



# **Croydon Mediation**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

*Updated September 2024 / to be reviewed September 2025*

Croydon Mediation (CM) is a community-based charity providing a volunteer-led mediation service to all residents in the London Borough of Croydon. The service was set up by Croydon Council in 1998, becoming an independent charity in 2001. During this time CM has managed thousands of cases, supporting local residents to heal conflict in their communities.

We offer an accessible, impartial, confidential and free community mediation service to all Croydon residents. We support both neighbour disputes and interpersonal conflicts (such as family relationships, community groups etc.). Our primary focus has been working with Council housing tenants and those living in deprived areas of the borough.

### **Introduction**

Everyone deserves to be safe and secure in their activities. Vulnerable people and their carers (if they have them) need to feel sure that the people in charge of these activities are trustworthy, responsible and will do everything they can to keep the vulnerable safe from harm. Unfortunately, sometimes people who work or volunteer may pose a risk to vulnerable adults and may wish to harm them.

Croydon Mediation (CM) fully supports the Croydon Multi Agency Policy and Procedures for protecting vulnerable adults and has therefore put in place safeguards to protect vulnerable adults. CM has also put in place safeguards to avoid putting their staff and volunteers in positions where abuse might be alleged, and to ensure that all staff and volunteers know exactly what to do should abuse be suspected or disclosed. CM believes it is important not only to protect the

vulnerable from abuse but also to actively promote the welfare of vulnerable adults.

We know that being a person aged 18 or over who has:

- a substantial learning or physical disability
- a physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- or, a significant reduction in physical or mental capacity

makes them vulnerable to abuse by adults. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult who is involved in the delivery of our service are transparent, and safeguard and promote the welfare of our clients, staff and volunteers.

CM has a responsibility to inform vulnerable adults and carers (where appropriate), of its duty to follow up any safeguarding concerns and report suspected cases of abuse to the appropriate body, when disclosed or observed.

## **Safeguarding Principles**

It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse to the Service Manager – Fiona Salmon, who will escalate to the Safeguarding Lead, trustee Darren Pullman.

020 8686 6084 / [office@croydonmediation.org.uk](mailto:office@croydonmediation.org.uk)

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of vulnerable adults is of primary concern and staff and trustees will work in accordance with the interests of vulnerable adults and follow the policy.
- All vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identify have the right to safeguarding from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse to the Service Manager or Safeguarding Lead, and the responsibility of the social services and the police to conduct, where appropriate, a joint investigation.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

## Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance

### Contact with Vulnerable Adults

This policy is relevant to our staff, volunteers, trustees and those who partner with us. CM does not specifically work with children, young people or vulnerable adults as a core activity, however CM does work with vulnerable adults directly and indirectly through its work providing conflict resolution services.

### Safer Recruitment

We practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with vulnerable people:

- In order to work with vulnerable adults, CM staff and volunteers will complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- Staff who may come into contact with Vulnerable Adults but do not directly work with them staff have a Standard DBS check. This may include administrators or volunteer office workers.
- CM will also seek at least two references for every paid and voluntary post.
- Regular one to one, peer group and monitoring supervisions will be given to all staff and volunteers.

### Safer working practices

We support our staff and volunteers to keep vulnerable adults safe by ensuring:

- All CM staff and volunteers will maintain up to date knowledge of safeguarding procedures through ongoing training.
- No member of staff or volunteer mediator will be alone with a vulnerable adult. If it is necessary, they must alert others of the reason.
- At least two volunteers or staff will be present at all times throughout a mediation process, workshops or other activity.
- All allegations of abuse against a worker, however minor, will be reported to the Service Manager or Safeguarding Lead.

### What is abuse?

- **Physical abuse:** the actual or likely physical injury to a vulnerable adult, or failure to prevent physical injury, or suffering, to a vulnerable adult.
- **Neglect:** the persistent or severe neglect of a vulnerable adult, or the failure to protect a vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the vulnerable person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.
- **Psychological abuse:** emotional or verbal abuse, threatening harm, controlling behavior, humiliation or harassment.

- **Sexual abuse:** the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult.
- **Financial or material abuse:** any act, such as theft, pressure to extort money, or misappropriation of property or money that lead to financial or material exploitation.
- **Emotional abuse:** the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioral development of a vulnerable adult, caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** the lack of culturally or gender sensitive care practices including lack of attempts to address language barriers, awareness of importance of faith festivals, etc.

### **What you should do**

If an adult who you think may be vulnerable shares information about abuse or neglect, or talks openly about this in your presence, you should:

- Listen carefully. Do not directly question them.
- Give your time and attention.
- Allow them to give a spontaneous account.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given including how they appeared/their behaviour, what was said, the time and setting, who else was present. Keep a copy of this.
- Explain to them that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Offer reassurance, they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep them safe.
- Do not ask the them to repeat their account.

Report this immediately to the Service Manager – Fiona Salmon: 020 8686 6084 / [office@croydonmediation.org.uk](mailto:office@croydonmediation.org.uk) who will escalate to the Safeguarding Lead trustee, Darren Pullman.

If the Service Manager is implicated in the disclosure, make the report to the Safeguarding Lead, trustee Darren Pullman ([darrenpullman@mac.com](mailto:darrenpullman@mac.com)) in confidence and they will follow the steps below. Or alternatively, you can consult with the social services team in the relevant borough.

### **What the Safeguarding Lead will do**

The Safeguarding Lead may consult with the trustees about whether this requires further action, such as:

- A further conversation or welfare check in.
- Advice or consultation with an external body, such as social services or a relevant charity.

- A referral to social services.

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to social services is necessary. We acknowledge that any referral to social services may include contact with the police.

### **In an Emergency**

If you find yourself in a situation where a vulnerable adult in your presence may need immediate medical attention, depending on the circumstances you may need to:

- Telephone for an ambulance.
- Ask a doctor to call.
- Ask the carer (if appropriate) to take the vulnerable person to the hospital or doctor at once.
- Offer to take the vulnerable adult and a carer (if appropriate) to the doctor / hospital for medical attention.

### **Care givers**

The vulnerable adult is the legal responsibility of the care giver (where appropriate) and that person must be involved in the matter as soon as practical unless it is suspected that person is responsible for the abuse of the vulnerable adult.

If this is the case and the vulnerable adult is at risk of harm if they return to the custody of the care giver (if appropriate) you should consult with the Service Manager or Safeguarding Lead, who may then contact social services, or if the Service Manager or Safeguarding Lead is not available, contact social services yourself.

### **Non-specific abuse**

Sometimes, you might become concerned about a vulnerable adult without any specific incident having occurred. This can be a vital time in alerting officers to predisposing factors, which could lead to abuse if not identified. Even if you are in doubt, it is better to mention your concern than to keep silent. In these circumstances volunteers should record their concerns and discuss them with the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. They will then contact the relevant authorities. To make a report yourself you may telephone the Croydon SAB Abuse Reporting Line on 020 8726 6500.

### **Recording**

Always keep a record of observations you make which concern you, noting the date and time, and including any conversation you may have with the vulnerable adult or anyone else who may be involved.

## **Accusation or suspicion against a member of staff or volunteer**

Avoid being alone with individual concerned.

Where possible the staff member/volunteer should cease contact with the vulnerable adult. Contact should be made with the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and a statement given.

## **Overall**

Above all, if you suspect or witness abuse, or are yourself in a position where charges of abuse may be made against you, always inform the Safeguarding Lead, or other appropriate adult, of your suspicions / actions.

## **The Care Act, Department of Health 2014**

The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other parts of the system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Care Act Statutory Guidance says adult safeguarding is:

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

<https://www.croydonsab.co.uk/>

## **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

In response to recommendation 19 of the Bichard Inquiry Report into child protection procedures following the Soham murders, new arrangements for people whose jobs and voluntary work bring them into contact with children and vulnerable adults (previously referred to as the vetting and barring scheme) was phased in from autumn 2008 under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act.

## **Resources**

Safeguarding Adults NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/abuse-and-neglect-vulnerable-adults/>

Six principles of safeguarding SCIE:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/six-principles/>

Safeguarding Network resources:

<https://safeguarding.network/content/safeguarding-resources/>

### **Signposting**

- Croydon SAB look out for vulnerable adults in the borough and those who care for them, call 020 8726 6500 [csab@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:csab@croydon.gov.uk)
- To talk about anything that is upsetting you, you can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call free 116 123 [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
- If you're experiencing a mental health problem or supporting someone else, call 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm–10pm every day).
- National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK. Offers a supportive listening service to anyone with thoughts of suicide. 0800 689 5652 (6pm to midnight every day).
- Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM). Call 0800 58 58 58 (5pm–midnight every day)
- If you're under 25, you can call The Mix on 0808 808 4994 (3pm–midnight every day) or text THEMIX to 85258.
- If you're under 35 and struggling with suicidal feelings, or concerned about a young person who might be struggling, you can call Papyrus HOPELINEUK on 0800 068 4141 (24 hours, 7 days a week), email [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org) or text 07786 209 697.
- Switchboard. If you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, you can call Switchboard on 0300 330 0630 (10am–10pm every day), email [chris@switchboard.lgbt](mailto:chris@switchboard.lgbt) or use their webchat service. Phone operators all identify as LGBT+.
- For vulnerable older people contact Hourglass <https://wearehourglass.org/> 0808 808 8141

Last revised September 2024