

REDBRIDGE YOUTH SERVICE

Child Protection Policy

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October 2006

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the role of Redbridge Youth Service in relation to Child Protection issues that is consistent with the Borough's overall Child Protection Policy. It sets out the core beliefs and responsibilities of the Service as well as giving guidance and clarification on the expectation placed upon all staff.

The management and staff of Redbridge Youth Service recognise that we have a duty of care to the young people with whom we work. The Service

fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children and supports the view that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in Child Protection.

In drafting these procedures the following documents/legislation have been taken into account/consulted:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- London Child Protection Procedures 2003
- Education Act 2002
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2005
- Youth Matters: Green Paper 2005

This Policy applies to children and young people up to the age of 18. In situations where there are concerns about people deemed to be vulnerable adults, then the Borough's Adult protection policy should be followed.

The central beliefs and purposes of this policy are:

- That the welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989)
- To raise the awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard young people and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring young people known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- To provide a structured procedure within the Service which all members of staff (including volunteers) will follow in cases of suspected abuse.
- To ensure that staff selection, recruitment and verifying procedures in respect of all staff, paid or unpaid, irrespective of time or commitment are rigorous and robust.
- To ensure that organisations with which the Youth Service works in partnership implement effective and robust child protection procedures including effective recruitment measures.
- To identify and clarify procedures to ameliorate any differences of approaches within partnership agencies and the Youth Service.
- To recognise that young people attend a number of organisations that share a duty of care, therefore liaison between these organisations is a mutual responsibility to ensure the safety of young people.

- Where the Youth Service funds youth organisations or other providers through grant arrangements, the Service will ensure that proper procedures to safeguard children and young people are in place.
- To work proactively with the voluntary youth sector and other agencies to ensure consistent policies and practice underpin all youth work practice in Redbridge.

2. Youth Work

Redbridge Youth Service supports the statement that “the purpose of youth work is to support young people’s growth through dependence to interdependence, by encouraging their personal and social development and enabling them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and society.” (National Youth Agency 2004).

The five outcomes for children and young people as outlined in *Every Child Matters* are at the heart of our Service.

Youth work can take place in a variety of places including building based, detached, outreach and mobile activities. There are also projects that offer information, advice and counselling as well as specialist schemes that focus on particular groups or specific issues.

Youth workers develop working relationships with young people in order to empower and enable young people to make informed choices about their lives. The key element of youth work is the relationship between youth workers and young people. This relationship is based on voluntary association and the establishment of trust and interaction often in informal settings.

By the nature of our work we are in a unique position to identify children at risk as well as working in situations where young people may feel more comfortable in sharing information about their circumstances. The range of our work can embrace residential, out of hours and issue-based work exploring themes of a personal nature.

This relationship based on trust and openness can create conditions that are conducive to receiving a disclosure.

Youth Workers have close contact with children and young people and should be alert to signs of abuse and neglect and know how to act upon concerns about a child’s welfare.

3. Youth Service Pledge

Redbridge Youth Service will ensure that:

- All staff and volunteers follow the written procedures set out by the London Child Protection Committee/Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Each project has an identified member of staff acting in the role of Designated Person for Child Protection. This member of staff will have undertaken appropriate training and the Service acknowledges the level of support required by the post holder.
- A Youth Service Officer will oversee all aspects of Child Protection for the Service as well as offer direction and support for the Designated Persons.
- All members of staff shall develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
- All members of staff will know how to handle a disclosure and how the referral process works.
- All members of staff shall know the name of the Designated Person and that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns.
- All new members of staff will be given a copy of our child protection policy and procedures as part of their induction and will undergo appropriate training according to their level of responsibility.
- That the duty of care towards young people and staff is promoted, by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and to assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice.
- That staff and volunteers are aware of and follow the Borough's Vulnerable Adult protection policy.
- That procedures will be regularly reviewed and kept up to date.

4. Supporting young people

In all aspects of our work we shall aim to promote a caring, safe and positive environment through our curriculum and relationships. All staff will be trained and vetted appropriately as promoted through the Staying Safe Outcome for Children and Young People (Children Act 2004).

This will be achieved through establishing strategies which will involve young people in the decision making process and by displaying appropriate support information such as Childline, NSPCC and other agencies.

We shall also seek to ensure that, once Child Protection Procedures are initiated, young people are kept informed of what is happening and have the opportunity to determine the support they need which may not be solely from one agency.

5. Confidentiality

All employees of the Borough must follow the guidelines on confidentiality, information sharing and data protection. Staff and volunteers should regard all information as being confidential and not passed on unless it is on a “need to know” basis and where possible, informing the young person that you will be doing this.

All information disclosed by young people must be treated as confidential except:

- in cases of Child Protection
- to prevent or detect a crime
- where there is the threat of harm or violence to the individual or violence will be carried out by the person on another.

If in doubt staff are required to seek clarification from their line manager or Designated Person.

6. Supporting Staff

All Child Services Authorities (CSAs) establishments should have procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers, that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse, and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded accusations.

Staff need to know that all allegations will be investigated and this may entail staff being temporarily moved from their place of work. During this time staff will be supported and kept appropriately informed of developments by an suitable person (usually the Designated Person).

In order to ensure the safe professional conduct of all, staff will receive an induction to the Service and risk assessments will be carried out to ensure that all staff are aware of appropriate policies and procedures and the level of support offered. Workers will have information on the London Borough of Redbridge helpline (Are You Tying Yourself in Knots 0800 716619) and the Duty Officer’s mobile emergency number 07940 624064.

If allegations are made against a member of staff then the member of staff receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Designated Person or a senior member of the management team.

All staff need to be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of their colleagues. The Redbridge whistle blowing procedure (2004) should allow staff to voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussions.

Good practice demands that staff follow ethical and professional principles. This will include treating young people with respect, the encouragement and promotion of young people's safety and welfare and the accountability of one's actions. Staff should also recognise the boundaries between their personal and professional life. Further information can be gained from *Ethical Conduct in Youth Work* – NYA Dec 2004.

Volunteers within the Service are subject to the same requirements and are offered the same level of support.

7. Physical Intervention

Redbridge staff need to follow the Redbridge Physical Intervention procedures in line with section 550A of the Education Act 1996. Should any physical interventions take place then these need to be recorded in line with Borough procedures. This will help to ensure that good practice is being adhered to and guard against Child Protection allegations.

8. Future Action

This draft policy will be sent to the Chair of the Policies sub-group for comment before a final version is distributed.