



WEST LONDON ACTION FOR CHILDREN SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Reviewed, updated and agreed by the Board of Trustees - 20th June 2023

Safeguarding Children Policy

1. The community as a whole has a responsibility for the wellbeing of children. Protecting children from harm is the responsibility of everyone.
2. As a voluntary agency we have a responsibility to pass on our concerns if we suspect a child needs protection from neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse. We have a duty to do all we reasonably can to ensure the safety of the child. Children have a right to expect this protection from harm.
3. This duty may conflict at times with duties and responsibilities towards adult clients. However, the wellbeing of the child is paramount.
4. Parents also have rights and responsibilities. Parents who come to us have a right to expect a confidential service, unless this is compromised by a child's right to be protected from harm.
5. West London Action for Children will ask permission of the client to share information with another agency. If this is refused, we will only share/compare information if we have child protection concerns which we judge to be in the interests of the child's welfare to share or as required by law.
6. Parents should be kept informed of any concerns we have and of any decision to report concerns. They should be involved as far as possible in this process and given clear reasons for the referral.
7. It is recognised that there may be exceptions, for example, in some cases of sexual or physical abuse, where it is judged that to inform parents about concerns, may place a child / children at increased levels of risk. In such instances referral may need to be made first to Social Services.
8. West London Action for Children staff may make use of anonymous consultation with Child Protection Advisers/Duty Social Workers without making a formal referral.
9. Staff should keep clear written records of any incidents or concerns, or conversations with children, recording the child's words and subsequent case discussions or actions agreed. This is whether, or not, the concern is referred on to another agency.
10. West London Action for Children will follow safe recruiting procedures for staff and volunteers. This will include written application forms, interviews, consideration of employment records, checking ID and qualifications where appropriate, and taking up of two references. All staff will be subject to criminal records checks through the DBS, and volunteers who have unsupervised access to children or confidential data

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regarding children and their families will be subject to these checks from DBS too. As part of staff and volunteer induction they will be given a copy of this policy.

11. A Code of Practice has been developed and adhered to for staff and volunteers and is constantly under review.
12. Most of the children who are involved in child protection procedures remain with their families. In these cases, protecting children from harm can best be achieved by supporting their families, working with parents in an open and honest way, being clear with parents about the types of behaviour or treatment which we and the Family Courts find acceptable, and offering them the appropriate assistance to help them ensure that their children remain safe and free from harm.
13. The Designated Person for overseeing Child Protection issues and concerns and for the implementation of the policy in West London Action for Children is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or in his/her absence the Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
14. Most safeguarding concerns unfold and develop over time. Therefore, most of the safeguarding activity within WLAC will be related to ongoing concerns requiring ongoing conversations with the family and ongoing internal and external consultations, rather than immediate and urgent one-off referrals to social services. This activity should be reflected in safeguarding concerns brought to and updated in conversations with the DSL or their Deputy, and a record of these conversations should be kept in the client database.
15. Online work: The same procedures apply to concerns when working with children and young people online as those disclosed when working face to face. Please see Appendix A for guidelines that we consider when providing therapy remotely.

The above is based on key safeguarding children legislation in England, including:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018

Child Protection Procedure

At the beginning of any piece of work with a client, staff should explain that all work with WLAC is confidential, except when a WLAC member of staff considers that either an adult or child is at risk or in danger and, in these circumstances, the staff member may inform a statutory service. This confidentiality policy is provided to the client to sign as a web-form. Please see Appendix B for a copy of this guidance.

16. Staff should discuss any child protection concerns or incidents with the DSL or in his/her absence, the DDSL or the Chief Executive as soon as possible. This may involve use of regular or a specially convened meeting or telephoning the DSL or, in their absence, the DDSL. In the unlikely event that none of these people are available the Chief Executive or the Professional Subcommittee may be consulted, as appropriate.
17. The staff member may also make use of peer supervision or external supervision if they wish, to enable them to think through the relevant issues.
18. Consultation with the DSL will usually be the first port of call for safeguarding concerns. The action and thinking decided upon within this consultation will be recorded on the client database by the therapist.
19. The staff member, in the consultation process described above, will decide on an appropriate strategy:
 - a) If it is not clear that there is a child protection issue that requires a referral to Social Services, then the staff member will gather more information in order to make a decision.
 - b) If the decision is that there is not a child protection issue, then the staff member will continue to work with the family as appropriate.
 - c) If it is clear that there is a child protection issue or if further assessment indicates that there is a child protection issue, then the staff member will refer the matter to the appropriate Social Services area team (please see Appendix C). This would usually take the form of a telephone call followed up by an interagency referral form. Parents should be kept informed of concerns and of the decision to report concerns unless to do so would place the child at greater risk (see Point 5 above).
20. If the DSL / DDSL / Chief Executive/ Professional Sub Committee are unavailable, the staff member must decide on whether to delay any action until it is possible to discuss with them or to refer the case to the Social Services Department if a delay would increase the risk to the child. If the staff member decides to refer to Social Services they should inform the DSL / DDSL / CE of this decision as soon as possible, and record their reasons for doing this.

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21. There are rare occasions when there is an immediate risk to the life of the child or likelihood of serious injury to a child or it is clear that the child has suffered recent serious harm. In these circumstances, referral should be made immediately to an agency with statutory powers (police or Social Services) to secure the immediate safety of the child, using a 999 call if necessary. However, in most cases the identification of abuse is less clear and staff members will follow the procedures outlined (points 1 – 6).
22. The DSL will be available to support staff in any action, e.g. can attend interviews telling parents of a decision to refer to the Social Services Department, can be present when referrals are made, etc.
23. The Administrator(s) may in very exceptional circumstances have to consult others about a child protection issue if neither a professional staff member nor the Chief Executive is available in the office, following the procedures outlined above (points 1- 6).
24. Volunteers with WLAC should discuss any child protection concerns or incidents with the DSL or Deputy DSL, or the Chief Executive as soon as possible. The DSL / DDSL / CE will make a referral to the Social Services team if this is appropriate and make a record of this action.
25. If a child discloses incidents of abuse to staff or volunteers with WLAC this should be recorded clearly including date and time of disclosure, the exact wording of the disclosure, and what was said by the counsellor or volunteer. Please see Appendix D. This should be discussed with the DSL / Deputy DSL / CE and the discussion, and any action taken should be recorded.
26. West London Action for Children's priority is to protect a child from harm or further harm. This takes priority over all other work.
27. If there is a disagreement within the Professional team, this should be referred to the Chief Executive who may, as appropriate, refer the matter to the Professional Sub-Committee. This includes any disagreements between West London Action for Children and Local Authority staff.
28. WLAC staff will follow school safeguarding policy and procedures when co-facilitating projects or offering individual counselling at schools. If WLAC staff feel decisions made in this process have not been in the best interests of the child(ren), WLAC policy and procedures can be implemented.

Recording Safeguarding incidents and concerns

All concerns and incidents will be recorded in detail on the client database. If a referral is made to Social Services, a copy of the referral form will be attached to the Client profile on the client database. All action, including the decision to take no additional action, should be clearly documented with supporting explanations in the client database, and any safeguarding discussions with action agreed should be recorded on the client database. This includes situations where there are current safeguarding concerns, but a referral to social services or to another agency is not considered appropriate. The reasons why a referral is not made must also be documented.

Appropriate training for staff

All staff working with children undertake Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Child Protection workshop Level 3 training provided by the boroughs of RBKC (Kensington and Chelsea) and LBHF (Hammersmith and Fulham) (London Safeguarding Children Partnership).

All staff read and sign to say they have read the policy and will report any concerns they may have to the DSL.

Child protection conferences: Attendance and Pro-forma

Practitioners will attend child protection conferences if they feel they have had significant involvement with the family around any safeguarding issues and have a useful contribution to make. If practitioners cannot attend a child protection conference, they will need to supply a report to the conference and to send a representative if this is possible. Please see Appendix E Child Protection Conference pro-forma attached. The contents of the report will be discussed with the relevant family members prior to the conference, unless to do so would put the child at risk of harm.

Health and safety and child protection safeguards

A safe and suitable environment is provided for all users of our services and participants in activities and projects. A Health and Safety Policy is in place and is reviewed at appropriate times and/or annually.

Review of policy

This policy is reviewed in line with developments in Safeguarding Children and/or annually. The next date for review is June 2024.

APPENDIX A

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR PRACTITIONERS WHEN WORKING WITH CLIENTS ONLINE

Below are some guidelines to consider when working with clients online:

Live webcam contact sessions / online messaging:

- All practitioners should be mindful of professional standards when using online messaging platforms (such as WhatsApp) or live webcam sessions (such as Facetime or Zoom) or mobile phone.
- Practitioners should not use personal devices and should use work provided equipment or dedicated equipment
- Practitioners and clients must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members who may be in the background
- Any computers/devices used should be placed in appropriate areas and where possible be against a neutral background. Practitioners should ensure there are no identifying features that would allow the practitioner's home address to be identified
- As in any therapeutic work, the contact should be recorded on the database so that if any issues were to arise, the notes can be reviewed. This should not involve audio or visual recordings, in line with the advice from the BACP.
- Live contact should be kept to a reasonable length of time.
- Practitioners will need to ensure the boundary between professional and social contact is clear. For example by ensuring that they are not "friended" on Instagram or Facebook.


All practitioners must continue to be aware of safeguarding obligations and to report safeguarding concerns if they arise

Data Controllers need to reassure themselves that any contact software and/or platforms selected are suitable and raise no privacy issues; or use cases against the provider's terms and conditions (for example, no business use of consumer products)

APPENDIX B

15 Gertrude Street, London, SW10 0JN
Telephone 020 7352 1155 fax 020 7351 2739
e-mail team@wlac.org.uk website www.wlac.org.uk

West London Action for Children

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Client confidentiality policy

* Required

1. Our Confidentiality Policy

Our services are confidential and all information you share with us remains within the professional team at West London Action for Children.

We have a duty to refer to other agencies any child or adult whom we judge to be at risk of significant harm or self-harm. We will keep you informed of any concerns we have and of any referral we make, unless doing so would place the child/client at greater risk.

Our Data Protection Policy

Confidential information is kept secure and is kept for seven years. For children who receive a service here this means seven years after their 18th birthday.

Our Complaints Policy

If you have any comments or suggestions, or are unhappy with the service you receive and would like to discuss this with the Chief Executive or Lead Therapist, please email team@wlac.org.uk.

If you would like to be sent a copy of this form or to see our policies in full, please email team@wlac.org.uk

Please enter your name below to show you have read the summary of our policies

*

Enter your full name below

2. Date *

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Never give out your password. [Report abuse](#)

APPENDIX C

Child Protection Contact Details

The Designated Person for overseeing Child Protection issues and concerns and for the implementation of the policy in West London Action for Children is the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, the Chief Executive - telephone 020 7352 1155/ 07525 781373

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM CONTACTS

Social Services

Postal:

Contact & Assessment Service,
Family Services,
145 King Street, Second Floor
Hammersmith
London W6 9XY

Telephone: 0208 753 6600

Or contact by email

Police Stations

Hammersmith – 101
Fulham –101

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA CONTACTS

Social Services

Social Services Line, Monday to Friday: 8.30am - 5pm
Emergency social worker, out of hours service

Town Hall and Main Office Social Services Reception,
Town Hall,
Hornton Street
W8 7NX

Email: socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7361 3013

Police Stations

Kensington – 101
Chelsea –101

NSPCC CHILD PROTECTION HELPLINE

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@NSPCC.org.uk

APPENDIX D

GUIDANCE ON HOW TO RESPOND TO DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

DO

- Always treat any allegations extremely seriously and act towards the child as if you believe what they are saying
- Tell the child that they are right to tell you
- Reassure them that they are not to blame
- Be honest about your own position, who you must tell and why
- Tell the child what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening
- Take further action – you may be the only person able to prevent future abuse – and tell your nominated person (Designated Safeguarding Lead) immediately.
- Write down everything said and what was done

DO NOT

- Do not make promises you cannot keep
- Do not interrogate the child
- Do not cast doubt on what the child has told you, do not interrupt or change the subject
- Do not say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse
- Do not delay - Make sure that you tell your Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately

APPENDIX E

15 Gertrude Street, London, SW10 0JN
Telephone: 020 7352 1155 Fax: 020 7352 2739
E-mail: team@wlac.org.uk Website: www.wlac.org.uk

Conference pro-forma

Re: Click here to enter text.
DOB: Click here to enter a date.

Referred by: Click here to enter text.
Date: Click here to enter a date.

Consultation by: Click here to enter text.
Date: Click here to enter a date.

Service agreed (including goals/preferred futures if relevant):
Click here to enter text.

Allocated Therapist: Click here to enter text.

Relevant feedback to conference:
Click here to enter text.

Particular safeguarding concerns:
Click here to enter text.

Signed: _____ (Client) Date:

Signed: _ _ _ _ _ (Therapist) Date:

APPENDIX F

What is abuse and neglect and how to recognise it

Please refer to the latest Edition London Child Protection Procedures (31st March 2023) relevant sections listed below. A hard copy is always held in the office. Alternatively, you can access it at:

https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/contents.html#core_pr

- CP1. Responding to Abuse and Neglect Updated
- CP2. Referral and Assessment Updated
- CP3. Child Protection Enquiries - Section 47 Children Act 1989
- CP4. Child Protection Conferences
- CP5. Implementation of Child Protection Plans
- CP6. Children and Families Moving Across Local Authority Boundaries
- CP7. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers (People in Positions of Trust), who Work with Children
- CP8. Organised and Complex Abuse
- CP9. Information Sharing Guidance
- CP10. Risk Management of Known Offenders