuals who raise or disclose concerns.
- **Maintaining confidential, detailed, and accurate records** of all safeguarding concerns, which will be securely stored.
- **Preventing the employment or deployment of unsuitable individuals** who may pose a risk to children.
- Ensuring that **robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures** are in place and consistently followed.

All Mapping for Change staff, volunteers, management, and representatives will:

- Treat all children with respect, considering **cultural differences**.
- Act as **appropriate role models**, setting an example for others to follow.
- **Challenge unacceptable behaviour**, including bullying, ridiculing, or cyberbullying. Do not permit abusive activities.
- Provide **constructive feedback** rather than negative criticism during activities.
- Be mindful of language, terminology, and behaviour, avoiding comments or actions that may be interpreted as sexual in nature.
- Take particular care when discussing **sensitive topics** with vulnerable individuals.

Abuse can take various forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect. Bullying also constitutes abuse, and all forms can have long-term effects on a child's development, health, and well-being.

While you may not always be certain in recognising abuse, if something concerns you or seems inappropriate, it is your responsibility to report it.

It is not the role of Mapping for Change staff or volunteers to determine whether abuse has occurred—that is the responsibility of Social Services. However, you are legally and ethically obligated to report any concerns about a child's safety.

If you suspect or witness abuse, you must take action promptly. Mapping for Change CIC will adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Confidentiality:** We will respect the child's privacy and, where possible, obtain their permission before sharing information with another agency.
- **Informing children:** We will ensure that children understand that if they or someone else is at risk of harm, or a crime has been committed, information may need to be shared without their or their guardian's consent.
- **Referral to the Local Safeguarding Children Board:** If more than one child is at risk, particularly if the concern involves an individual who works with or provides services to children, we will pass the information to the appropriate authority.
- **Accidental harm:** If a child is accidentally hurt during an activity, the incident must be reported to the activity coordinator as soon as possible, and the child's guardian should be informed when necessary.
- **Removing risk:** Mapping for Change has a legal obligation to remove any individual who has caused harm, poses a risk of harm, or would likely harm a child.
- **Staying informed:** Mapping for Change will keep up to date with national developments and changes in legislation related to safeguarding children and preventing abuse.

To further ensure the safety of children, Mapping for Change will:

- Conduct **thorough background checks** on all employees, volunteers, and contractors working directly with children.
- Provide **regular training** on safeguarding policies and procedures for all staff, volunteers, and management to ensure they are equipped to identify and act on safeguarding concerns.
- Establish a clear **reporting structure** that enables staff and volunteers to report concerns quickly and without fear of repercussions.
- Ensure that **safe recruitment practices** are followed to prevent the employment of individuals who may pose a risk to children.

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to legislative changes to ensure it remains up to date and effective. Any significant changes in law, regulation, or safeguarding practices will result in an immediate review.

Mapping for Change CIC is committed to a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and to ensuring the safety of every child involved in our activities.

This policy was last reviewed 19 September 2024