

Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedure

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Ratification and Review:

This policy has been ratified for implementation by the Board of Trustees. It will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner to ensure that it continues to comply with WAIL's legal and other obligations and meets the needs of the organisation.

PART ONE - POLICY

1.1 WAIL recognises the direct links between domestic violence and child abuse and the harm experienced by children. The purpose of this Policy is to outline the WAIL commitment to protect and safeguard children experiencing abuse, and the principles underlying our approach. The accompanying procedures are intended to assist WAIL staff and volunteers to understand their roles and responsibilities when dealing with concerns of a Safeguarding or Child Protection nature and the necessary action.

Aims And Principles

1.2 This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and trustees.

1.3 WAIL: -

- believes that all children and young people have a right to be protected from all forms of abuse or neglect, whether this is physical, sexual, or emotional.
- believes that the child is never to blame for any abuse that s/he may suffer. The welfare of the child is paramount.
- will support and empower the non-abusing parent to protect and safeguard her children.
- recognises that all adults, including staff and volunteers, have a duty to create safe environments and protect children from harm.
- will ensure that all staff, volunteers, trustees, parents, and service users are made aware of, and understand WAIL's safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- will ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children receive Safeguarding Children training. Mandatory induction for new staff and volunteers includes child protection responsibilities plus procedures to be followed if anyone has concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- will ensure that all adults with access to children are appropriately vetted, trained, and supervised.
- will respond to any concern about abuse to children promptly.
- recognises that responsible information sharing plays a key role in enabling organisations and professionals to protect women and children affected by domestic violence.
- will usually only share information with a woman's consent but will share information without consent if there are good reasons to believe that a child is at risk of significant harm.
- will record concerns about child abuse fully and accurately, as well as any decisions made and the reasons for making them.
- recognises the need to maintain good working relationships with lead agencies for safeguarding children issues.
- All volunteers will be Enhanced DBS checked and will receive monthly supervision. Volunteers will need to complete a successful 6-month probation period before lone working with a child or vulnerable adult.
- take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
 - The Designated Safeguarding Lead for WAIL is the Operations Manager, contact numbers Office: 01582 876636, Helpline: 01582 391856.

PART TWO: DEFINITIONS AND LEGAL CONTEXT

2.1 The **Children Act 1989** introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries (Section 47) to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or

promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

- 2.2 'Harm' is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) so that it may include 'impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another' for example, where there are concerns of Domestic Violence and Abuse.
- 2.3 There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements.
- 2.4 Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action the commission take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children 2013 (gov.uk 2014) as:
 - protecting children from maltreatment
 - preventing impairment of children's health and development
 - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- 2.5 Voluntary organisations have a legal responsibility under The Children's Act 2004 Section 11 - duty to safeguard & promote child welfare. Trustees of charities which work with vulnerable groups, including children, must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to them. Having safeguards in place within an organisation not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but also it enhances the confidence of trustees, staff, volunteers, parents/carers, and the public.
- 2.6 Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 2.7 Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. WAIL will work with agencies and individuals to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

PART THREE: LIAISON WITH AGENCIES

- 3.1 We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board policies and guidelines at safeguarding@luton.gov.uk Tel: 01582 547624 or 01582 547590
- 3.2 Staff have access to a Safeguarding Children from Harm and Neglect Flowchart detailing procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and social services to work well together.
- 3.3 Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) can also be found on www.nspcc.org.uk.
- 3.4 If a referral is to be made to the local authority, we act within the areas of the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time. Reference to the LSCB website, <http://lutonlscb.org.uk/how.html> headed Information for Professionals to The HM Government Information Sharing Pocket Guide Pages 1 to 24.

PART FOUR: PROCEDURES

A concern about or allegation of abuse

- 4.1 Safeguarding Children is a multi-agency responsibility, with the statutory Social Care and Police services having lead responsibility.
- 4.2 There will be different responses depending on whether a child is still in a situation of danger.
- 4.3 All staff and volunteers must be aware of the procedures to follow when dealing with safeguarding children cases and will receive training in safeguarding children and confidentiality. It is the responsibility of staff to report concerns, NOT to decide whether something is child abuse. If any member of staff or volunteer has reason to believe that a child is being abused or has been abused, she must discuss this immediately with their line manager or, if the line-manager is not available, with the WAIL designated Safeguarding Lead. However, this should delay staff in making a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- 4.4 All documentation related to reporting a safeguarding concern must be sent to WAIL's Safeguarding Lead. A report or a referral is not a betrayal of trust, it is necessary, so that wider enquiries can be carried out and informed decisions made for the most effective course of action to protect the child and promote her/his welfare. Staff should not wait until they are one hundred per cent certain about their suspicions before they act.
- 4.5 We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect. When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or signs that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks, etc.
- 4.6 Where such evidence is apparent, the staff member is required to make a dated record of the details of the concern. Any case discussions with need to be recorded in a factual way on the On Track data management system.

Support to families

- 4.7 WAIL believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff, and volunteers. WAIL makes clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising always with the local children's social care team.
- 4.8 WAIL will continue to work with the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- 4.9 WAIL will follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, after any investigation.

Possible referral

- 4.10 Before making an actual referral it may be useful for WAIL's staff member to discuss a possible referral with Early Help, the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or NSPCC (giving no names) and to ask what action they would be likely to take in this situation. Health Visitors may also be able to offer helpful advice.
- 4.11 The response to a suspicion or allegation of abuse follows four stages:
 - Alerting

- Reporting
- Investigating
- Monitoring

Alerting

4.12 WAIL expects that all staff will alert their manager and the Safeguarding Lead to suspicion or disclosure of abuse. The **Whistle Blowing Policy** provides reassurance to staff that they will be supported in making an allegation of abuse if that allegation is made in good faith.

4.13 **Any WAIL staff member or volunteer who receives a disclosure of abuse should:**

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Reassure the child that s/he was right to disclose what happened and that the abuse is not their fault and the issue will be taken seriously.
- If it is not part of your role to work with children, then you need to immediately involve someone for whom this is part of their role i.e. Support Officers, Family, Children/Young Person Support Worker, and Senior Children's Support Workers.
- Give the child time and reassurance so s/he can say what has happened in his/her own words. It might be helpful to reassure that you take what they say seriously, it was not their fault, they were right to tell, it is right to say no to unwanted e.g. touching *if relevant*
- Discuss the allegations with your line manager and/or the Safeguarding Lead immediately, who will decide upon a course of action – dependent upon the nature and seriousness of the abuse. Seek advice from the MASH if appropriate. Inform and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Consider whether an immediate referral to the police or social care is required (informed by local statutory pathway arrangements), and whether there is a need to move the child to a place of safety
- Ensure that this decision and the reasons are recorded immediately, filling out an incident form stating what both the child and the staff member said. Remember to record facts not opinions.
- It is important to reassure the child that the abuse is not her/his fault and to continue providing reassurance that they were right to tell.
- Make a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure.
- **WAIL** staff and volunteers will never make judgmental comments or jump to conclusions. We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

Recent or continuing abuse

4.14 If there is a need to ensure the immediate protection of the child, the staff member in conjunction with their line manager/safeguarding lead, will make a referral to the MASH or the Police without delay. If the child would be in immediate danger put in place precautions to protect them until a Social Worker or the Police arrive.

4.15 If the line manager is absent, contact the Safeguarding Lead or another manager. In the unlikely event of no manager being available, the staff member may need to act themselves and report to a manager as soon as possible.

- Encourage the non-abusing mother to make her own referral to MASH immediately if the child is at risk. If the mother has not done this by the end of the appointment, then the staff member will need to make the referral.

4.16 If the non-abusing mother resumes a relationship with an abuser or if it is known that a child has been abused by the partner of the mother/carer or has been seriously affected by witnessing violence, WAIL will discuss the situation with the woman and explain that Children's Social Care/MASH will have to be informed.

- 4.17 Concerns should usually be discussed, if appropriate, with the mother/carer even if she is the alleged abuser. **DO NOT DO THIS** if discussion and agreement seeking will place a child at increased risk of significant harm.
- 4.18 If the child discloses abuse by the mother/carer, the person in whom the child confided should arrange a meeting with the mother/carer and the Safeguarding Lead. This should only occur where the child or the staff member is not at risk of harm or danger and the risks should be discussed initially with a manager. This meeting should focus on the child's safety.
- 4.19 If the mother leaves WAIL services in an attempt to prevent further action from being taken, but a child is considered to be at risk, as outlined above, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care/MASH or the Police, depending on the nature/ urgency of the risk to the child's welfare.
- 4.20 Staff must not question or discuss the alleged incident with the child beyond the details of the disclosure. This could seriously contaminate evidence and hamper any criminal prosecution or protection of the child.

Previous abuse when a child is no longer in danger

- 4.21 Intervention by police or social care may not be necessary when the child is no longer in danger. Under these circumstances an internal safeguarding meeting including WAIL's safeguarding lead and the relevant support officer(s) should be held and actions and outcomes recorded which should include completing relevant documentation.
- 4.22 A referral to MASH **will** be necessary if the abuse involved a serious physical injury or sexual abuse.

Reporting

- 4.23 Immediately after an incident of abuse or neglect has been reported or witnessed, a staff member should complete an incident report using the incident form. The report should record only information, not opinions, about the alleged incident including details of conversations with the mother/carer, child, staff members or other service users and should be uploaded to On Track (Oasis) in the child's case file.
- 4.24 The dates and times of these conversations must be recorded. Discussions between staff about their concerns should also be recorded in the child's case file. All reports should be signed and include both the child's name and date of birth, so it is clear who has written the report and when it was written. Be sure to include: -
- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
 - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible.
 - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
 - the names of any other person present at the time.
- 4.25 If WAIL continues to work with the family (e.g. they are in the refuge), regular updated reports must be filed. These can be useful if there are any further allegations or concerns about abuse or neglect. If a referral has been made MASH, monitoring and plans to protect the child should be carried out in consultation with appropriate agencies.
- 4.26 All verbal referrals to MASH or the police must be followed up in writing within 24 hours. All documents relating to safeguarding will be stored securely either on the client drive, embedded on Oasis or in a locked filing cabinet.
- 4.27 Documents stored on the client drive or emailed must be password protected. The Safeguarding Lead will set a new password for WAIL each financial year. Only authorised WAIL staff will have

access to personal records including any record of Safeguarding Children concerns. Documents will be stored in compliance with WAIL's Data Protection Policy.

Access to records

- 4.28 Safeguarding children records should only be accessed by staff who work directly with families or by those directly involved in decisions.
- 4.29 If necessary, to fulfil ongoing responsibilities staff and volunteers may need to be made aware of ongoing safeguarding issues.
- 4.30 If personal information is to be disclosed, the purpose of any information sharing must be clearly defined. The General Data Protection Regulations 2016 requires that there be a 'legitimate basis for disclosing sensitive personal data.
- 4.31 It is a general principle of data protection legislation that individuals have a right of access to information recorded about them. Access should only be refused if it could cause harm to a person or might prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.
- 4.32 The mother/carer has a right to see all written reports unless this might endanger the safety of the child or a staff member or volunteer. Children have a right to see their own records if they can sufficiently comprehend the contents and this information will not harm them. Staff and volunteers should also be aware that safeguarding children records might be subpoenaed for use in court proceedings.
- 4.33 Personal information relating to safeguarding or child protection matters, will only be shared, or disclosed (including with the mother/carer or child) with the authorisation of the safeguarding lead.

Confidentiality and service users

- 4.34 Women receiving services from WAIL will be informed about WAIL's Safeguarding Children and Confidentiality policies. It is important that women with children understand that there can be limits to confidentiality when Safeguarding Children issues are involved.
- 4.35 In cases where the issue may not be serious enough to warrant statutory intervention, the safeguarding lead and the support officers for the child and mother will attend an internal safeguarding meeting to agree actions. This should include completing an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and with consent shared with the early help team – this can be completed if consent is not given but cannot be shared unless there is a risk.

Dealing with allegations of abuse occurring during contact

- 4.36 Case law has established a strong presumption of contact, which often overrides considerations of safety. As contact may lead to further abuse of both the woman and the child(ren), WAIL will offer practical support and will provide written or verbal evidence in court if appropriate. Witnessing domestic violence or knowing that the mother/carer is living in fear may have a harmful impact on the child. For this reason, WAIL considers that contact visits with a violent parent may involve unacceptable risks for the child and the mother/carer of the child.
- 4.37 WAIL will carefully record any disclosure or evidence of abuse which may be relevant to contact proceedings. WAIL will also record information about the child's behaviour if s/he appears to be disturbed or traumatised by contact arrangements, as this evidence may be needed to show that contact is not in the best interests of the child.
- 4.38 Abusers often allege that the woman is an "unfit mother" and may apply for a residence order on this basis. If WAIL has relevant evidence about the woman's ability to care for her child(ren), we

will offer to provide that evidence for Children's Social Care, for the police or for the court.

- 4.39 We will seek to ensure that the court is made aware of any factors indicating a risk of harm to either the child or the mother/carer. If contact visits are unavoidable the support officer for the women and child must complete a safety plan for contact sessions.

An injured child

- 4.40 WAIL will ensure that an injured child is immediately taken to hospital or to a doctor. Ideally the mother/carer should be present, a staff member may be there to provide support, but anyone who has care of the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's welfare. (Children Act 1989 s.3(5)). The staff member should record the injury that the child has sustained as soon as possible, noting anything that was said about how this happened, and should seek to provide support for both the child and the mother/carer.

A child abuses other children or adults

- 4.41 Managing challenging behaviour positively is an intrinsic part of working with children in domestic violence or abuse cases.

- 4.42 In these cases, WAIL staff will hold an internal safeguarding meeting and, depending on the level of severity and risk may:

- Inform the child and the mother/carer that this behaviour is abusive and unacceptable
- In partnership with the mother/carer, work with the child to enable her/ him to cope with emotions and to develop more positive relationships and signpost for support agencies where appropriate.
- Monitor the situation and keep factual records.

- 4.43 In extreme cases (such as sexual assault) it will be necessary to make a referral to Children's Social Care or the Police, explaining the situation clearly. If there is a clear danger to other children, and they are living in refuge, a team decision should be made on whether the family should be required to move to alternative accommodation and be supported in doing so. At all stages, the safeguarding lead should be involved.

An allegation that a child has been abused by a service user (not a family member)

- 4.44 WAIL staff and volunteers will ensure that:
- This is discussed with a line manager or the Safeguarding Lead immediately
 - The situation will then be discussed separately with the resident and the mother/carer of the child
 - A record will be kept of any comments made
 - If the allegation is of a serious nature and staff have reason to believe it is correct, then Children's Social Care should be informed.

- 4.45 If the accused person is in refuge or attending a group session it may be necessary to move the accused resident to temporary accommodation or suspend from the group pending full investigation, which should take place without delay. If the allegations are not substantiated, WAIL will try to ensure that the accused woman and her family are offered accommodation elsewhere within WAIL service or with a different refuge and group members can re-join the group if appropriate. In these circumstances the other refuge service must be told what has happened.

PART FIVE: CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection register

- 5.1 When a woman is first referred to WAIL, she will be asked whether she has any involvement with Children's Social Care. If the answer is yes and the child is on the Safeguarding Children Register, this is recorded.

- 5.2 The mother/carer should be encouraged to inform Children's Social Care that she and her children are living in the refuge, giving the PO Box address only NOT the actual address of the refuge. If she is unwilling to do this, she must be told that WAIL will inform Children's Social Care on her behalf.
- 5.3 WAIL staff should seek the woman's consent to liaise with the Children's Social Care team, which dealt with the family before or the agency that initiated an EHA. This can help to obtain clear information, provide ongoing support and, if necessary, negotiate a support package for the woman and her child(ren) with the local Children's Social Care department, or relevant agencies working with the family.
- 5.4 If the mother/carer has moved to a new area, it is likely that there will be a safeguarding conference. It is possible that her ex- partner will be invited to such a meeting.

Safeguarding children conferences

- 5.5 Multi-agency Safeguarding Children conferences are a key part of the Safeguarding Children process.
- 5.6 The key staff member (or the staff member who has been assigned to work with the child and the mother/carer) should contact the family's social care worker, before the safeguarding children conference takes place, to introduce themselves and their involvement with the family and to ask for copies of reports that are relevant to the child's needs. If staff believe they have information that will be valuable to a safeguarding conference, they should contact the conference chair in advance and ask to be invited. Information should preferably be provided in a written report with sufficient copies for everyone attending the conference. Safeguarding Children conferences allow for the inclusion of positive aspects of parental care as well as concerns.
- 5.7 The issue of domestic violence and keeping the location of a refuge confidential must be discussed with the child's social worker before the Safeguarding Children conference takes place. It is crucial to insist that the woman should be seen separately from her partner or ex-partner so that she can speak without fear of retribution. The woman should also be given sufficient time to consider any written report prior to the Safeguarding Children conference.
- 5.8 In cases where there is an apparent conflict of interest between the mother and the child, it may be appropriate for two WAIL staff members to attend the Safeguarding Children conference: one to represent the interests of the child, and the other to provide support for the mother/carer. It is essential that these arrangements should be explained clearly to the social worker, to the woman and to the child beforehand.
- 5.9 As WAIL is well placed to assess Safeguarding Children issues in relation to women and children who use WAIL services, we will seek to establish a relationship with Children's Social Care whereby we can contribute to decision-making at Safeguarding Children conferences. Before attending safeguarding conferences, a risk assessment and safety plan should be completed.
- 5.10 If a WAIL member of staff will be attending a safeguarding conference they should do so with the knowledge of their line-manager and/or the safeguarding lead.

PART SIX: SEX OFFENDERS AND OTHERS WHO MAY PRESENT A RISK TO CHILDREN

- 6.1 If someone with a record of sex offending applies for a contact or residence order, WAIL staff will ensure that family court professionals are made aware of this risk. WAIL staff have a responsibility to pass information to Children's Social Care, when they become aware of potential child abusers

having contact with children. Children's Social Care has a responsibility to assess the risk to children where there is significant contact.

- 6.2 This would also apply if a woman in a refuge, attending group work sessions or receiving any service within WAIL is known to be a risk to children

PART SEVEN: CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND/SUBSTANCE MISUSE

- 7.1 A high proportion of these children are likely to have safeguarding issues, but this may not be immediately apparent.
- 7.2 If the child/young person discloses or is symptomatic of using substances, then the concerns should be discussed initially with the individual, and a request should be made that this also be discussed with the mother.
- 7.3 The Mother and child will be encouraged by the WAIL staff member to make a referral to the local drug and alcohol services for an appropriate assessment and treatment to be provided.
- 7.4 Where there are concerns around risk of harm of suicide or self-harm, then the WAIL worker will encourage the child and mother to engage with local mental health services. Crisis information will be provided to both the parent and family and a case discussion with need to take place with a senior manager.

PART EIGHT: FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

- 8.1 The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is an offence under the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985.
- 8.2 In instances where there is a suspicion of this taking place or a disclosure made then this will need to be treated as a safeguarding concern and a MASH referral will need to be made.

PART NINE: FORCED MARRIAGE

- 9.1 The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 contains civil measures to enable a person who is being forced into marriage or has been forced into marriage or a relevant third party to apply to the court for a Forced Marriage Protection Order. The court can order the behaviour or conduct of those forcing another person into marriage to change or to stop or impose requirements on them. Any individual can apply for this order if they have a concern. If a forced marriage is disclosed, it must be reported as a Safeguarding issue.

PART TEN: MISSING CHILDREN

- 10.1 The Police are the first contact if a child is missing. If all necessary checks have been carried out to ascertain the whereabouts of the missing child, the police should be informed, preferably by the mother/carer, but if a WAIL staff member may do so on her behalf, passing on information that there is a child at risk due to domestic abuse and giving details of any perpetrators.

PART ELEVEN: PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CHILDMINDING

- 11.1 Women in WAIL services are responsible for their children's care at all times, including health, safety, and behaviour.
- 11.2 Women should supervise their children in the refuge communal areas and ensure that younger children are never left alone. This obligation is stated clearly in the house rules.
- 11.3 Children should never be left in the refuge without proper supervision. In special circumstances (such as where a woman must see her solicitor, attend court, or go to hospital) it may be possible for the relevant support officer to provide or arrange childcare.

- 11.4 Older children in the refuge should not be used as babysitters.
- 11.5 The mother/carer has prime responsibility for disciplining children. As an agency providing support to families escaping domestic violence, WAIL is well placed to provide information and advice to women on positive management of children's behaviour.
- 11.6 Women's Aid has been promoting alternatives to smacking since the Children's Rights Policy was introduced in 1993. This states specifically in section 7: "All children in refuge have the right to safety from violence, which includes the right to safety from physical punishment."

PART TWELVE: DIRECT WORK WITH CHILDREN – PROTECTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- 12.1 WAIL children's work has traditionally been provided on a one-to-one basis or in small groups supervised by one adult. It is not always possible to have two staff members present when direct work with children is being carried out.
- 12.2 There are practical steps to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse against staff. Record keeping is extremely important.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs to a child. Ensure that another staff member witnesses the record and that a Senior Manager and/or the Safeguarding Lead is informed.
 - Where possible, children should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal care (such as going to the toilet). Personal care should not be provided if children are able to care for themselves.
 - If allegations of child abuse are made against any staff member, follow the procedures set out above.
 - If a child touches a staff member or volunteer in an inappropriate/ sexual way, a record must be kept of what occurred. Another staff member and a Senior Manager must witness this record and the CEO and safeguarding lead should be informed.
 - When play sessions are taking place, other staff should always be told when one-to-one work is being done and the mother's permission should be sought. It is also good practice to keep a record of play activities, noting any issues of concern.

PART THIRTEEN: WORKING WITH CHILDREN ONLINE

- 13.1 In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and where travel / weather make face to face work impractical, it will sometimes be necessary to deliver sessions and support to children via online video tools, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype etc.
- 13.2 In these cases the following action should be taken:
- Explicit consent to deliver sessions virtually needs to be obtained from parents/carers alongside the standard service consent.
 - Staff should consider whether virtual sessions are appropriate in line with a child's age and ability and if a safe and private space is available in the child/young person's environment where they can talk freely and without compromising confidentiality.
 - A responsible adult either teacher/parent or carer should be available following the session to take responsibility /supervision of the device and internet use in line with the child's environment (ie school or at home) their age and ability. Staff should make contact with the responsible adult and let them know once the session has ended.

- Let the child and parent or carer know what they can do if they have any concerns about the sessions. Talk about any support the child or young person may need from their parent or carer.
- It is important that you have the contact details for children and young people's parents or carers and that they have yours in case of emergency.
- All sessions must be undertaken at an agreed time (not ad hoc). Staff should also inform another appropriate adult (their team lead or colleague) that they are undertaking a virtual session where they will be alone with a child or young person.
- Staff need to ensure that a suitable device is available to the child/ young person. Only school or parent/carer emails should be used, staff must not send links to a child's personal email.
- If you are using a platform where you can blur or digitally change your background, this is recommended to try to maintain boundaries where possible.
- If not, try to present in a neutral space if possible. Always remove any identifying background features ahead of time. No other staff member should be present unless there is a reason and this has been agreed prior.
- If delivering sessions from home no other family members should be present and confidentiality should be maintained at all times.
- Staff must keep up to date with the risks associated with video calling software, and social media in general. Always use password protection facilities to ensure no one else can enter the virtual meeting.
- Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times as they would if conducting a session in person.

PART FOURTEEN: ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE RELATING TO STAFF (INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS)

- 14.1 Any allegations are reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day of it coming to WAIL attention. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this. Allegations of abuse related to radicalisation should be reported to the local named PREVENT or CHANNEL lead.
- 14.2 Internal Investigation should only be carried out after initial consultation with the LADO/ Prevent Lead WAIL will continue to seek guidance from LADO when they can carry out their own initial investigation and will take steps to ensure that WAIL will not hinder any police investigation.
- 14.3 Any staff member accused of abuse will be suspended on full pay for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff member as well as children and families throughout the process. The Designated Lead should ensure the staff member is always supported and communicated with throughout the LADO investigation
- 14.4 WAIL will co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- 14.5 Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups), can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

PART FIFTEEN: RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND SUPERVISION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- 15.1 WAIL will take every step to ensure that those in contact with children within its services are suitable and skilled.
- 15.2 Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and be able to challenge incorrect information.
- 15.3 Vetting procedures include:
- Using the Disclosure and Barring Service checks (previously CRB checks)
 - Checking references and essential qualifications before making appointments
 - Roles which involve working with children will be subject to a 6-month probationary period
- 15.4 WAIL will ensure that all staff and volunteers working with children receive adequate support, training, and support in line with the WAIL Supervision Policy.

PART SIXTEEN: LEGISLATION AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

This policy is reviewed on a three-yearly cycle. It can be reviewed earlier if legislation or best practice requires.

The documents below the legislation and internal documents associated or linked with this policy.

Legislation

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Human Rights Act (1999)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations
- Equalities Act (2006)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non-Statutory Guidance

Internal associated documents

- Recruitment And Selection Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Children's Rights Policy
- Supervision Policy