



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

The Westminster Society believes that all children have the right to feel safe and secure in their environment. We therefore strive to provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment for the children and their families. We aim to do this by thoroughly implementing this child protection and safeguarding policy, and ensuring all staff and volunteers are following the guidelines and procedures as outlined below. Under the Children's Act 1989 all staff employed by the Society have a legal obligation to report any child abuse they may witness, suspect, or are informed of by other team members and / or visitors in any of our services and activities delivered to the children and young people that take place within building based settings or within the family home or community. Staff employed by the Westminster Society also have a legal obligation to assist in any investigation that may take place.

What is safeguarding?

We will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give the very best start in life.

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.

Effective child protection is essential as part of our wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, we aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced

It might be difficult to accept, but every child can be hurt, put at risk of harm or abused, regardless of their age, gender, religion or ethnicity. Safeguarding legislation and government guidance says that safeguarding means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

and

“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 and

families has a role to play.” Working together to safeguard children (HM Government March 2015)

The Westminster Society is committed to reducing the risk of, and increasing the detection of safeguarding through:

- Effective staff and volunteer recruitment which ensures full pre-employment checks including references, right to work, Disclosure and Barring, fit for work and clarification of gaps in employment
- Robust values based selection and monitoring procedures
- The provision of training, raising awareness and enabling team members to use proactive approaches in the delivery of safe, respectful and responsive services
- The development of robust policies and procedures which outline good practice, adhere to the law and are commensurate with our mission and values

Where abuse is suspected the Westminster Society will provide a service, which is:

Prompt

In situations where there is any doubt about the child or young person immediate health, emotional wellbeing, mental health and safety.

Sensitive

To children and young people and their parents and families.

Effective

In reporting, communicating and providing solutions which aim to prevent the risk of further abuse and the abuse recurring, working within a strengthening families multi-agency frame work

Balanced

Team members must exercise responsibilities and duties appropriately, avoiding unwarranted intervention into family's lives.

Aware

Does not discriminate against a child/young person or family member because of their religion, cultural beliefs, age, disability, gender, race, or sexuality.

We will support children, young people and their families to have access to sources of relevant information such as Abuse is Wrong, what to do if your worried about a child or young person and to make available in all services information on who to contact and their role if they have any concerns .

Statement on safeguarding disabled children

Any child with a disability is by definition a 'child in need' under s17 of the Children Act 1989. Disabled children are more vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect than children who do not have a disability.

The presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of abuse and neglect.

Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children. Particular attention should be paid to promoting a high level of awareness of the risks of harm, high standards of practice, and awareness of barriers to communication which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.

Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with the guidance, in the same way as with any other child. The national guidance, '*Safeguarding Disabled Children*' – *Practice Guidance*, provides a framework of collaborative multi-agency responses to safeguard disabled children:

Safer Recruitment

The Westminster Society will implement robust recruitment and selection procedures, deliver training and supervision, promote safe working practices, and work within the law. All staff and volunteers employed by The Westminster Society and either based in any of our building based services and / or within the community will be subject to a criminal record check through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) prior to starting work.

A copy of this child protection and safeguarding policy will be given to each staff member during their induction process. They will be asked to sign it and hand it back to their manager, once they have read and understood the policy. All staff are also required to attend child protection/safeguarding training as soon as possible after starting work with the Westminster Society within Children, Youth and Family Services. Each staff member will also receive yearly refresher briefings.

We are members of the safer network which is a national organisation providing safeguarding related information and resources and sharing good practise (in terms of keeping children safe) We undertake the safer network self – assessment safeguarding audit tool.

Procedure for all team members to follow if they suspect child abuse

All staff or volunteers must report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding officer (Appendix 3 Safeguarding Poster - Our Commitment to Safeguarding Children) in the first instance and keep their line manager informed. If they are not available **do not wait** contact the On Call Manager for Children, Youth and Families directly (Appendix 5 Who to Contact)

- You have witnessed any form of child abuse towards a child who attends any Children, Youth and Family Service or Society led activity or building based service or within the family home or community.
- You were informed of any form of abuse by another team member, a visitor to Society led activity or building based service or within the family home or community or by any other professional having contact with Children, Youth and Family Services
- You have witnessed something that worries you while undertaking your role as an employee of the Society about any child or young person.
- You have any concerns about abuse towards a child based on the Definitions of Abuse (Appendix 1 Definitions of Abuse)
- A child/young person has disclosed to you.

Designated Lead for Safeguarding

Acts as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies and be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referral.

Carol Foyle Director of Children, Youth and Family Services is the designated lead for safeguarding and children protection concerns within WSPLD.

Fran Smith Head of Children, Youth and Family Services will deputise for the designated lead for safeguarding as required.

The designated lead for safeguarding takes the lead responsibility for child protection. The broad areas of responsibility for the designated safeguarding lead are to ensure that;

Managing referrals

Refer all cases of suspected abuse to the relevant local authority children's social care.

Refer to the relevant local authority designated officer (LADO) for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member) following an 'allegation against a member of staff', and if as a result of consulting the LADO a child protection investigation is undertaken, the Westminster Society disciplinary procedures will be followed only when these investigations and any resulting actions are completed. (Appendix 7 Useful Links)

Referral (in discussion with the human resources department) to Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child) and/or Police (cases where a crime may have been committed).

All concerns must be passed on to Carol Foyle. In Carol's absence contact Fran Smith promptly and within 12 hours.

If for some reason all of the Children, Youth and Family Head of or Service Managers are unavailable, the team member will need to report to the Chief Executive of Westminster Society at 16a Croxley Road, or to any other of the Westminster Society's Senior Manager.

The Westminster Society Children, Youth and Family Services Out of Hours on-call support phone number must be used if a report needs to be made outside of normal working hours (9am – 5pm Monday to Friday) and none of the above people are available). **The on call number is 020 8968 2680**

The relevant Manager will ask the staff member to document all face to face or telephone conversations regarding the child, what they witnessed, observed or were told and the steps that were taken. The documentation will be recorded on the

Society's incident form marked confidential stating facts of what was seen, observed, or heard, and should not contain any interpretation or speculation of the events and circumstances. It should be dated and signed and copies held in the child/young person's personal file and a copy sent to the designated Lead (all under password protected communication)

Training for Safeguarding Leads

The designated safeguarding lead will receive appropriate training carried out every two years in order that:

They understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention in the relevant Local Authority for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments and submission of CAF and eCAFs.

They have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so

Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the organisations child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, especially new, sessional, part time staff and volunteers.

Only the Designated Safeguarding Lead mentioned above or the Designated Deputy will take action if a safeguarding concern is suspected. The relevant service manager will take the following steps:

- Look/Read and listen to all information from the staff member who has brought forth their concerns.
- Discuss with their line manager if appropriate, and make a decision as to whether the case should be reported to the relevant Social Services department. It is important that the Manager handling the situation feels they are being supported by his/her line manager. The line manager will offer support at all times during the process, and will take responsibility for checking in with the Manager handling the situation.
- Where practicable the concerns should be discussed with the child's parents, UNLESS this may either place the child at risk of significant harm.
- The manager can at any point consult with the relevant Local Authority Social Services safeguarding team about the concerns.
- If the manager decides to report the case to Social Services, they should do so as soon as possible and within 12 hours
- The manager must also document all of his/her conversations, steps taken and when and any further information gathered/observed.

The manager will at all times follow the procedures outlined in the London Child Protection Procedures and should refer back to these procedures at any stage if needed.

If the allegation is against a member of staff:

If an allegation is made against a member of the children, youth and family services team(s), they will be precautionary suspended by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy in consultation with the Director of Human Resources pending an investigation after seeking advice and the course of action agreed with the relevant Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO).

The Children with Disabilities or relevant social work team will be notified and the Manager handling the situation will discuss their concerns based on the information recorded. The parents must also be contacted and a meeting held with the parents to discuss the concerns, and subsequent actions. All these steps will be undertaken in close liaison with the relevant LADO. All decisions and actions will be made in close liaison with The Director of Human Resources and the agreement of the LADO.

Any subsequent investigation action and will be conducted in accordance with the Society's Disciplinary Procedure

If the allegation is against a member of a child's family:

The safety of children is paramount in all decisions relating to their welfare. If there is an allegation made against a member of the child's family, the manager should seek immediate advice from the relevant Local Authority Social Services department as to what to do with the child. It may be necessary for the child to stay within the service setting after the other children have gone home, until a decision has been made by Social Services, staff should be prepared for this. The child should not be released into anyone's care until advised by Social Services. This is of particular importance when there is a serious threat to the child's safety and/or the need to protect the child from further abuse and to avoid the child being pressured by family members to not cooperate with an investigation.

Copies of all documents written by the Manager, concerned staff member and any other witnesses/ involved parties will be kept on the child's record under confidential cover. Further copies will be made available to Social Services, Health Services, the General Practitioner or Health Visitor and parents if required. Staff reporting this type of incident may need to be available to attend strategy meetings or a child protection conference.

It is important to remember that allegations could be made against any one – staff, volunteers, other children, other adults, and parents/carers.

Where a Child is thought to be in Immediate Danger

The person who suspects a child may be in immediate danger should inform the On Call Manager immediately who should always report through to the Designated Lead and then follow their protocol accordingly

If an adult is in the Service and an allegation has been made, call the On Call Manager immediately who will always report this to the Designated Lead and then follow their protocol accordingly

If the staff member thinks that child may be at further risk of abuse on leaving the Service, they should inform the On Call Manager who will always report this to the Designated Lead and then follow their protocol accordingly

Mobile Phones and Cameras

Personal mobile phones and cameras must not be used at any time to take photographs or to make recordings of children at work either within building based, family home or in community settings. All personal phones and cameras must be put away in a separate secure place and not be carried or available for use by a worker during a session. While at work all mobile phones should not be carried on a worker’s person unless they are phones designated for specific use as part of the service.

Confidentiality

All staff must agree to keep all information that they receive, confidential to the service. This means they act accordingly, e.g. following the Data Protection Act, Child Protection guidelines, The Westminster Society Confidentiality Policy, and informing other team members only if instructed to do so by the Manager. The Relevant Manager / Director of Children, Youth and Family Services must be informed of any information that is seen as confidential to the Service, before any further actions or decisions are made.

All staff, sessional and volunteers are not to befriend a child/young person on their own Facebook, WhatsApp or any other social media communication.

**STAFF MUST NOT DISCLOSE INFORMATION TO ANY OTHER MEMBER OF STAFF
CONFIDENTIALITY IS PARAMOUNT**

Please sign below once you have read and understood these guidelines.

I (name) agree to follow the guidelines outlined in this child protection/safeguarding policy at all times when working for the Westminster Society.

I agree to maintain confidentiality.

Signed: Date.....

Print Name:

Review of policy

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| Date of last review | September 2015 |
| Date of next review | September 2016 |
| Date it was first implemented | August 2008 |
| Author(s) | Director of Children, Youth and Family Services |
| Audience | All employees .trustees and volunteers |



Policy on Child Protection and Safeguarding Parental Agreement

Introduction

It is important for parents / carers to understand The Westminster Society's responsibilities towards the safety of the children within the guidance of current legislation. We therefore ask parents to read the policy below and sign it as a condition of your child's attendance or access to one of our services for children and young people up to the age of 18.

Your Child's welfare is paramount

As professional child-carers registered with the Local Authority, it is the Westminster Society's responsibility to follow the Child Protection/Safeguarding Procedure as stated by the Local Authority. If a child arrives at any service with an injury, or we have made observations that suggest the child may have been abused in some way, we have a legal obligation to follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedure. In the event of a recent injury, we would expect the parent to bring it to our attention and give an explanation as to how the accident/injury occurred. The parent may be asked to visit their GP to have the injury checked. Failure to report an injury or give a satisfactory explanation regarding the nature of the injury may result in Social Services being informed.

Your Local Authorities Child Protection Procedure is available on request. Key points of these procedures are that:

- Every effort will be made to contact parent/carer and make him/her aware of our concerns
- Clear and accurate records will be kept on our observations or concerns.

I agree that the Westminster Society will follow their Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedure in any event where my child's safety appears to be at risk. I accept this policy as a condition of my child's place at a service provided by the Westminster Society's Children, Youth and Family Services.

Parents / Carers Name.....

Child's Name.....

Parent / Carers Signature..... Date.....

Review of policy

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|-------------------------------|---|
| Date of last review | September 2015 |
| Date of next review | September 2016 |
| Date it was first implemented | August 2008 |
| Author(s) | Director of C, Y & F Services |
| Audience | All C, Y & F Services employees, trustees /parents and volunteers |



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Appendices

Appendix 1)
Definitions of Abuse

Appendix 2)
Guidance on how to respond to a child / young person who has disclosed

Appendix 3)
Poster – Our Commitment to Safeguarding

Appendix 4)
What to do if you have concerns about a child

Appendix 5)
Who to Contact

Appendix 6)
Early Help Islington – Families First Key Contacts

Appendix 7)
Useful Links