



# rucksack

support for bereaved children in Islington

## **CARIS Islington Child Protection Policy for safeguarding children (Rucksack)**

### **Introduction**

All members of the Caris team, whether Trustees, professionals or volunteers, have a professional responsibility to safeguard the children in their care. This policy is to ensure the safety of the children (aged 3 to 11 years) we support through The Rucksack Children's Bereavement Service. Please also see our safeguarding policy for young people aged 12 to 20 who are supported through our service, "The Basement"

### **Confidentiality**

- We offer a confidential service.
- The sessions we offer are one-to-one and private.
- We would not normally discuss what happens in the session with anyone including the child's family.
- However, this will not be the case if there is any concern about the child being subject to significant harm, whether physical, emotional or through neglect.
- It would always be our intention to discuss with the child any plans to talk about what the child has said or done with other appropriate people before taking any action.
- Usually the Rucksack volunteer would discuss this with their supervisor.

It is extremely unusual for us to offer Rucksack sessions without the knowledge of the child's main carer.

Occasionally we might work in a school with a child of any age without permission from the child's main carer – but only with the full knowledge of senior management at the school.

## **Boundaries**

- Rucksack offers each child no more than one session per week
- Rucksack volunteers will never take a child to, or meet a child at, a venue other than that arranged for the Rucksack sessions.

Rucksack sessions will always start and finish on time.

- Rucksack volunteers should never be entrusted with sole responsibility for a child so they will never agree to be alone in a building with a child. Carers must be at home while Rucksack visits are taking place (although usually in a different room) and when the Rucksack session is on our premises the child's carer must wait in the Caris waiting room during the Rucksack sessions.
- A Rucksack session can only take place with a child's consent and never against a child's wishes.
- The work should be transparent and therefore for example doors might be left open if appropriate.
- A Rucksack volunteer will never lock him/herself in a room with a child, and never suggest that a door should be closed if the child prefers it to be open.

A Rucksack volunteer will never restrain a child from leaving the Rucksack session, although children should understand that once they leave the session, it is over for that week.

Physical contact should only be initiated by the child and therapeutically appropriate.

Rucksack will never photograph a child without permission from an appropriate adult.

Rucksack sessions are always one-to-one. Other adults and children may occasionally be invited, and this should be discussed with the child, preferably in advance. A child should never be persuaded to invite others into the session.

When working at a child's home Rucksack will always endeavour to adhere to the child's 'home' rules (eg no throwing balls in the living room) and if these rules might detract from the Rucksack session (eg 'no shouting indoors') we will discuss this with the child's family and try to reach a compromise (eg only shouting indoors when the Rucksack worker is here').

All Caris staff and volunteers are appropriately trained and supervised.

CRB checks are undertaken for all staff and volunteers.

## **Safety**

- If there is an accident we will always act promptly, call for the assistance of other adults where necessary, and make a record of the incident.
- Any concerns whatsoever must be discussed in supervision.

The safety of the child is our top priority and any action needed to ensure this must be taken.

## **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused?**

All members of the Caris team, whether Trustees, professionals or volunteers, have a professional responsibility to safeguard the children in their care. All Trustees, staff and volunteers are issued with a copy of the Government guidance "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused".

- Counsellors in direct contact with children have a duty to report to the Caris safeguarding officer (Lydia) anything that makes them think that a child is not being kept safe.
- It is important to also log reports from adults or low level observations about children, so that a full picture can be built up over time, which may be indicative of a problem.
- If a child makes an allegation the adult should check by repeating back to the child what has been said. They should not press the child for extra details. When reporting, they should use the child's words and not make any interpretation or assumptions
- An adult receiving an allegation or disclosure should report this either in person or on the telephone to the SO. They should do this on the same day that they receive the information and follow it up with a written record as soon as possible.
- Issues of counsellor-client confidentiality will not apply although the counsellor may inform the child that they need to speak to someone else in order to keep the child safe.
- Any information or allegations received from a child should not be discussed with anyone other than the safeguarding officer. Counsellors however, may feel they need to talk to their supervisor to clarify issues before reporting them to the SO.
- All written concerns will be stored in a Child Safeguarding file that will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.
- The safeguarding officer will monitor the safeguarding file on a regular basis, follow up any communications made to social services and record the outcome in the file.
- The SO will carry out a yearly audit which she will present to the Trustees. As a result of this audit there may be further action plans which will need to be recorded in the file before implementation. Deadlines need to be made for all further actions to be carried out.
- All new counsellors will attend an Islington child protection course within the first four months of their appointment. A copy of their certificate of attendance will be lodged with the Child Safeguarding officer.

## **Whistleblowing**

- Caris Islington is committed to the highest standards of quality and accountability. As part of that commitment, we encourage anyone with serious concerns about any part of our work to come forward and express those concerns. In many cases, concerns or complaints can be dealt with through normal procedures
- If the worker is not satisfied with the way the safeguarding officer is handling a case then she can contact social services directly –  
Municipal Office  
222 Upper Street  
N1 1XR  
Telephone: 020 7527 7400  
Fax: 020 7527 7042  
Email: [cscreferrals@islington.gov.uk](mailto:cscreferrals@islington.gov.uk)

*[adopted by Trustees March 14<sup>th</sup> 2011]*