



How does Mencap keep people safe?

Keeping people safe as we support them to enjoy happy and healthy lives is a responsibility that we take seriously. We want you to feel that you can entrust the safety of your family member or friend to those who support them. Our safeguarding policy and practice supports us to ensure that you can do so with confidence.

What is abuse?

Abuse means illegal, improper or harmful practice. The new Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership policy in Northern Ireland identifies the following categories:

- physical abuse
- psychological or emotional abuse
- financial abuse
- sexual violence and abuse
- neglect
- institutional abuse
- exploitation.

Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse, exploitation or neglect.

There are other forms of abuse which are also recognised in Northern Ireland including:

- domestic violence and abuse
- human trafficking
- hate crime.

Mencap's safeguarding responsibilities

Mencap works together with people, their families, friends and other organisations to prevent the risk and experience of abuse, exploitation or neglect, whilst promoting people's wellbeing.

To do this:

- We have policies and procedures in place, which help us to protect vulnerable adults and children from harm and abuse, and enable our staff and volunteers to know what to do if they have concerns.

- All staff throughout the organisation are fully trained and are required to be aware of safeguarding and their responsibilities to prevent, protect and report where a safeguarding matter arises.
- There are a range of legal and regulatory requirements around our safeguarding responsibilities. We are committed to acting promptly, responsibly and sensitively when safeguarding issues arise, working with relevant organisations and families throughout the process.
- Our national safeguarding panel is made up of staff from across the organisation and has an independent chairperson. This panel oversees our responsibilities and reports into our board of trustees.

Here at Mencap, safeguarding is not just about systems and processes, we engage with individuals throughout to ensure that people's voices are heard, that they are kept informed and are involved in solutions and outcomes.

Local authority safeguarding responsibilities

We work closely with local authorities to ensure that we meet our safeguarding requirements. Under current legislation in Northern Ireland Local Authorities have a number of safeguarding responsibilities of their own including:

- The Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership, and five local Adult Safeguarding Partnerships (LASPS) have been established. These are made up of provider organisations, local Trust staff, Public and Community Sector agencies, and are responsible for adult safeguarding in Northern Ireland.
- Intervening early when they think someone may be at risk and action plan to ensure their safety
- Carrying out Safeguarding Adults Reviews when someone dies as a result of neglect or abuse
- Arranging advocacy for individuals who are subject to safeguarding reviews where necessary.



Reporting allegations of abuse

If you are concerned that an adult is at risk of harm or in need of protection you should always tell someone. Share your concerns immediately with the service manager, or area operations manager if Mencap supports the person that you are concerned about.

We will:

- take your concerns seriously
- report them through to an Appointed Person and to our Adult Safeguarding Champion who will ensure the local trust are informed
- keep you involved and informed of progress
- report the outcome to you and act appropriately where action needs to be taken
- notify required authorities such as RQIA and other agencies as required.

Mencap is committed to creating an environment in which everyone feels welcome and safe. We have a safeguarding culture that focuses on the outcomes that a person we support wants to see, and we will include them throughout the process.

Duty of Candour

As a social care organisation, Mencap is required to be open and transparent with the people we support, families, and other relevant people, about the care and support that they receive. This is called our Duty of Candour.

The Duty of Candour legally applies to services that are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England, and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in Wales, but we are committed to ensuring that we maintain this duty across all of our services regardless of type or location.

For more information about this duty, please visit: <http://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-20-duty-candour>

For further information about safeguarding, see our *Safeguarding policy statement*.