



Watford Mencap

Child Protection - Policy and Procedure

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Who is the procedure aimed at?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| All employees | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Managers only | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Specific Employees (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Volunteers | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

This policy applies to all at Watford Mencap, paid and unpaid.

Why is this procedure needed?

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| It is a legal requirement | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| It is a regulatory requirement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| It is core Watford Mencap procedure | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| It is subject to local discretion | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

What are the key points?

This policy says what Watford Mencap will do to protect children from abuse. It says how Watford Mencap will report concerns and allegations of abuse.

It shows a commitment to protecting and safeguarding children against potential harm or actual harm. It fully accepts and promotes the principle enshrined in the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The policy also demonstrates a commitment to working with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and welfare of children and acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult. Watford Mencap will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary

Introduction

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers

- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Watford Mencap will endeavour to safeguard the children who are members or who attend activities we organise or facilitate by following the procedure if a concern is raised about a child's welfare.

The definition of a child for the purpose of this document is anyone under the age of 18 years.

Important Contacts

Watford Mencap has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers to consult with.

The Designated Safeguarding leads for Child Protection within **Watford Mencap** are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Ruth Murray
Work telephone number:	01923 713620
Emergency contact no:	07939 098401
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Sarah Fishwick
Work telephone number:	01923 220816
Mobile number:	07580 815734
Emergency Number:	07956 908816

Other Key Contacts:

Hertfordshire MASH Team	0300 123 4043 (including out of hours)
Police (CAIU)	0845 33 00 222 (or in an emergency 999)
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285

Further useful contacts are listed on page 15

Responsibilities of individuals in implementing this policy and procedure

All members of Watford Mencap are to:

- *Understand and apply this policy and procedure in their activities;*
- *Identify opportunities and undertake appropriate training to support them in their role;*
- *Act appropriately at all times and be able to challenge inappropriate behaviour in others;*
- *Be able to recognise harm; and*
- *Know how to report any concerns in a timely and appropriate way.*

In addition, senior members of the organisation are to:

- *Encourage all staff and volunteers to understand this policy and procedure*
- *Offer opportunities to undertake appropriate safeguarding training and refresher training*
- *Ensure that the policy and procedure is adhered to and to undertake regular compliance audits*
- *Ensure that a whistle blowing policy is developed, agreed and communicated with all staff and volunteers*

The role and responsibilities of the Designated lead(s) are:

- *To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person maybe subject to abuse or neglect.*
- *Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.*
- *The Designated lead(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.*

Outcomes for Children and their Families

In developing this Policy Watford Mencap intends that it will promote the welfare of children and young people attending and taking part in activities.

Children and young people and their parents / carers can be assured that Watford Mencap takes their welfare seriously and wants them to enjoy the activities in a safe and secure environment.

Every adult who works with or on behalf of Watford Mencap is aware of the contents of this policy and understands what the reporting procedures are if there are any activities that may be unsafe or may present a risk of harm, or if the child or young person (or their parent(s) / carer(s)) makes a disclosure of abuse or an allegation against an adult working with them. Such disclosures or allegations will be taken very seriously to ensure that the child is protected.

All adults working for or with Watford Mencap will have been appropriately recruited and Enhanced DBSs will be applied for and references taken up in line with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. Their induction into the organisation will include basic child protection training and a briefing on this policy.

Policy Statement

In implementing this child protection /safeguarding policy Watford Mencap will

- Ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation by including training on Child Protection in their induction and in subsequent training that is undertaken;
- Ensure that all workers understand their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed in the organisation's *Child Protection Policy* and work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice;
- Ensure that all workers are aware of *HSCB Inter-agency Child Protection & Safeguarding Children Procedures* and are confident in how to work within these guidelines by ensuring their attendance at training and at subsequent refresher training organised by the HSCB.
- Ensure that all workers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's Designated lead for child protection;
- Ensure that a Designated lead responsible for child protection is appointed and that they understand their responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Children's Services (CS));
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner;
- Provide opportunities for all workers to develop their skills and knowledge, particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people;
- Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the organisation's *Complaints Procedure*;
- Ensure that parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in the work of the organisation and, when requested, have access to all guidelines and procedures;
- Endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people.
- Ensure that appropriate background checks are undertaken when anyone joins the organisation and before they start working directly with children and young people.
- Ensure that all people working directly with children and young people have at least a basic understanding of child protection and as part of their training have at the very least undertaken an online, certificated child protection course.

Legal Framework

The Children Act 1989 sets out that the child's welfare is paramount and safeguarding and promoting it is the priority.

The Children Act 2004 set out a duty on Local Authorities to work closely with those providing services to children and young people.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015](#) sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and how practitioners should conduct the assessment of children:

'Safeguarding children - the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm - is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with Children's Services has a role to play.'

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out key principles which are enshrined within these acts and the statutory guidance. From 15 January 1992, when the treaty came into force, every child in the UK has been entitled to over 40 specific rights. These include:

- the right to life, survival and development
- the right to have their views respected, and to have their best interests considered at all times
- the right to a name and nationality, freedom of expression, and access to information concerning them
- the right to live in a family environment or alternative care, and to have contact with both parents wherever possible
- health and welfare rights, including rights for disabled children, the right to health and health care, and social security
- the right to education, leisure, culture and the arts
- special protection for refugee children, children in the juvenile justice system, children deprived of their liberty and children suffering economic, sexual or other forms of exploitation

The rights included in the convention apply to all children and young people, with no exceptions.

(<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/healthandwellbeing/b0074766/uncrc>)

Recognising abuse and neglect

Definition of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children maybe abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

An abused child is any boy or girl, under 18 years of age, who has suffered from, or is believed likely to be, at risk of significant risk of physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

Physical Abuse (including when masqueraded as discipline and chastisement)¹

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. [...]

Physical abuse often arises from a wish to chastise. English law allows smacking by parents in that parents can use the defence of “reasonable chastisement” but only in a charge of common assault.

The introduction of section 54 of the Children Act 2004 changed the law, to remove the reasonable chastisement defence for actual bodily harm. Actual bodily harm includes minor visible injuries such as a graze, a scratch, an abrasion or bruising around the eye. Common assault implies a transient trifling injury such as reddening of the skin or no injury at all. The use of an implement to hit a child though not specifically prohibited is more likely to leave a mark. Thus the law allows a parent to smack a child where doing so leaves no mark upon the skin, so only light smacks are permitted. “Over chastisement” which implies at least actual bodily harm would be against the law and the reasonable chastisement defence would not apply. This means, for example, that a parent can no longer justify beating a child on the grounds that child is difficult to raise.⁵

Although the reasonable chastisement defence only applies to the criminal law the concept influences decisions taken in the family courts. The defence applies only to parents and adults acting in loco parentis with the parent’s permission. Physical chastisement, i.e. corporal punishment, of any form has been prohibited in state schools since 1986, private since 1998 and by child minders since 2003.

It is important that all professionals treat injuries caused to children by their parents as an assault and do not condone or excuse this because their intention was to discipline the child. Professionals should be cautious about referring to such assaults as “over-chastisement” as this can have the effect of minimising the impact on the child of the injuries or implying the child’s behaviour was a contributory cause.

There is evidence that even smacking allowed within the law is harmful to children. For example, minor forms of regular smacking of pre-school children is associated with an increased risk of antisocial behaviour after 2-3 years even when allowing for other parenting risk factors and the presence of such behaviour at study entry.^{6, 7} Maternal depression and violence between adult partners are associated with a greater risk of smacking children than either factor present alone regardless of child behaviour.⁸ Parents who experience physical punishment in their childhood are more likely to smack their own children.

The following definition is taken from [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015](#), p85:

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

¹ Heckmatt Dr J, Recognition of Child Abuse Hertfordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board) 3rd Edition 2011; H.3.1: 3-4
Issue date July 2018
Review date July 2019
Document Owner LL Manager

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

Emotional Abuse

The following definition is taken from a previous version of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010,

Emotional abuse is a form of Significant Harm which involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Physical, mental and emotional development delay
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc.')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- *Extremes of passivity or aggression*

Sexual Abuse

The following definition is taken from a previous version of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010:

Sexual abuse is a form of Significant Harm which involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

Neglect

The following definition is taken from a previous version of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- *provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);*
- *protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;*
- *ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or*
- *ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.*

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

The Prevent Duty

In order to comply with the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Watford Mencap promotes the 4 British Values that are designed to keep children and young people safe and promotes their welfare. It is our duty to raise awareness, recognize and support both children and adults. This includes awareness of the expression of extremist views. There is no single way to identify an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology, but at Watford Mencap we; manage risks, notice changes and patterns in behavior and if we are concerned, we act proportionately, by referring through MASH and the Channel Panel. We use the Notice (recognise), check and share method. Staff at Watford Mencap are trained to identify children and young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and how to build resilience. By promoting fundamental British Values and debating controversial issues in a safe environment, allows children and young people to understand how they can influence and participate in safe decision making, recognise pressures, know how to manage difficult situations and where to get help. We provide opportunities to converse with the children and young people, listen to them and this rapport and trust that is built in a safe haven is essential in safeguarding effectively.

Bullying

Bullying affects everyone at some point in their lives. It may be at school, at college, in an activity group or club, in the workplace or even at home.

Parents, carers, teachers and others working with children have a duty to take action if they suspect or discover that child(ren) are being bullied.

Bullying includes:

- People calling you names
- Making things up to get another person into trouble
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving
- Taking things away from someone
- Damaging another persons belongings

- Stealing someone's money
- Taking someone friends away from them
- ['Cyberbullying'](#)
- Spreading rumours
- Threats and intimidation
- Making silent or abusive phone calls
- Bullies can also frighten the victim so that they don't want to go to school or take part in other activities. The victim may pretend to be ill to avoid the bully

Developing a 'code of conduct' with children and young people can assist with minimising the opportunity for bullying and encourage their participation in the activities of the group.

Steps to follow if you are worried about a child or if a child confides in you

Watford Mencap recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse and believes that the safety of the child should override any doubts, hesitations, or other considerations (such as the potential to have a negative impact on professional relationships with a family). When worrying changes are observed in a child's or young person's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, staff will follow the steps set out below.

If a child confides in you:

- Stay calm, approachable and open to what they have to say
- Listen to them carefully without interrupting
- Make it clear that you are taking what they are telling you seriously
- Acknowledge that you understand how difficult this might be for them to say what they are saying
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone
- Let them know that you will do everything you can to help them
- Do not show any shock or disgust;
- Do not probe further;
- Do not ask leading questions that might suggest the answer;
- Do not make assumptions;
- Do not make any comments about the alleged abuser;
- Do not make promises you cannot keep, particularly about keeping the information 'secret', but explain that you may need to share it with an appropriate person;
- Do not discuss with colleagues apart from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputy); and
- Follow the steps set out below

Step 1

- Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay? But never use leading questions
- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously;
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child/young person talks about matters that may be indicative of abuse;
- Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others, if this indicates they and or other children are at risk of harm;
- Notify the organisation's Designated lead for Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure on the form attached at Appendix 1 and send to the Designated lead for Child Protection / Safeguarding;
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely;

Step 2

- The Designated lead(s) will take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child has been abused or likely to be abused. In this situation the Designated lead will contact the police and/or MASH team. If a referral is made direct to a Social Worker this must be followed up in writing within 24 hrs.

NB Parents / carers will need to be informed about any referral to the MASH team unless to do so would place the child at an increased risk of harm.

- The Designated lead can also seek advice and clarity about a situation that is beginning to raise concern through the MASH team **0300 123 4043** or from the NSPCC National Child Protection on **0808 800 5000**. Specific advice about issues concerning South Asian children can be sought on the NSPCC National Child Protection Asian Helpline on **0800 096 7719**.

Professionals, employees, managers, helpers, carers and volunteers in all agencies must make a referral to the MASH Team:

- If it is believed or suspected that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, or
- Where a professional has identified unmet need in relation to a Child in Need

A referral must be made as soon as possible when any concern of significant harm becomes known - the greater the level of perceived risk, the more urgent the action should be.

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD YOU HAVE A DUTY TO REFER

The belief or suspicion about significant harm may be based on information which comes from different sources. It may come from a member of the public, the child concerned, another child, a family member or other professional staff. It may relate to a single incident or an accumulation of lower level concerns.

The information may also relate to harm caused by another child, in which case both children, i.e. the suspected perpetrator and victim, must be referred.

The suspicion or allegation may relate to a parent or professional or volunteer caring for or working with the child – see Managing allegations against an adult who works with children or young people.

A referral must be made even if it is known that Children's Services (Social Care) are already involved with the child/family.

Advice and consultation may be sought about the appropriateness of the referral by contacting the local MASH team or if the case is open, from the allocated social worker. Alternatively advice may be sought from the Police or a Designated Professional or Named Professional within your agency.

Safer staffing and DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks

Watford Mencap has its own processes for recruiting paid workers and volunteers. The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board sets out guidance in the Safe Staffing Handbook and this is included in Watford Mencap's Recruitment and Selection Policy:

http://www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk/adults/files/Safe_Staffing_Handbook.pdf

Managing allegations against an adult who works with children or young people

Whenever it is alleged a person who works with children has in any activity connected with her/his employment or voluntary activity:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against / related to a child
- Behaved toward a child in a way which indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

The procedures apply to situations when:

- There are suspicions or allegations of abuse by a person who works with children in either a paid or unpaid capacity - as a permanent, temporary or agency staff member, contract worker, consultant, volunteer, approved foster carer, child minder or approved adopter
- It is discovered that an individual known to have been involved previously in child abuse, is or has been working with children

If concerns arise about the person's behaviour to her/his own children, Police and/or Designated Officer must consider informing her/his employer in order to assess whether there may be implications for children with whom the person has contact at work. A decision as to whether the person's employer should be approached, either for further information and/or whether it is appropriate to invite the employer to a future Strategy Meeting when decisions are to be made about managing the possible risk, should be made at the initial Strategy Meeting when all agencies can contribute. The risk that someone presents needs to be properly considered and a decision made whether the risk outweighs the employee's right to confidentiality before an employer is approached.

If an allegation relating to a child is made about a person undertaking paid or unpaid care of vulnerable adults, consideration must also be given to the need to alert those who manage her/him in that role.

Procedure

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification, it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Actions to be taken include making a written record of the allegation using the informant's words - including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present. This record should be signed and dated and immediately passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

The recipient of an allegation must **not** unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

If there is an immediate or imminent risk of significant harm to a child or young person, you should contact The MASH team or the Police and then speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to inform them of the actions you have taken and follow this up in writing on the form attached at Appendix 1.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must take steps to ensure that the person against whom the allegation is removed from the situation immediately. This may be done by either agreement or suspension from the organisation until the matter has been fully investigated.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow the [Managing Allegations against Adults who work with Children and Young People](#) policy on the HSCB website by referring the issue to the Designated Officer (DO).

Ofsted must also be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by an adult working with the children or young people as well as an action taken.

Any member of staff who believes that allegations or suspicions, which have been reported to the appropriate manager, are not being investigated properly has a responsibility to report it to a higher level in her/his agency or directly to the Designated Officer.

The Designated Officer must be told, within one working day, of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to meet the criteria so that s/he can consult or refer to the Police Designated Unit Manager and Children's Services (Social Care) Team Manager as appropriate.

If, for any reason, there are difficulties with following the above procedure, the Whistle Blowing Procedure should be considered or a referral made directly to The MASH team and / or the Police.

The need for consultation must not delay a referral, which should be in accordance with **Referral procedure**.

The employer should keep the subject of allegations informed of progress in the case and arrange to provide appropriate support (via Occupational Health or equivalent). If the person is suspended, s/he should be kept informed of development in the workplace and if a member of a Trades Union or professional association, advised at the outset to contact that body.

Confidentiality

Information about a referral about a child or an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- Protect children
- Facilitate enquiries
- Avoid victimisation
- Safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected
- Manage disciplinary / complaints aspects

The Designated lead for Safeguarding may ask you for further information in order to make any referrals. You should not discuss or share this information with anyone else within the organisation. Any paperwork you have generated should be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet, or if stored on a computer it should be password protected.

Managing activities involving Children and Young People

When managing an activity involving children and young people, it is important to consider a risk assessment, both in terms of the health and safety of the participants, but also of the potential child protection issues.

Risk Assessments

Every child using services must have an individual risk assessment looking at their vulnerability, behaviour and other factors that may put them or others at greater risk. This should normally form part of introduction to services and be documented

Each activity should also have a risk assessment undertaken to consider what level and impact of risk there may be to the children and to the staff or volunteers. The service manager decides whether to document this or not.

Record keeping

Whilst record keeping may seem overly bureaucratic from time to time, it is important to keep good and clear records of the work of your organisation. All details must be kept securely on Watford Mencap's Charitylog system in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Good record keeping promotes confidence in the organisation and in the safety of children who are participating in the activities.

Mobile Phones

All staff personal mobile phones must be locked away whilst on duty. Watford Mencap will ensure that leaders are issued with company mobile phones without cameras. Staff should give these numbers for emergency contact.

Taking photographs or videos of children

Cameras may not be brought to activities but from time to time photographs may be taken on behalf of the organisation of children participating in activities. This must be arranged with the leader of the activity and children and young people should be advised why they are being taken and written consent obtained.

Following the introduction of GDPR legislation written consent must be obtained from the individual for any child aged 13 or over. Below that age a parent or carer must give written consent.

Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

If you have concern that a child is being harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, you must not keep these concerns to yourself. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. You need to ensure that you speak to the appropriate organisations who can listen to and record your concern, and then take appropriate action. In Hertfordshire, these are the numbers that you can ring for advice and to make a referral:

Children's Services (including out of hours): 0300 123 4043

The Child Abuse Investigation Unit: 0845 33 00 222. This is a specialist team that is a department within the police with countywide responsibility for undertaking child protection investigations.

The Police: 999 (in an emergency)

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 0300 123 4043

The MASH brings together key agencies to work together as a team, to share information, assess risk and make decisions jointly about the best way to safeguard and meet the needs of vulnerable children ensuring that they 'receive the right response at the right time with the right service'. The Hertfordshire MASH will deal with contacts and referrals sent by members of the public and professionals to Children's Services for a safeguarding response. Where the MASH team consider that the child's welfare will be better met by Early Help services, they will ensure referrals get to the most appropriate teams and will inform referrers of the outcome of their request for a safeguarding assessment.

Other useful contact information

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) provides advice and guidance for British nationals being forced into marriage overseas:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/forced-marriage/>

The FMU also provides expert advice to professionals, especially those confronted by it for the first time.

Tel: 0207 008 0151

<http://www.muslimparliament.org.uk/marriage.htm>

If the situation is urgent always call 999

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free 24-hour service that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Telephone: 0808 800 5000 - Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC Asian Child Protection Helpline is a free, multilingual service for the UK's Asian communities providing counselling, information and advice to ANYONE who is concerned about the welfare of a child, including:

- Parents, carers or relatives who need advice
- Children or young people in need of help and advice
- Education, health and social welfare professionals seeking culturally sensitive advice and information.

Safe Network

This is the National Organisation to support Safeguarding within for the 3rd Sector and can be accessed online at

www.safenetwork.org.uk for a wide range of information and materials offering support

For eSafety support and guidance - please contact 01438 843350

Useful Leaflets and Links

- [Bullying at School](#)
- [Bullying Help and Advice](#)
- [Beatbullying](#)
- [BullyingUK](#)

WHEN IN DOUBT, CONCERNS MUST BE SHARED APPROPRIATELY.

