



## **PARTNERS WITH disABILITY**

### **SECTION 4**

#### **GOOD PRACTICE:**

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## **GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITHIN KITH & KIDS**

Throughout its activities and projects Kith & Kids aims to have a consistent approach to working with members, parents, professionals, friends, and volunteers. Our overall aim is to encourage the social inclusion of people with disabilities within the community; this, however, involves everyone in that community. Our activities aim to be fun and of benefit to all involved in them; there is always a sense of caring and sharing, and we all need guidelines within which to work.

### **WORKING WITH OUR MEMBERS**

In working with our members with learning disabilities we hope to always encourage behaviour appropriate to age, time and place, and ability. For example:

- i) We hope always to work positively with our members' abilities rather than focussing on their disabilities. Many members are able to do many things that they might not appear to (e.g. making tea, putting some clothes on, buying drinks - everyday tasks); we should encourage our members' independence by allowing them to do the things we know they can, and by showing and teaching them tasks at present beyond their reach.
- ii) Rude, offensive, or abusive behaviour is not generally acceptable within the community, so it should not be tolerated on Kith & Kids activities. Different members will need different approaches to manage their behaviour, but it is important that we all have a consensus on what is OK. It is never OK to use physical punishment with a member of Kith & Kids, and any such behaviour will be treated as an assault.
- iii) Some of our members are very ready to show affection to anyone who will respond to this; we all need affection, but hugging and kissing someone you have only known for a few days or hours is not something we would all readily do (although some people might operate this way). Encouraging this behaviour in our members leaves them vulnerable to abuse, if they do not learn who and where it is appropriate to hug and kiss.

It is never easy to lay down exactly how we should relate to any one member as we all have a different approach to such issues in our own lives. We should, however, try to put ourselves in the place of our members and think of how and why we would or wouldn't do something - we can use our own experience to guide others.

## **WORKING WITH EACH OTHER**

We aim always to create a sense of community within our activities and projects; everyone has come for the same purpose; there needs to be an open and caring atmosphere in which we can share the delights and frustrations of working and playing together.

This atmosphere can be eroded by any of us saying or doing anything which could be potentially upsetting to other members of that community. We all need to feel comfortable about our participation and not threatened by offensive, discriminatory, or harassing behaviour of others (please leave such behaviours outside Kith & Kids activities). Kith & Kids has an active equal opportunities policy and we ask that all are respected.

If you do experience or observe any threatening or otherwise upsetting behaviour by anyone involved in an activity, you should inform the Kith & Kids worker responsible for that activity as soon as possible.

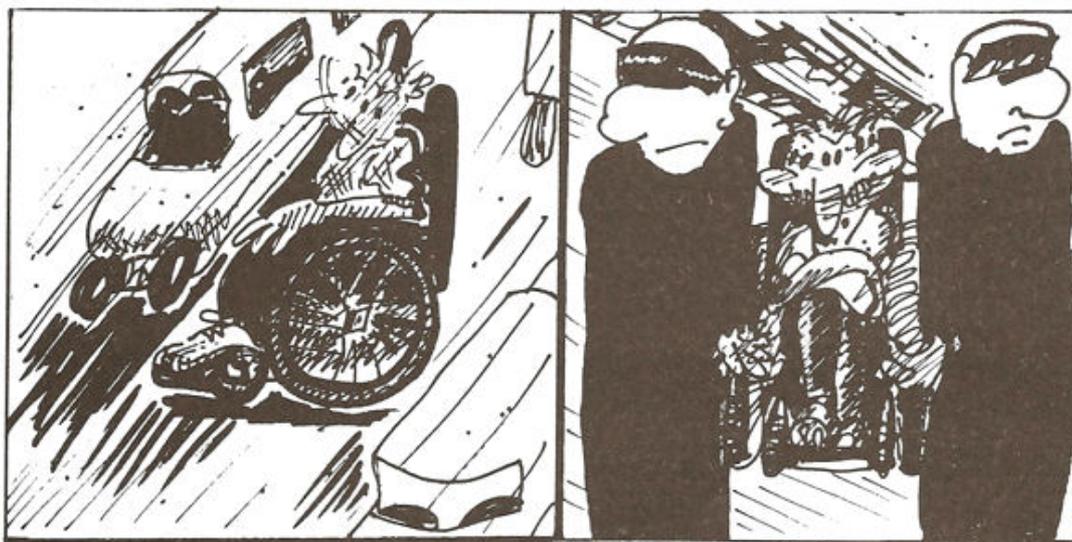
## **KITH & KIDS IS ABOUT FUN**

Kith & Kids activities always seem to foster a sense of fun in those who participate; it is this which we would like to emphasise as being of major importance, and which we hope you will benefit from in your involvement with us. It is because we have carefully considered our guidelines, and are able to come together in a climate of respect, that we are all free to enjoy the activities. We have found that our projects build communities which encourage all participants because they are enriched by the diversity of ability, race, culture, gender and so on.

## SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY

Kith & Kids has a very good safety record and this is partly due to the fact that we try to raise awareness around safety and protection issues in our volunteer training. If people do not feel safe with each other or the environment they find themselves in, they probably will not enjoy themselves or find any ease in working with one another. Our ethos is that no one has to do anything with which they are uncomfortable and that any learning process needs to have elements of fun. To help establish an environment where all participants feel this is possible and to safeguard the welfare of all participants Kith & Kids has a protection policy. Firstly as a reassurance, so that you will know who you can go to if difficulties arise, what set procedures to follow. Secondly as an awareness raiser – anything you experience as potentially harmful for anyone, bring it to the attention of the person who can most likely do something about it. There is no need for you to worry by yourself. In fact, we feel it is more beneficial for the safety and welfare of us all if you do discuss your worries, whatever they are.

In the following pages you will find the Kith & Kids policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. As said, the document is there to support you but if there is anything in it that alarms or worries you, or raises questions, please come and talk to a Kith & Kids staff member. It's all about finding a balance, really. To be safe without being over-protective, to be protective without losing the sense of fun and adventure.



How much Protection?

Finding a balance.

## **KITH & KIDS**

### **POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

#### **Introduction**

As a self-help organisation for families in which one or more members, child or adult, have a disability, K&K seeks to provide all our members with services of the highest quality.

We regard the following principles that have been adopted by Kith & Kids as essential to this quality of service:

Recognising and respecting all participants in Kith & Kids projects and services as individuals and not discriminate in relation to age, gender, physical disability, mental or sensory impairment, race, culture, class, economic factors, sexual orientation, marital status, politics, religion or other specific factor.

This means that we encourage respect for others' background, appearance, personality, abilities, opinions or preferences and do not countenance any form of abuse, whether physical, sexual or emotional, nor destructive criticism or verbal insults.

For all participants in any of our projects and services, be they members, volunteers or staff, we seek to ensure that any activities are undertaken in an atmosphere of mutual respect, dignity and support. This is the ethos that sets the tone of our work (see also the section in the Kith & Kids training manual entitled *Guidelines for working within Kith & Kids*).

In order to safeguard the welfare in the first instance of our members who have a learning, physical and/or sensory disability, but generally for all persons involved in Kith & Kids projects and/or activities we have adopted a protection policy with the following aims and objectives.

#### **Aims**

- i to protect children (i.e. persons under 18 years old) and vulnerable adults
- ii to work to the highest standards of good practice
- iii to safeguard the welfare of all participants on Kith & Kids projects and activities

#### **Objectives**

- i to raise awareness of abuse, what is meant by abuse, its causes and symptoms
- ii to provide Kith & Kids, their members, staff and volunteers with guidance
- iii to give to Kith & Kids members, staff and volunteers clear guidance on how to respond to situations of suspected abuse

## **Policy Statement**

Kith & Kids believes that the welfare of its members who have a learning, physical and/or sensory disability is of paramount importance. The Kith & Kids protection policy requires its staff, volunteers and able-bodied members to accept the duty to safeguard the welfare of the members who have a disability and to prevent physical, sexual and emotional abuses of all members with a disability with whom they come into contact.

At the same time guidelines and procedures set out in this document aim to ensure the welfare of all people, disabled and able-bodied, participating in Kith & Kids projects and/or activities.

The full policy document will be distributed to all members, volunteers and paid staff.

## **Definitions**

### **Abuse**

Abuse is the violation of a person's human and civil rights. Abuse may be said to have occurred when a person suffers harm to their physical, emotional or social well-being.

### **Vulnerability**

Vulnerability can result from the need for care, prompting, support, supervision, help or advice. It may also result from exposure to the risk of abuse. A vulnerable person may be the carer, volunteer or staff member in certain situations.

### **Types of Abuse** (see also appendices re abuse attached to this document)

- Physical
- Neglect
- Sexual
- Emotional or psychological
- Financial or material

### **Kith & Kids Co-ordinators:**

- Projects Manager
- Activities and Volunteer Co-ordinators (2)
- Self Advocacy Co-ordinator
- Citizen Advocacy Co-ordinator

## **Confidentiality**

Children and Adults have rights to protection from abuse. Such rights may require confidential information to be passed on to appropriate authorities.

Confidentiality is respected at all times but disclosure may be necessary to protect another person. Kith & Kids members, volunteers and staff must limit such disclosure to people who need to know and are in a position to offer guidance, or act to protect the individual (e.g. Kith & Kids co-ordinators, Chair of the Kith & Kids Management Committee, Police, Social Services).

## **1. Measures for personal safety and the prevention of abuse**

Kith & Kids acknowledges and accepts the need for a comprehensive strategy to prevent abuse from occurring and it requires members, volunteers and paid staff to be aware of that strategy and to observe its guidelines and procedures.

### **1.1 Vetting and Supervision Procedures.**

All volunteers and paid staff have to:

- a. complete a written application form
- b. attend an application interview
- c. provide at least one referee and give permission to take up references (in writing and in person)
- d. provide details of any criminal convictions (including any 'spent' convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974), cautions, reprimands, final warnings and pending cases
- e. undergo a criminal record check through the Criminal Records Bureau
- f. provide details of previous experience, voluntary or paid, of working with children and/or vulnerable adults
- g. commit to the duty of safeguarding the welfare of members who have a disability

Kith & Kids will regularly supervise paid staff and volunteers to enable monitoring of relationships and an opportunity for concerns to be shared; it will also record all actions and findings in relation to investigation of paid staff and volunteers, of their concerns or of complaints against them.

### **1.2 Training**

Kith & Kids is committed to providing training for volunteers and paid staff in all areas, including protection practices. It requires all volunteers and paid staff to attend the necessary training sessions. It also encourages members to participate in these sessions.

### **1.3 Supervision**

Kith & Kids is committed to ensure adequate and appropriate levels of support for all its projects and services. These levels may vary from project to another, but the following applies to all projects and services:

- a. At no time will the number of members who have a disability to be supervised by one co-ordinator exceed 15.
- b. The minimum level of volunteer support for members who have a disability will be 1:1 within group situations and 2:1 (2 volunteers per disabled person) away from groups.
- c. All participants and visitors of projects and activities must sign in upon arrival and sign out upon leaving using the provided attendance book. Any participant who notices a person unknown to the project/activity entering the premises must immediately notify a project co-ordinator, who will establish their identity and reason for attending and either invite them to sign in or ask them to leave the premises as appropriate.
- d. Written consent by parents/carers/guardians is required for all members who have a disability and all participants under the age of 18. Consent forms are provided for this.

### 1.4.1 Protection Guidelines and Support – Code of Behaviour

Kith & Kids believes that guidance and support are integral to good practice as is the observance of dignity and mutual respect.

With regard to safety and protection the following guidelines apply to all Kith & Kids projects and activities:

- a. one-to-one situations (one staff/volunteer to one member with a disability) should only occur within sight or hearing range from other participants - they are not to occur in isolation. Only within the context of the friendship and advocacy schemes may this be varied but only with the prior consent of the relevant parent or the co-ordinator
- b. personal care (e.g. toileting, bathing, changing clothes) is done on a same sex basis, save for exceptional circumstances with the prior consent of the co-ordinator
- c. anyone who is supporting a person who does need assistance with personal care is to be briefed beforehand in terms of what is required and how to offer such assistance with dignity, respect and safety
- d. those supporting a person who has a disability should know at all times during a project or activity where that person is or who is supporting them in their place. If it occurs that the person who has a disability has gone missing outside of the project venue, firstly the police need to be alerted immediately and secondly the Kith & Kids co-ordinator. If a person has gone missing within or from the project venue, the Kith & Kids co-ordinator or other designated person (i.e. programme planner or team leader) needs to be alerted immediately
- e. members who have a disability travelling to or from Kith & Kids activities are to be escorted by at least one responsible adult who is known to Kith & Kids
- f. Kith & Kids offers ongoing support to all participants in its projects and activities; it encourages all participants to seek support whenever needed. The support can take a number of forms: e.g. group feedback sessions, one-to-one chats face to face or over the phone, asking someone to take one's place in order to have a break.
- g. no one is expected to do something with which they are not comfortable or confident. If anyone is asked to do something that they feel uncomfortable with or lack confidence in, they have the right to refuse or ask for further guidance/support.
- h. all participants have the duty to report to a Kith & Kids co-ordinator any incidence or behaviour they feel is not in accordance with the protection policy and its guidelines (for further details see sub-sections 1.4.2 and 1.4.3 or section 2 below).

Please remember: the Kith & Kids Protection Policy and Guidelines apply to everyone involved in Kith & Kids activities: members (those with a disability as well as their parents and siblings), volunteers and paid staff.

#### **1.4.2 What to do if the incidence or behaviour that causes concern is about another member of staff**

It can be very difficult to report concerns about a member of staff but all staff and volunteers have a **duty** to do this. If it is difficult to approach a co-ordinator, or they are the alleged abuser, their line-manager must be contacted (see appendix staff structure in Kith & Kids). If the concern is about the Director, the Chair of the Management Committee should be contacted.

Allegations of abuse against a member of staff will be fully recorded, and referred to Social Services for investigation in the same way as any other such concern.

Concerns about a staff member's conduct will be dealt with through Kith & Kids' disciplinary procedures. Kith & Kids acknowledges that staff members who are the subject of allegations will have support needs. Information about their rights to representation and support will be provided. The Director or Chair of the Management Committee will ensure the time taken for the investigation is not unnecessarily protracted.

#### **1.4.3 What to do if concerns are not dealt with appropriately**

If a staff member or volunteer passes on a concern or allegation to their line manager, but feels this has not been acted on appropriately, they must contact the Director or Chair of the Executive Committee. If they feel that the inappropriate action is putting a child or vulnerable adult at immediate risk of harm they should also report their concerns to the local Social Services office.

#### **1.4.4 Guidelines on how to respond to a person disclosing abuse** (see also point 4 under "*Action when incident does not appear to require emergency procedure*")

- a. Treat any disclosure and allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child or vulnerable adult like you believe what they are saying.
- b. Confirm with them they are right to tell you and assure them they are not to blame.
- c. Be honest about your position, who you have to tell and why and encourage them to choose the person whom you'll tell (e.g. choice between designated person or other named person responsible for protection issues in Kith & Kids).
- d. Tell them what you're doing and when and give them the option to do it with you; keep them up to date with what is happening.
- e. Ensure that what you're reporting is written down on the standard report form and sign the written report – reports will be kept safe in a locked office during the project and in a locked filing cabinet at the Kith & Kids office once the project has finished.
- f. Do NOT make promises you can't keep and do NOT ask leading questions.
- g. Do NOT interrogate or investigate.
- h. Do NOT do anything to cast doubt on what they tell you or make them feel they are to blame in any way.
- i. Whatever you do – do NOT do nothing. Even if you are not quite sure about what you have heard or seen, if you have any concerns at all, tell the designated person or other named person.

## **1.5 Other Health and Safety Measures**

- a. Any venue and/or equipment used for activities is to be safety-checked by the appropriate Kith & Kids co-ordinator
- b. All participants will be made aware of who the First-Aiders are and of the location of First Aid equipment
- c. A fire drill will be carried out at the beginning of each project and/or camp
- d. All participants will be made aware of safety rules specific to a particular venue (in addition to the overall safety rules)

## **1.6 Insurance**

Kith & Kids is committed to ensuring that it has adequate insurance cover for all its projects, activities and services and all their participants. It will not conduct any activities for which it is not insured. Copies of the charity's insurance cover may be obtained from the Kith & Kids office.

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 Role and Responsibilities of Kith & Kids Management Committee**

- a. to familiarise themselves with Kith & Kids Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- b. to ensure that staff recruitment, vetting and supervision procedures include all reasonable measures to ensure members are not at risk from persons employed by Kith & Kids
- c. to ensure that staff receive training on the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- d. to ensure that the membership are made aware that Kith & Kids has a policy on the protection of children and vulnerable adults and that this limits confidentiality
- e. to ensure that proper support and supervision is available to all staff in the event of an incident occurring.
- f. to ensure the implementation of procedures for liaising with and reporting to appropriate authorities.
- g. to agree recording and reporting systems
- h. to agree procedures for staff to follow in case of suspected abuse.

### **2.2 Role and Responsibilities of Kith & Kids Co-ordinators**

- a. to understand and implement all procedures as required by Kith & Kids Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- b. to be aware of Local Authority procedures relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- c. to organise appropriate training for all volunteers and ad-hoc paid staff

### **2.3 Role and Responsibilities of Kith & Kids volunteers and ad-hoc paid staff**

- a. to work within Kith & Kids Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- b. to seek the support of the Kith & Kids co-ordinator(s) with any concerns or worries regarding the members who have a disability
- c. to attend appropriate training
- d. to report incidents or concerns immediately to the co-ordinator or other designated person (e.g. programme planner, team leader).  
This includes matters affecting their own safety.

### **Procedures for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults in Emergencies**

Kith & Kids members, volunteers and/or staff seeing a person who presents as being abused or in need of immediate medical assistance must:

1. Seek medical assistance for an injured person
2. Tell Kith & Kids co-ordinator (or where appropriate, the Chair of Management Committee) who will inform the appropriate authority. If the co-ordinator is not available, tell designated person (programme planner or team leader who will refer to instructions on whom to contact in an emergency (this information is provided on members' information/consent forms, which are kept by the relevant programme planners or team leaders).
3. In extreme emergency dial 999 for emergency services and alert Social Services (emergency desk)

### **Action when Incident does not Appear to Require Emergency Procedure or there is not substantial evidence of abuse or neglect**

1. Inform Kith & Kids Co-ordinator immediately of incident or concern; if Co-ordinator is not available inform Chair.
2. Kith & Kids co-ordinator will sensitively take steps to check out the reported incident/concern with the relevant individuals. S/he should explain to them that any unsatisfactory explanation of the child's or vulnerable adult's condition may be discussed with other professionals
3. Any re-occurrences should be reported immediately to Kith & Kids co-ordinator, who must record the concerns
4. If a child or vulnerable adult begins to disclose information about abuse they must be listened to carefully without prompting or probing, but where possible they must be made aware that Kith & Kids has a protection policy which limits confidentiality; then Kith & Kids co-ordinator must be informed immediately and s/he will take appropriate action. It is not the role of Kith & Kids staff or volunteers to investigate allegations or diagnose abuse.
5. Written records should be simple and factual. They should be written in ink within 24 hours, dated, signed and held confidentially and securely. Actions taken by staff should also be recorded.
6. If the Co-ordinator finds cause for concern, s/he must contact the appropriate authorities (the appropriate officer of Social Services and/or GP and/or Police).  
If the Co-ordinator is not available the Chair will follow procedure as set out above for the Co-ordinator.

7. Kith & Kids reserves the right to exclude from all Kith & Kids projects and activities any person against whom an allegation of abuse is made.
8. Kith & Kids reserves the right to exclude from all Kith & Kids projects and activities any person whom it feels jeopardises the safety and welfare of other participants and/or does not operate within the Kith & Kids guidelines.

**NB - In all cases Kith & Kids staff will inform and seek the co-operation of the relevant member family except where there is risk of exposure to further danger.**

**REMEMBER:**

1. The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult comes first.
2. Where possible the co-operation of the family must be obtained, except where there is risk of exposure to further danger.
3. Investigating abuse is not the responsibility of Kith & Kids (neither members, paid staff, nor volunteers).
4. Social Services have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
5. Volunteers have a responsibility to pass all concerns to the co-ordinator or other designated person (programme planner, team leader).
6. Paid staff have a responsibility to pass all concerns to their line manager.
7. Information kept must be factual, in ink, dated and passed to the appropriate co-ordinator/manager immediately.
8. Sensitive information must be kept securely.
9. Confidentiality must be respected at all times except where the law requires disclosure.



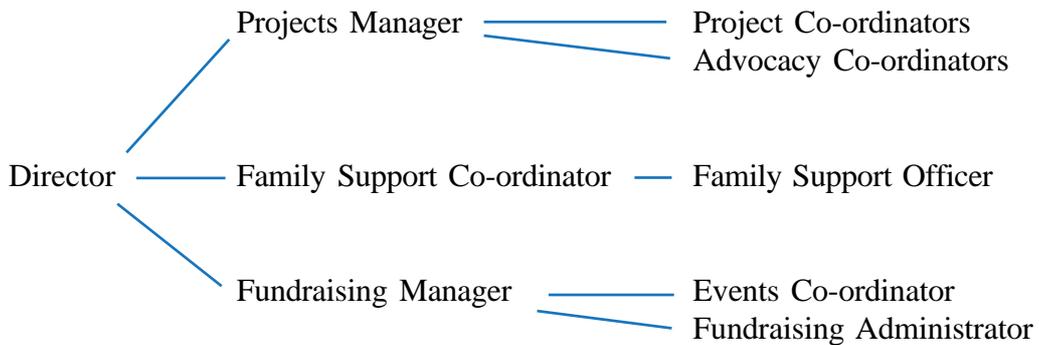
## Useful Telephone Numbers

Finally, at the end of the training workshop on safety and protection you will be given a list of useful telephone numbers, which will include:

Kith & Kids office: 0208 801 7432  
Kith & Kids projects mobile: 0780 123 4472  
Co-ordinators  
Director  
Chair of Management Committee  
Social Services Emergency desk  
Local Police Station  
NSPCC Child Protection Line

## APPENDIX 1

### Staff Structure in Kith & Kids



## APPENDIX 2

### Definitions of Abuse

Abuse: to use wrongly: to pervert: to revile: to violate. (Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary)

### SEXUAL ABUSE

(Henry Kempe, 1962 cited in Battison & Kerr, 1994): “The involvement of dependent developmentally immature children or adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend and to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family life”

(Ainscough & Toon, 1993): “ Any kind of unwanted or inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child. This includes sexual intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, being touched in a sexual way and being persuaded to touch somebody else. It may involve inserting objects into the child’s body or sexual acts with animals.

However sexual abuse does not always involve physical contact. Being made to watch other people’s sexual behaviour, or look at their bodies or at sexual photographs or videos can also be forms of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse includes abuse by one person or groups of people. The abuse may have happened only once or many times over a number of years. It may still be happening. “

People with learning and/or physical disabilities are vulnerable to sexual abuse throughout their lifetime, not only as children. The reasons for this are explained on page .

### Signs may include:

- \* a change in usual behaviour
- \* stained or bloody underclothing
- \* sudden onset of incontinence
- \* bleeding, abrasion or pain in the genital/rectal area
- \* disturbed sleep pattern
- \* overt sexual behaviour/language
- \* fear of person/place

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Beating with belts, canes and other objects. Burning with cigarettes, irons, pokers, scalding. Pinching, punching, slapping (here defined as beyond the light smack - this latter is currently being debated and EPOCH are trying to ban it). Biting, kicking, throwing the child, breaking objects (ie plates, chairs etc.) on the child. Restraint, tying up, throwing things at the child. Because of their dependence on others for their care and support, people with learning and/or physical disabilities are at risk throughout their lives of physical abuse. Many times aggressive behaviours exhibited by people with disabilities reflect the way they have themselves been treated in the past, or may still be suffering.

### **Signs may include:**

- \* unexplained falls or minor injuries
- \* bruising (especially in hidden places e.g. inside of upper arms/thighs, buttocks, breasts, genital or rectal areas etc.)
- \* clustered bruising from repeated injury (different discolouration of bruises in the same area may indicate on-going abuse)
- \* burns - by cigarettes, objects or water
- \* repeated fractures
- \* malnutrition
- \* over sedation
- \* depression
- \* mood/challenging behaviour
- \* lacerations
- \* flinching
- \* pressure sores, ulcers, bed sores (may indicate neglect also)

### **EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE**

(Battison and Kerr, 1994) “Children who are emotionally abused are rejected and unloved. They are not experiencing a close and stimulating relationship with their parents”. Children may be constantly undermined, criticised, ridiculed, humiliated, told they are in the way, should never have been born, are stupid, ugly etc. They may have been frequently forced to watch other siblings beaten or sexually abused, or have had to watch a parent being beaten. People with learning and/or physical disabilities may observe emotionally abusive behaviour in residential care situations, either directed at themselves or at others. If this is “normal” to them, they are unlikely even to say anything to anyone even if they are able to communicate verbally. It is therefore important to look out for the signs and take action. Included in these definitions are:

- \* systematic intimidation
- \* harassment or humiliation (bullying)
- \* unreasonable demands
- \* deliberate ignoring
- \* emotional blackmail
- \* deliberate isolation from social contact
- \* failure to meet cultural requirements

### **Signs may include:**

- \* insomnia
- \* change in appetite
- \* unusual weight gain/loss
- \* tearfulness
- \* unexplained paranoia
- \* fear of certain and/or new people/places

## **NEGLECT**

(Battison and Kerr, 1994): “...the grossly neglected child who shows evidence of inadequate parenting, i.e. stunted growth, poor hygiene (persistent and extensive nappy rash and repeated stomach upset), inadequate warmth or inadequate supervision”. Babies and children who are left to fend for themselves for long periods of time, feeding may be erratic, comfort non-existent. This definition can be extended to include any dependent person, regardless of age.

### **Signs may include:**

- \* hunger and/or underweight
- \* soreness/chafing due to lack of assistance with personal hygiene
- \* pressure sores, ulcers, bed sores
- \* change in behaviour

## **FINANCIAL OR MATERIAL ABUSE:**

Unauthorised extraction of money or goods e.g. withdrawing money from an account, exploitation or misuse of a person's money or goods; theft.

### **Signs may include:**

- \* unexplained/sudden inability to pay bills
- \* unexplained withdrawal from accounts
- \* disparity between assets and living conditions
- \* confusion or anger about loss of money

## APPENDIX 3

### **ABUSE IS MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR IN:**

#### **Unequal power relationships where one person can:**

- \* tell the other what to do
- \* gives intimate personal care
- \* has more status or credibility
- \* provides material goods
- \* has total financial control
- \* misuses confidential information

#### **Situations where the vulnerable adult/child:**

- \* has hit out at the carer
- \* cannot speak or communicate normally
- \* disturbs the carer at night
- \* has stolen from or otherwise abused the carer in the past
- \* is rejecting and/or ungrateful
- \* behaves in a bizarre way
- \* is behaviourally disturbed or experiencing personality changes

#### **Caring situations where formal carers or family/friends:**

- \* have not been given adequate knowledge, skills or equipment to provide adequate care
- \* feel very lonely or isolated
- \* habitually lose their temper
- \* feel unable to cope with the vulnerable adult or child
- \* experience considerable change in lifestyle
- \* have unsupervised/uninterrupted access to the vulnerable person
- \* have not recognised, acknowledged or addressed their own feelings of grief, anger and hopelessness about the vulnerable person's disabilities

#### **Family situations where:**

- \* relationships have been poor over the years, subject to violence
- \* living conditions are poor
- \* carers are not receiving practical/emotional support from other family members and/or professionals
- \* carers have other responsibilities
- \* role reversal has been experienced
- \* the person cared for is inconsiderate of other family members
- \* the carer is being abused by the dependent person
- \* family members have not recognised, acknowledged or addressed their own feelings of grief, anger and hopelessness about the vulnerable person's disabilities

## **RESOLVING CONFLICT SITUATIONS**

The following points may help you when trying to resolve conflicts between yourself and others:

- \* If you lose your temper, you'll lose your point - breathe deeply and/or count to ten!.
- \* Remember, you are trying to win an agreement, not an argument - negotiation and compromise will leave both parties feeling resolved, instead of one winner and one loser.
- \* Recognise and admit the impact of your demands.
- \* Exerting your power over the other will lead to resentment.
- \* Apologise when you are wrong, even if it seems only a small matter.
- \* Acknowledge that it is possible to have two different opinions or perceptions of "fact" - both are equally valid.
- \* You may need to use the "broken record" technique to stay with your point - bringing the argument back to a clear statement of what you want, but avoid put downs, or undermining statements
- \* Don't quibble; say what you mean and mean what you say. If you want truth, give it.
- \* Negotiation and compromise are the keys to resolving conflict.

## **THE FOUR "R's"**

### **RESPECT**

People behave respectfully, when treated respectfully. For those who have had years of being treated disrespectfully, it may take some time, and consistent respectful modelling and treatment, before they too behave respectfully - We can all be a part of that process.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

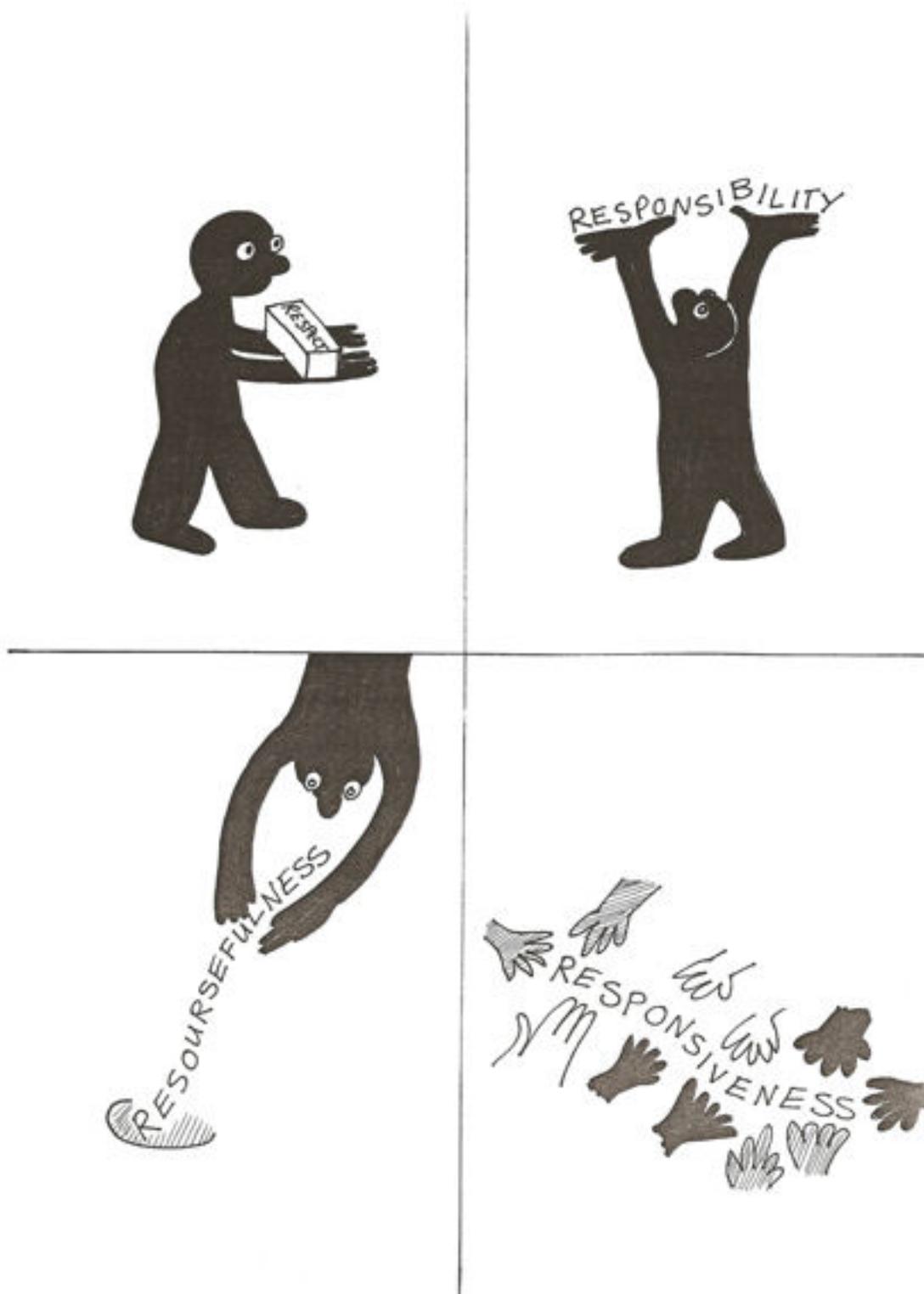
People become responsible by being given responsibility. Many people with learning and/or physical disabilities are prevented from taking responsibilities even for basic daily choices, like what to eat and when. It is important to offer opportunities for students to "be in charge" or be responsible for whatever can realistically be achieved by that individual.

### **RESOURCEFULNESS**

People become resourceful if permitted to solve life's problems. Many people with learning and/or physical disabilities are denied the opportunity or time to solve problems in their lives - even those problems that are well within that individual's capabilities. This undermines his/her self esteem and develops a helpless attitude. By trusting that the individual can solve the problem (being sure it is a realistic situation for this individual), and encouraging, you are helping develop that person's resourcefulness.

## RESPONSIVENESS

people become responsive when they are treated fairly and with acceptance. So often people with learning and/or physical disabilities are denied opportunities to be who they are and feel accepted. By having their own feelings acknowledged and accepted, s/he is given the opportunity to develop empathy for others, and will be more likely to respond positively, as this is the experience s/he understands.



Here are some practical points to help you communicate positively in conflicts with students with learning difficulties:

1. Don't spoil me, or try to give me everything I want. I know I ought not to have everything I ask for. I'm only testing you.
2. Be firm and clear with me. I prefer it. It lets me know where I stand.
3. If you use force with me, I will learn that power is all that counts. I will learn much more through encouragement and negotiation.
4. Please be consistent, otherwise I will be confused and I might try harder to get away with everything that I can.
5. Only promise me something if you can be absolutely sure you can come through with it, I want to learn to trust you.
6. If I provoke you, I am only testing my power, wanting a "victory" in that moment. If you get upset, I will have won - and that is not good for me.
7. If I say "I hate you", I don't mean it, but I want you to feel sorry for what you have done to me, or to understand that I am feeling upset over something or someone, and I might not be able to express it in any other way.
8. Please encourage me to do things that I can do for myself. It makes me feel like a baby if you don't, and I might expect you always to do everything for me.
9. Don't let my "bad habits" get me a lot of your attention. It only encourages me to continue them.
10. Don't correct me in front of people. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.
11. If we are in a conflict over something, I may not be very good at listening to reason or co-operating. You will need to take the action necessary, and let's talk about it later.
12. If you try to tell me how I should be, it makes me confused and feel bad about myself - it is more helpful if you encourage me in ways I can understand.
13. If you make me feel that my mistakes are crimes, I feel I am no good. I have to learn to make mistakes without feeling that I am no good.
14. Don't nag. If you do so, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.
15. If you want an explanation or reason for my bad behaviour from me, it makes me confused because I really don't know why I did it.

16. It is good for me to learn from the consequences of my actions, so even if it is hard for you to watch, please allow me to learn from experience.
17. Please give me straight answers to my honest questions, or I might be left with misinformation, or ask someone else who does not know the answer and who confuses me more.
18. Don't answer "silly" or meaningless questions. I just want you to keep busy with me.
19. Please apologise to me if you have hurt or upset me, or let me down. It makes me trust you more, and helps me to see that apologies are important.
20. Don't worry about the little amount of time we spent together. It is how we spend the time together that counts.
21. If I am frightened or nervous, it helps if you show me courage.
22. I thrive on and learn from encouragement.
23. I learn much more from how you behave than how you tell me to behave - please be my model, not my critic.
24. If you treat me like you would your friend, I will be your friend.

## COPING WITH ‘ CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR ‘

The term “challenging behaviour” is one well known in the caring and support professions, but not one Kith & Kids are happy with. This is because the focus always is upon the person with a learning disability, and denies the interactive possibilities when difficulties occur. However, we have chosen to use the common term for ease of reference, whilst reminding readers that whenever a “challenging behaviour” occurs there is likely to be a “challengee” as well as a “challenger”, and that we need to explore the whole situation in order to make any positive changes.

An example of “challenging behaviour“ was given in Section 3 (page 7) in discussing communication. Here we will focus on what is specifically challenging to you. What do you find the hardest behaviours to cope with from others? Are there particular habits that others display that make you cringe, frightened, uncomfortable?

Think about those for a while. You may want to write a list of those behaviours in others and/or yourself, that you find especially challenging. Next think about your own reactions to these behaviours: What do you feel, do, think of the person? Are there any situations in your life where something you do seems to precipitate the behaviours you dislike.

Being with people who have learning and/or physical disabilities brings many rewards and challenges. These may be more extreme than with others, but lie on the same continuum. Oftentimes we don’t like to have negative feelings on the grounds that “s/he can’t help it“. However, unless people are given the opportunity to recognize the impact of their behaviour, they will continue, and often receive negative responses they don’t understand. Saying “I don’t like it when you pick your nose” is a reasonable and negative response. Especially if followed by “you need to be in private.”

“Challenging behaviours“ range from simple, everyday annoying or unsociable habits, to extreme antisocial, aggressive or self destructive behaviours. How you can respond to these can make the difference between diffusing and escalating the problems in given situation.

At Kith and kids projects and activities, you will have been given training and additional information about any particular difficulties your member may have, and how these are usually responded to. There will also be support available throughout projects and activities as well as meetings for befrienders or advocates.

Unfortunately many with learning and/or physical disabilities, have not always got access to supporters, teachers or carers who are able to see their own part in creating difficult behaviours, nor be willing to examine their own frustrations and behaviours as they may contribute to difficult situations. Because of this they may miss the potential for change if offered a climate of respect, understanding and appropriate boundaries.

Here we hope that all persons on our projects and activities be respected. This means that “challenging behaviours “ may try our patience, but how we respond to them may make a very big difference in that persons life.

As a way of understanding the 'mistaken goals of behaviour', you could do some further reading on this issue you could read Alfred Adler's "The Educating of Children" (George Allen and Unwin Ltd), or Rudolph Dreikurs and Loren Grey's "A New Approach to Discipline, Logical Consequences" (Hawthorn Books Inc).

Whenever you feel challenged by someone's behaviour, consider the following questions:

- \* What is the person doing that presents a challenge? (be as specific as possible)
- \* What are you doing in response? (be as specific as possible)
- \* What is the person saying?
- \* What do you say in response?
- \* Are there others around, if so who?
- \* Does this behaviour occur in particular situations, with particular people, or anywhere, and with anyone?
- \* What do you feel when this behaviour occurs?
- \* What or who, if anything/one, prevents the behaviour occurring?
- \* What happens before the behaviour occurs? (You may need to observe over a long period to work this out)
- \* What happens immediately after the behaviour occurs? (include anything of possible relevance, who is around, what they do/say, where the person moves to etc)
- \* What or who, if anything/one, can stop the behaviour continuing once it has started?
- \* What could you guess is the message behind the behaviour?
- \* Could the behaviour be anticipated?

### **COPING WITH "CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR"**

We can all behave erratically and in extreme ways given the right set of circumstances. For some people this may mean explosive anger outbursts, or another extreme reaction is to become very withdrawn and not want to talk. People with learning and/or physical disabilities are no different, and yet when they behave in ways others find disturbing, they are labelled as displaying "challenging behaviours". Because they may have restricted ways of expressing themselves, people with learning and/or physical disabilities are vulnerable to being misunderstood, and having their distress or agitation exacerbated by others who become impatient, angry, or simply do not understand what they want. We have found that when the person is treated respectfully, and empathically (that is, when we try to understand from that person's perspective what is happening, what s/he is feeling), difficulties can be overcome positively. Here is an example:

Alice (not her real name) has a learning disability, and sometimes becomes distressed. She will then often swear and stamp around, ignoring the people who are with her, and attaching herself to anyone else she can. On one occasion Alice was stamping around swearing, and her supporter stamped too, saying, "Alice, you seem very angry, so angry you are stamping your feet". Alice looked surprised, and grabbed a wire fence swearing. The supporter went close to her, grabbed the fence too, and said, "you are so angry, you're not going to let go of that fence" - Alice stamped her foot and said "yes I am!" (she meant angry - but also walked away from the fence). This continued for some fifteen minutes, where the supporter was giving words to Alice's behaviour, but always respectfully and without anger. Alice then sat with the supporter and began to have a positive conversation.

This is one example, which worked really well. Naturally it is not always that easy, but it is remarkable how treating people with respect, and naming the feelings can bridge a gap, and turn a “challenging” situation into a positive experience. Even if you name the feeling wrongly, you are communicating “I want to understand”, and this has an impact. Often the person will correct you if you have got it wrong.

During projects and activities, it may be necessary to ask others not to try to help in these difficult situations, unless you ask them to. This is because you may have a chance of helping the person to communicate and change a negative pattern, but if others step in, it may spoil that chance, reinforce negative behaviours, and leave you feeling undermined. It is always worth letting others know that you are OK unless you say you are not!



## **POSITIVE EVALUATION**

Keeping a daily diary supports our members with a disability to connect their lives. For people who are not able to communicate their experiences in a manner that makes it understandable to others, and for people who have memory lapses, keeping a diary allows them and their family and/or friends to relate activities and happenings. It allows the choice to share, an opportunity we all have.

How the entries to the diary are recorded is extremely important. Positive recording at ALL times. That does not mean you should not record any difficulties that may have been experienced. Every negative has a positive, if a person has a difficult time or encounters frustration and therefore shows antisocial behaviour, there is always a solid reason for it. We may or may not be able to understand the reason BUT PEOPLE DO NOT GET WORKED UP WITHOUT A REASON. With this in mind look for the positives. ie. X may have thrown his/her plate across the restaurant and it may have landed in a strangers lap or hit them somewhere and chaos ensued, but in recording the incident THINK about the circumstances. Was X agitated prior to the incident? Had X shown any signs of not wanting the meal and persuasion been used? Was X uncomfortable in her/his chair? Were other people bringing attention to X? By X throwing her/his plate what happened?

“We talked to X and she/he calmed down, turned and smiled at the people hurt.” This could be an indication that understanding had happened. “We took X out of the restaurant. I talked to her/him, calming her/him down. My partner went back into the restaurant and explained, offering to pay for any damage. The proprietor, after the initial shock, came out, spoke with X and invited her/him back in.” Even if the outcome was that you escaped as quickly as possible leaving chaos behind - the positive may be that on returning to base and talking it through together lessons have been learned.

It is also important not to lose sight of small achievements. It is possible that your objective was to sit down in the art room and do some art work, but that your member didn't actually do any artwork, although she/he sat down in the art room a few minutes and seemed quite relaxed with that. Maybe for your particular member it is quite an achievement to just sit down and relax for a few minutes. By being aware and looking at each stage involved in an activity, you are likely to find quite a number of achievements which are worth noting and celebrating.

The diary entries do not have to be long and drawn out but sufficient that anyone reading it could hold a stimulating conversation around it.

AT ALL TIMES NEGOTIATE WITH YOUR KITH & KID MEMBER and agree what is to be recorded. When in doubt ask your group supervisor, co-ordinator or Kith & Kid volunteers co-ordinator or any person on the project whom you feel can be of support.

## VOLUNTEER CHARTER

Kith & Kids is committed to the principles (set out below) of the 1993 Volunteers Charter as it was drawn up by Camden Volunteers Bureau.

Everyone has a right to volunteer and the right to expect equal treatment from both the organisation they work for and the clients they work with. This includes:

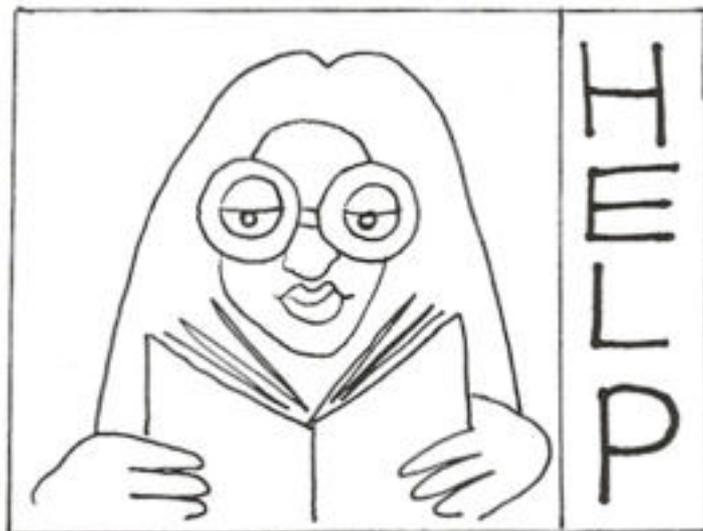
- \* The right to an open and fair volunteer recruitment procedure
- \* The right to have an interview based on equal opportunities principles
- \* The right not to be discriminated against by the organisation involving the volunteer (or the clients of that organisation) irrespective of race, colour, sexuality, gender, religion, age, disability or class
- \* The right to equal status with paid staff including the right to express, in an appropriate way, views and comments about the work and how it could be improved
- \* The right to a complaints or grievance procedure based on the principles of natural justice
- \* The right to join a Trade Union (if the volunteer wishes)
- \* The right to have out of pocket expenses met by the organisation
- \* The right to proper Health and Safety procedures, and insurance cover, for the activities undertaken by volunteers
- \* The right to information on Health and Safety procedures, equal opportunities procedures, and the extent of the insurance cover
- \* The right to proper support and supervision; training opportunities; opportunities for personal/skill development; and periodic reviews of the work of the volunteer
- \* The right to a reference

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## USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

### **British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD)**

Campion House  
Green Street  
Kidderminster  
Worcestershire DY10 1JL  
Telephone 01562 723 010  
Email [enquiries@bild.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bild.org.uk)  
[www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)

### **Contact a Family**

209-211 City Road  
London EC1V 1JN  
Telephone 020 7608 8700  
Helpline 0808 808 3555 or Textphone 0808 808 3556  
Freephone for parents and families (10am-4pm, Mon-Fri): 0808 808 3555  
e-mail: [info@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:info@cafamily.org.uk)  
[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

### **Mencap**

123 Golden Lane  
London EC1Y 0RT  
Telephone: 020 7454 0454  
Email: [help@mencap.org.uk](mailto:help@mencap.org.uk)  
[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

### **National Autistic Society**

393 City Road  
London EC1V 1NG  
Telephone 020 7833 2299  
Autism Helpline (0845 070 4004)  
Email: [nas@nas.org.uk](mailto:nas@nas.org.uk)  
[www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk)

### **National Society for Epilepsy**

The National Society for Epilepsy  
Chesham Lane  
Chalfont St Peter  
Bucks SL9 0RJ  
Telephone 01494 601 300  
[www.epilepsysociety.org.uk](http://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk)

### **SCOPE**

6 Market Road  
London N7 9PW  
Telephone 020 7619 7100 / 0808 800 3333  
Email: [response@scope.org.uk](mailto:response@scope.org.uk)  
[www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

**Royal National Institute of Blind People**

105 Judd Street

London WC1H 9NE

Telephone 020 7388 1266

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

**Royal Association for Deaf People**

18 Westside Centre

London Road

Stanway

Colchester

Essex CO3 8PH

Telephone 0845 688 2525

Text: 0845 688 2527

Email: [info@royaldeaf.org.uk](mailto:info@royaldeaf.org.uk)

[www.royaldeaf.org.uk](http://www.royaldeaf.org.uk)

We hope that our training manual will be of help to you, and we are always keen to hear about/ from people or organisations who are using (parts of) it and in which context as it is a part of our outreach work.

We also know there is usually room for improvement and we very much welcome any feedback you can give us that will help us improve our manual, or indeed any aspect of our projects or services you have used or wish to use.

Please give us a call or drop us a line when you can.

**The contact details are:**

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c/o Haringey Irish Centre  
Pretoria Road  
London N17 8DX

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email: [projects@kithandkids.org.uk](mailto:projects@kithandkids.org.uk)  
[www.kithandkids.org.uk](http://www.kithandkids.org.uk)

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Registered Charity number 1080972