

Guidelines for responding to disclosures, suspicions or allegations of abuse

As referred to in section 5 of the main body of this SOLT safeguarding policy, set out below are guidelines on the procedure to follow when responding to disclosures, suspicions or allegations of abuse. Useful contact details are also set out in the box below.

If a child is, or appears to be, in immediate danger, action should be taken straight away. Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead who should then contact Westminster Council's Children's Social Care Team (see box below for numbers) or call the Police on 999. If you cannot contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputies, you should contact Westminster Council's Children's Social Care Team or call the Police on 999.

Procedure when a child discloses abuse happening in a place other than at a Kids Week Activity e.g. at home or at school

The following guidelines explain what action to take if a child or young person discloses details of abuse to a SOLT staff member:

- Remain calm and in control and don't delay acting.
- Listen carefully to what is said. Allow the person to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification. Don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Don't promise to 'keep it a secret'. Use the first opportunity you have to say that you will need to share the information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child or young person that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone.
- Tell the child or young person what you are going to do next.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, use the Incident Form (annexed to this Appendix 3) to make a note of what was said, using the child's/young person's own words.
- Immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead should then contact Westminster Council's Children's Social Care Team (contact details in the box below) without delay.
- All information and action must be documented by using the Incident Form (annexed to this Appendix 3) where possible, but it may be appropriate to use another form of documentation (for example, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may need to make additional records). In all cases ensure that the documentation is signed, dated and timed.
- A child protection investigation carried out by the local authority's children's social care team and/or the police is the first priority in all cases. All SOLT staff must co-operate fully with the investigation when requested to do so.

Procedure for responding to allegations of abuse made against a SOLT staff member or another person associated with SOLT

If a child or young person makes an allegation of abuse against a member of SOLT staff or another person associated with SOLT, the procedure is as follows:

- Immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will then must inform Westminster Council's Children's Social Care Team (contact details in the box below) without delay.
- The member of staff or other person who is the alleged abuser should be removed from the activity and not be informed until the matter has been discussed fully with Westminster Council's Children's Social Care Team.
- If the alleged abuser is an employee of SOLT they should then be made aware of their rights under both employment law and internal disciplinary procedures. Speak to Finance and Operation Director before doing this.
- All information and action must be documented by using the Incident Form (annexed to this Appendix 3) where possible but it may be appropriate to use another form of documentation (for example, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may need to make additional records). In all cases ensure that the documentation is signed, dated and timed.
- A child protection investigation carried out by the local authority's children's social care team and/or the police is the first priority in all cases. All SOLT staff must cooperate fully with the investigation when requested to do so.
- In cases of alleged abuse the alleged abuser and the person who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality and for their data to be processed in accordance with data protection legislation.

Procedure wherever there is suspicion or evidence of abuse of a child or young

person by a member of SOLT staff or any other person, whether or not that person is associated with Kids Week

SOLT staff have a responsibility to be aware of and to report any concerns or suspicions regarding abuse immediately. Should any concerns or suspicions regarding abuse be identified, staff should immediately act in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Discuss any suspicions or concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who must inform Westminster Council's Children's Social Care Team without delay. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may also seek advice from the NSPCC helpline if necessary. All contact details are in the box below.
- All information and action must be documented by using the Incident Form (annexed to this Appendix 3) where possible but it may be appropriate to use another form of documentation (for example, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may need to make additional records). In all cases ensure that the documentation is signed, dated and timed.
- A child protection investigation carried out by the local authority's children's social care team and/or the police is the first priority in all cases. All SOLT staff must cooperate fully with the investigation when requested to do so.

Procedure for Documenting Disclosures, Suspicions or Allegations of Abuse

All child protection concerns must be recorded accurately and immediately using clear and simple language preferably in the Incident Form annexed to this Appendix 3. If you are unable to use the Incident Form for any reason or need to create additional records, please

ensure that you document your concerns accurately following the guidelines set out in this Appendix 3. Record information as soon as possible and all documentation must be signed, dated and timed. Records should be an account of factual information and any view or judgement expressed about these facts should be clearly qualified as such. All records should be kept in a secure place and regarded as highly sensitive material, treated confidentially and processed in accordance with data protection legislation. Records should cover four specific areas:

1. Everything and everyone that was seen and observed, such as injuries or consistently negative parental behaviour towards a child.
2. Any allegations or disclosures made by children / young people / parents / carers or anyone else. If possible it is best practice to write down the actual words used to describe the abuse.
3. Any explanations given for injuries or statements made by the child / young person or others.
4. All actions taken, such as discussion with any other person, contact with Westminster Council's Children's Social Care Team, the NSPCC or any other agency involved in the protection of children.

Useful contact numbers:

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Westminster

lado@westminster.gov.uk

020 7641 7668

Westminster Council Children's Social Care Team:

Email: accesstochildrensservices@westminster.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7641 4000

Out of Hours: 020 7641 2388

NSPCC helpline:

0808 800 5000 13