



## What happens if something significant occurs in the life of my family member or friend?

Mencap's work is with people. The nature of people means that sometimes unpredictable or significant things happen. We want to reassure you about how we deal with these situations when they arise, and ensure that you feel confident in our ways of supporting people through them.

It is important for us to tell you when significant things happen with, or for, your family member as soon as possible. At Mencap, we are committed to doing so at the earliest opportunity so that you feel involved and informed at the start, and throughout our next steps.

### Health emergencies

We risk assess thoroughly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the people that we support, but sometimes health emergencies happen. Our service staff are all trained in first aid to ensure that they are able to give people the immediate help that they need in an emergency. Following a health emergency we will:

- seek the relevant help and support for your family member
- inform you promptly about the health emergency
- share any documentation, letters and reports from health professionals where agreed
- discuss any resulting changes to our support as a result of the emergency
- inform the local authority, and other organisational bodies, as required.

### Other emergencies

When any other emergencies affecting the people that we support, or their home occur, we will:

- inform you of the emergency as soon as possible
- contact appropriate services (in the case of fire, flooding, burglary, vehicle breakdown etc)
- follow our emergency evacuation plan in the service where necessary
- follow our critical incident procedure where appropriate
- ensure the safety of your family member comes first and foremost in all of our actions.

## Reporting and Recording

When significant things happen in the lives of the people that we support, we take reporting and recording of incidents seriously. This helps us to ensure that we understand what happened and why, are able to report it accurately to those that need to know, and that we learn how we might avoid similar incidents in future.

The managers who oversee our services can talk to you more about how and why we report and record if you would like them to do so.

We may also need to make a referral to Safeguarding, you can find out more about this in the *How does Mencap keep people safe?* document in the Better Together pack.

## Safeguarding

We have an organisational commitment to safeguarding (see *How does Mencap keep people safe?* document) and take all safeguarding concerns within the organisation extremely seriously.

Where safeguarding issues are reported to us, we will:

- take people's concerns seriously
- investigate thoroughly
- keep you involved and informed of progress
- report the outcome to you and act appropriately where action needs to be taken
- make appropriate referrals and notifications to local authorities and other agencies as and when these are required.

## When a person dies

It is a sad reality that sometimes people die whilst we are supporting them. In many cases, this is expected because someone had a pre-existing health condition, but sometimes, as with all things, it can happen out of the blue.

At Mencap, we are committed to learning from deaths however they occur, and to support families to gain the information, support and answers they need.

## Supporting families after a death

We know the death of a family member is an impossible thing to think about, and an awful thing to happen. That's why we work to ensure that we provide families with the answers and support they need at this most difficult time. We will:

- share our condolences with you, never losing sight of how much your family member meant to you
- understand how difficult this time is for you and your family and acknowledge that in any conversations we have

- be available to answer any questions and concerns that you have about what happened, ensuring that we are honest and transparent with you at all times
- be available to share any stories and anecdotes about your family member that you wish to hear and let you know how much they meant to others who knew them
- talk to you about any further support you require from Mencap
- talk to you about any further investigation that might be required around the death, and ensure that you have the information that you require about this
- make referrals for any further investigation into what happened (where necessary) and cooperate in such investigations fully
- follow our organisational commitment to refer the death for independent review under the Learning Disability Mortality Review programme (see below).

### The Learning Disability Mortality Review Programme (LeDeR)

Mencap has an organisational commitment to refer all deaths of people that we support to the Learning Disability Mortality Review programme.

This is a programme of work carried out by Bristol University to review the deaths of people with learning disabilities over the age of four, upon referral. The aim is to understand and reduce the health inequalities that people with learning disabilities face. The reviews conducted consider whether there was anything that could have been different about the way that the person died. Once a referral is made to the LeDeR programme, families may be contacted by the programme team to discuss whether they would like to be involved in the review process.

The Regional Managers who oversee Mencap services are available to answer any questions that you may have about the programme, at any time.