



The Basement

CARIS Islington Child Protection Policy for safeguarding children (The Basement)

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 young people (aged 12 to 20 years) we support through The Basement Bereavement Service.. Please also see our safeguarding policy for children aged 3 to 11 who are supported through our service, "Rucksack".

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 young person's family.
- However, this will not be the case if there is any concern about the Basement client being subject to significant harm, whether physical, emotional or through neglect.
- It would always be our intention to discuss with the Basement client any plans to talk about what he or she has said or done with other appropriate people before taking any action.
- Usually The Basement volunteer would discuss this with their supervisor.
- It is unusual for us to offer Basement counselling sessions without the knowledge of the Basement client's main carer, however there might be circumstances where we would offer confidential counselling in line with current legislation and legal practices.
- Occasionally we might work in a school with a client of any age without permission from the child's main carer – but only with the full knowledge of senior management at the school.

Boundaries

- The Basement offers each client no more than one session per week
- The Basement volunteers will never take a client to, or meet a client at, a venue other than that arranged for The Basement sessions.
- The Basement sessions will always start and finish on time.
- Clients of The Basement are able to come to our premises without an adult if their family is in agreement.
- A Basement session can only take place with the client's consent and never against a young person's wishes.
- The work should be transparent and therefore for example doors might be left open if appropriate.
- The Basement volunteers will never lock him/herself in a room with a young person, and never suggest that a door should be closed if the young person prefers it to be open.
- The Basement volunteers will never restrain a young person from leaving a counselling session, although clients should understand that once they leave the session, it is over for that week.
- Physical contact should only be initiated by the young person and therapeutically appropriate.
- The Basement will never photograph a client without permission from an appropriate adult. If photographs are taken during the counselling, CARIS will ensure negatives or digital images are destroyed when the counselling is concluded..
- The Basement sessions are always one-to-one. Other adults and children may occasionally be invited, and this should be discussed with the client, preferably in advance. A Basement client should never be persuaded to invite others into the session.
- When working at The Basement client's home, we will always endeavour to adhere to the young person's 'home' rules (eg no throwing balls in the living room) and if these rules might detract from The Basement session (eg 'no shouting indoors') we will discuss this with the client's family and try to reach a compromise (eg only shouting indoors when The Basement worker is here').
- All Caris staff and volunteers are appropriately trained and supervised.
- CRB checks are undertaken for all staff and volunteers.

Safety

- The safety of the young person is our top priority and any action needed to ensure this must be taken
- 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 Rucksack Room is inspected annually as part of our Health and Safety Audit.

We will endeavour to ensure safe practice when working at the client's home but cannot be responsible for circumstances outside our control.

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

[Adopted by Trustees March 14th 2011]