



# 30.1 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Section 3: Safeguarding & Child protection			
Initial Policy Approved By:	The WonderWorks RSP Ltd	Version Number:	1.2
Review Date:	Oct 2023	Date of Next Policy Review:	Oct 2024

Review Details:		
Date	Reviewed by:	Comments (List changes and refer to page if applicable)
17/12/21	MOK	See mobile version for location editable version
13/07/21	Jane Cowell	(Page 4) Clarified language. <i>Volunteers and visiting professionals are to be made aware of our duty to safeguard children and our safeguarding policy. They are to complete a Safeguarding Agreement when visiting the setting.</i> Safeguarding Agreement also reviewed. Jane Cowell
13/07/2021	Jane Cowell	(Page 4) Added the use of chronologies
13/07/2021	Jane Cowell	(Page 5) Updated to provide reference and links to the LSCP and their referral paperwork/support

13/07/2021	Jane Cowell	(Page 3) Added Jane Cowell as Company Safeguarding Lead
13/07/2021	Jane Cowell	Prevent Duty -Added specific LSCP and contact details to refer and share concerns
13/07/2021	Jane Cowell	(Page 6) Physical Abuse- provided direct link to LSCP bruising policy/tools
08/03/2022	Jane Cowell	Clarification of LADO process and link to updated LADO form
01/06/2022	Jane Cowell	Added reference to being aware of 'child on child' abuse
16/02/2023	Jane Cowell	Added specific procedure to report/refer bruising and marks in babies under 6 months
02/03/2023	Jane Cowell	Added referrals to MASH should go to the LA where the child lives
Oct 2023	Jane Cowell	Added reference to monitoring and filtering for electronic devices- KCSIE 2023
Dec 2023	Jane Cowell	Added 'Red Book' for sharing low level information which may need monitoring in the child's Chronology

## **Policy Statement:**

*Working together to Safeguard Children (2018)* states in its introduction:

“Nothing is more important than children’s welfare. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified. We want a system that responds to the needs and interests of children and families and not the other way around. In such a system, practitioners will be clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together in partnership with others”

The WonderWorks (the company) takes its responsibility seriously and is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers fully grasp that the safeguarding of children’s welfare is a fundamental priority.

The aims of this policy are:

- To set out a clear line of leadership and accountability for safeguarding throughout the organisation.
- To ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities to identify abuse, neglect or radicalisation and know what to do if a child experiences, or is at risk of, harm.

- To set out a procedure to ensure volunteers and visiting professionals are aware of their role within safeguarding and have been properly briefed on company policy.

To ensure staff are clear about the need to share information effectively and to work in partnership with parents and with the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) to protect children [Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

## Definitions:

<b>Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children</b>	Defined for the purposes of this guidance as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protecting children from maltreatment</li> <li>preventing impairment of children's health or development</li> <li>ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care</li> <li>d. taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes</li> </ol>
<b>Child protection</b>	Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

(HM Government, *Working together to Safeguard Children*, 2018)

## General Principles:

All company directors, company staff and volunteers have an obligation to ensure that children are kept safe and protected from harm. All must take responsibility for ensuring their knowledge is up to date, and that they are familiar with company policies. All are aware of their responsibility to take immediate action, where they are concerned a child may be experiencing harm or are at risk of harm, from adults and children (known as 'child on child abuse') by following the procedures as outlined below.

In addition to this policy, the company *Whistleblowing Policy* set out the internal procedures, where the concern may relate to a director, member of staff or volunteer. The responsibilities are outlined in the job descriptions, person specifications, as well as in the safeguarding agreement for volunteers, temporary staff and visiting professionals.

All volunteers, temporary staff and visiting [professionals are required to fill out a *Safeguarding Agreement (28.2)* **before** entering the rooms with any of the children.

The company safeguarding contacts are:

**Designated Safeguarding Officer:** Michael O’Keeffe, Manager

**Designated Deputy Safeguarding Officer:** Amy Chard, Deputy Manager & Cheslea Ward, Deputy Manager

**Company Safeguarding Lead:** Jane Cowell, Head of Childcare

The nursery settings support good practice, by ensuring the following:

- We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures;
- Safeguarding contacts are on display throughout the nursery settings;
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children;
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the review of 2014;
- To guide us in our recruitment policy, we have copies of:
  - HM Government ‘Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education’ (April 2011)
  - HM Government ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (March 2015)
  - HM Government ‘Working together to safeguard children’ (July 2018)
- We abide by Ofsted Statutory requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children;
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out ‘enhanced disclosure’ checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Unchecked staff do not have unsupervised access to children.
- We have in place a Safer Recruitment Policy, to guide us in all areas of recruitment.
- Volunteers and students do not work unsupervised.
- Volunteers and visiting professionals are to be made aware of our duty to safeguard children and our safeguarding policy. They are to complete a Safeguarding Agreement when visiting the setting.
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act (2006, Order 2019) requirements, (formerly List 88 and disqualification orders) in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We 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.
- Safeguarding is a feature of each staff meeting, refreshing staff’s knowledge, and sharing key information.
- Safeguarding is a feature of staff supervision and opportunities to discuss concerns about a child are provided.

- Staff have access to FLICK online training, and it is a requirement that each of them completed all safeguarding and child protection modules during their probation. These include modules on online safety, breast ironing, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- The company produces regular 'spotlight on safeguarding' blogs which shares information, case studies and links to keep employees upskilled and updated on safeguarding news and practice.
- We work in partnership and in line with our Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)

[Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

## **Understanding Abuse & Neglect:**

In relation to child safeguarding, abuse and neglect is defined as: *“A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.”* (HM Government - Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018, Appendix A, Glossary)

HM Government 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (March 2015) sets out some of the following signs might be indicators of abuse or neglect:

- Children whose behaviour changes - they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;

- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away;
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements

### **The Use of Chronologies**

At The WonderWorks we use chronologies as an effective way to see what is happening in the life of a child or young person, and the impact that this has had. It helps identify patterns and issues, invaluable in assessing risk and when analysing the likely impact of events, especially where there may be no single 'incident' e.g., in neglect. Chronologies are monitored regularly by our DSL's and Key people to spot any patterns or issues. A confidential 'Red Book' enables the team to share any 'in the moment' information which is then reviewed by the Manager or DSL and information to be added to the child's chronology. In some circumstances the team member may be asked to complete a 'Record Of Concern' if the concern warrants immediate action.

We can use these to make a quick and simple record of a range of incidents or event in a child's life for example:

- Absences from nursery.
- Pre-Existing Injuries from home.
- Isolated or unusual behaviour which does not cause immediate concern.
- Life events such as moving home, new baby, change in family circumstances.

### **Mobile phones and electronic devices**

We ask for staff mobile phones to be logged in by reception and phones are stored either in the phone cupboard or in the nursery office. Visitors can keep their phones on their person, but if wishing to use their phone must only do so off premises.

Staff can use their mobile phones whilst on their break and in the designated staff room/relaxation areas. Personal phones must not be taken into the playrooms or garden and NEVER used to take photographs of children in the nursery.

## **Monitoring & Filtering- Keeping children safe online (E-Safety)**

We take online/digital safety seriously in the nursery and ensure that all nursery devices and tablets are secure, and safe to use. Children will be supervised using digital devices for research purposes. We assess the risk to children based on the following areas:

### **Content**

Content is anything posted online - it might be words or it could be images and video. Children and young people may see illegal, inappropriate or harmful content when online. This includes things like pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.

### **Contact**

Contact is about the risk of harm young people may face when interacting with other users online. This includes things like peer-to-peer pressure or seeing inappropriate commercial advertising. Sometimes adults pose as children or young adults with the intention of grooming or exploiting a child or young person for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

### **Conduct**

Conduct means the way people behave online. Some online behaviour can increase the likelihood, or even cause, harm - for example, online bullying. Conduct also includes things like sharing or receiving nudes and semi-nude images and viewing or sending pornography.

### **Commerce**

Commerce is about the risk from things like online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams. Children and young people may be exposed to these risks directly. Schools should also consider how the risk from commerce applies to staff.

An audit tool is used to monitor all devices in the setting, and to ensure that devices use up-to-date filtering mechanisms to reduce the risk of children being exposed to unsuitable/unsafe content. In line with government guidance provided in 'Keeping Children Safe In Education 2023' and our Safe Use of Technology and Online Safety Policy 07.

We share information with parents about keeping young children safe online and support children to learn about how to keep themselves online. We signpost parents to suitable information and websites such as:

## Types of Abuse

There are four main areas of abuse, as outlined in HM Government ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (March 2015).

These are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

### **Physical Abuse:**

Definition	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 of Abuse	<p>Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children with frequent injuries;</li><li>• Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones;</li><li>• Children with unexplained: bruises or cuts; burns or scalds; or bite marks.</li><li>• Research has shown that even a small bruise on a pre-mobile baby can be a sign of abuse as these infants are not expected to bruise. We will make a referral to Children’s Services following the identification of any suspicious bruise or mark on any infant under 6 months.</li></ul> <p>Staff can use the tools provided in the LSCP “Management of Suspicious Bruises/ Marks in Infants Under 6 Months for all Front Line Professionals” policy which is available here:</p> <p><a href="#">bruising_suspicious_marks.pdf (proceduresonline.com)</a></p>

*(HM Government - Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 - Appendix A, Glossary & Understanding and identifying abuse and neglect, page 7)*

### **Emotional Abuse:**



Definition	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 of Abuse	Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;</li> <li>• Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';</li> <li>• Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child;</li> <li>• Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.</li> </ul>

*(HM Government - Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 - Appendix A, Glossary & Understanding and identifying abuse and neglect, page 8)*

### **Sexual Abuse:**

Definition	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 Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
Signs of Abuse	Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;</li> <li>• Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;</li> <li>• Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games;</li> <li>• Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.</li> </ul>
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*(HM Government - Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 - Appendix A, Glossary & Understanding and identifying abuse and neglect, page 8)*

## Neglect:

Definition	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)</li> <li>b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger</li> <li>c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)</li> <li>d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment</li> </ol> <p>It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.</p>
Signs of Abuse	<p>Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;</li> <li>• Children who are left hungry or dirty;</li> <li>• Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;</li> <li>• Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;</li> <li>• Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;</li> <li>• Children who fail to receive basic health care;</li> <li>• Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.</li> </ul>

*(HM Government - Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 - Appendix A, Glossary & Understanding and identifying abuse and neglect, page 10)*

In addition to the four main areas of abuse, the staff specifically monitor the following examples of abuse:

## Child Sexual Exploitation:

Definition	Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
Signs of Abuse	<p>Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;</li> <li>• Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;</li> <li>• Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;</li> <li>• Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;</li> <li>• Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;</li> <li>• Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;</li> <li>• Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;</li> <li>• Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.</li> </ul>

*(HM Government - Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 - Appendix A, Glossary & Understanding and identifying abuse and neglect, page 9)*

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is known by a variety of names including 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'. The terms 'FGM' or 'cut' are increasingly used at a community level. FGM is illegal in the U.K. and is an extremely harmful practice. FGM is an unacceptable practice for which there is no justification, and as a result cannot be left to personal choice. FGM is often an embedded social norm, therefore engagement with families and communities plays an important role in contributing to ending it.

Definition	FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in
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	<p>childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother; and/or death.</p>
<p>Signs of Abuse</p>	<p>Some of the following signs may be indicators that a child is at risk of FGM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a female child is born to a woman who has undergone FGM;</li> <li>• a female child has an older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM;</li> <li>• a female child’s father comes from a community known to practise FGM;</li> <li>• the family indicate that there are strong levels of influence held by elders and/or elders are involved in bringing up female children;</li> <li>• a woman/family believe FGM is integral to cultural or religious identity;</li> <li>• a girl/family has limited level of integration within UK community;</li> <li>• parents have limited access to information about FGM and do not know about the harmful effects of FGM or UK law;</li> <li>• a girl confides to a professional that she is to have a ‘special procedure’ or to attend a special occasion to ‘become a woman’;</li> </ul> <p>Some of the following signs may be indicators that a child has already been subjected to FGM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a girl or woman asks for help;</li> <li>• a girl or woman confides in a professional that FGM has taken place;</li> <li>• a mother/family member discloses that female child has had FGM;</li> <li>• a girl or woman has difficulty walking, sitting or standing or looks uncomfortable;</li> <li>• a girl or woman finds it hard to sit still for long periods of time, and this was not a problem previously;</li> <li>• a girl or woman spends longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating;</li> <li>• a girl or woman has frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems; a girl avoids physical exercise or requires to be excused from physical exercise without a GP’s letter;</li> <li>• there are prolonged or repeated absences</li> <li>• increased emotional and psychological needs, for example withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour;</li> <li>• a girl or woman is reluctant to undergo any medical examinations;</li> <li>• a girl or woman asks for help, but is not be explicit about the problem; and/or</li> </ul>

- a girl talks about pain or discomfort between her legs.

*(HM Government, Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation, 2016, 2.1, What is FGM)*

## **Breast Flattening/Ironing:**

Although there is no specific law within the U.K. around breast flattening or breast ironing, it is a form of physical abuse. If any directors, staff or volunteers are concerned that a child is at risk, or may be at risk of breast flattening, the safeguarding procedures as set out in this policy must be followed.

Due to the type of instruments that may be used, the type of force and the lack of aftercare, significant health and developmental issue may occur, such as:

- Abscesses
- Cysts
- Itching
- Tissue damage
- Infection
- Discharge of milk
- Dissymmetry of the breasts
- Severe fever
- Even the complete disappearance of one or both breasts.

Definition	The process during which young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged, flattened and/or pounded down over a period of time (sometimes years) in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely.
Signs of Abuse:	<p>Some of the following signs may be indicators that a child has had, or is having breast flattening procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May disclose to a teacher, social worker, GP or another medical professional</li> <li>• Some girls may ask for help, perhaps talk about pain or discomfort in their chest area, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear</li> <li>• A girl may display reluctance to undergo medical examination</li> <li>• A girl may be fearful of changing for physical activities due to scars showing or bandages being visible</li> </ul>

*(National FGM Centre, U.K. <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/breast-flattening/>)*

## **Radicalisation, Extremism and Prevent Duty:**

From 1 July 2015 all schools, registered early years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, in the

exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

Definition	<p>Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable - including the young - by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.</p> <p><i>(HM Government - Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 - Appendix A)</i></p>
Signs of Abuse	<p>Radicalisation can be really difficult to spot. Signs that may indicate a child is being radicalised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>isolating themselves from family and friends</li> <li>talking as if from a scripted speech</li> <li>unwillingness or inability to discuss their views</li> <li>a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others</li> <li>increased levels of anger</li> <li>increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.</li> </ul> <p><i>(NSPCC, Protecting Children from Radicalisation  <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation</a>)</i></p>

When staff have concerns, they must raise these first with a DSL who can then seek advice from the HCC Prevent Programme Manager [sophie.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk) on telephone number 07773094897.

If the setting still has concerns the DSL must share the concern and make referral by completing the [National Referral form](#) and sending it to Hertfordshire Prevent at [prevent@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@herts.pnn.police.uk) and telephone 01438 735373

Consent is NOT needed when making Prevent referrals.

### County Lines:

Definition	<p>The UK government defines county lines as:</p> <p>“County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or</p>
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	<p>more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.”</p> <p><i>(HM Government, Ministry of Justice - County Lines Exploitation, Practice guidance for YOTs and frontline practitioners, 2019)</i></p>
Signs of Abuse	<p>Some potential indicators of county lines exploitation are listed below, with those at the top being of particular association with county lines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistently going missing from school, home, care</li> <li>• Children travelling to locations, or being found in area’s they have no obvious connections with, including seaside or market towns</li> <li>• Unwillingness to explain their whereabouts</li> <li>• Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, accessories or mobile phones which they are unable to account for</li> <li>• Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls</li> <li>• Children having multiple mobile phone handsets or sim cards</li> <li>• Withdrawal or sudden change in personality, behaviour or language used</li> <li>• Relationships with controlling or older individuals and groups</li> <li>• Leaving home or care without explanation</li> <li>• Suspicion of physical assault or unexplained Injuries</li> <li>• Parental concerns</li> <li>• Carrying weapons</li> <li>• Significant decline in school results or performance</li> <li>• Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks</li> <li>• Self-harm or significant changes in emotional wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>Further indicators for professionals to be mindful of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in possession with intent to supply offences outside your local area</li> <li>• Matrix nominals being stopped outside your area</li> </ul> <p><i>(HM Government, Ministry of Justice - County Lines Exploitation, Practice guidance for YOTs and frontline practitioners, 2019)</i></p>

The children’s commissioner estimates that 46,000 children in England alone are involved in gang activity. The company and its staff recognise that these vulnerable children need to be recognised as victims, and support needs to be offered. Staff need to remain vigilant, considering high risk groups in deprived areas, and looking out for signs and symptoms that might suggest that children could be victims of

county lines - and any concerns put through the MASH team as per all over procedures for referrals, and responding to concerns below.

Other useful contacts:

The Children's Society:

Area Director, Gary Thomas (South and South West England)

01962 711 511 / 07834 418 255

Gary.thomas@childrenssociety.org.uk

## **Procedures - Responding to Concerns:**

Staff should follow the 'What to do if a staff member has a concern' flowchart

- Parents are normally the first point of contact unless it is felt that this will put the child in immediate danger.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents may be informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

## **Stage One: Dealing with Initial Concerns**

You may have an initial concern about a child as a result of something someone has said or done, or you may notice a change in a child or adults behaviour that worries you, or you may notice that a child is consistently not meeting their expected developmental standards. No matter how a safeguarding concern reaches you, you must take it seriously and not assume someone else is dealing with it. If you have a concern you should;

- **If the concern is significant, and you are concerned that a child is being abused, or is at risk of being harmed, you must refer straight to stage two.**
- Explore your concerns with colleagues or managers, referring to the sections above that outlines understanding abuse, and seek advice and solutions
- Discuss any concerns with parents or carers, **if it is safe for the child for you to do so**, exploring what is causing your concern and how you might work together with the family and/or other services for the good of the child (for example Speech and Language);
- Record any concerns in writing in the 'Red Book' and continue to observe the child
- Review the child's chronology to see if there are any records, links or patterns which increase or decrease the level of concern.
- Discuss with the setting Designated Safeguarding Officer to see whether it is appropriate to discuss any concerns with parents or carers, **if it is safe for the child for you to do so**. This would be an opportunity to explore what is causing your concern and how you might



work together with the family and/or other services for the good of the child (for example Speech and Language);

## **Stage Two:**

If a child or adult makes a disclosure to you or raises an allegation of abuse, or if believe a child is at risk of harm or in need of protection, you must;

- Listen carefully to what the child/adult has to say and take it seriously, recording it as much as possible in their own words;
- If appropriate, talk to the child/adult about what you have witnessed or have heard, but never use leading questions;
- Be clear that any information they have given will have to be shared with others if children are at risk of harm;
- Notify the setting Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will immediately notify the Director;
- Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure; the person who receives the allegation or has the concern, should complete the 'Record of Concern' form, ensuring it is signed and dated.
- Contact Children's Social Care, in line with local procedures

**Remember: It is not the responsibility of the nursery to investigate suspected child abuse, but rather to gather information and refer to the relevant services.**

## **Referral:**

'Referral' means sharing information about concerns with outside agencies. If staff are concerned about the welfare of the child, information must be passed on to the appropriate agency to consider, investigate, or act on.

Usually this means contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer or MASH. If the concern is about a child only, and no need for LADO involvement the concern should usually be shared with the MASH for WHERE THE CHILD RESIDES. The DSL will check the child's home address before contacting the relevant MASH.

MASH for children residing in Hertfordshire: **0300 123 4043**

If Children or adults in the setting are identified at immediate risk of harm or there are serious concerns the DSL with seek support from the Police by calling 999.

When making a referral, staff must inform parents/carers that the setting is going to do so. In some cases, this might not be possible, if informing the parent/carers might put the child or yourself at risk. In these cases, we would seek the advice of the local authority via the MASH Telephone. For Hertfordshire this is: **0300 123 4043**

All telephone referrals should be followed up by a written referral using the relevant forms available here [Information for professionals and volunteers | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

## **Recording:**

You should use the company *Record of a Concern* Form for recording concerns.

- make a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
- 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.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.

### **Managing Allegations against staff:**

All allegations against staff members, whether they are made by staff members, parents or children will be taken seriously and will be reported straight away to the Manager, DSL or Director of Childcare.

The process for dealing with an allegation is not limited to allegations involving 'significant harm / risk of significant harm'. The WonderWorks takes any allegation very seriously and we will refer concerns into the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day when there is a concern raised that a person working within the organisation (paid or voluntary, permanent, or temporary) **may have:**

- 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 that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm;
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

And also when:

- It is discovered that an individual known to have been involved previously in child abuse, is or has been working with children.

The DSL for the setting will be responsible for referring to the LADO for advice and support. This is available online here [5.1.5 Managing Allegations Against Adults Who Work With Children and Young People \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)

Usually the referral will need to be made by completing the LADO referral form available via this link [lado\\_referral\\_form.docx \(live.com\)](#). If necessary the DSL can request advice from LADO by emailing [LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk) Or calling 01992 555420

Referrals must be made within 1 working day and followed up within 24 hours if no response is given.

Ofsted are to be notified if a referral is made into the LADO and provided information on the steps that were taken by the setting and any conclusion/advice given by the LADO. We understand that it is an offence not to notify Ofsted.

The LADO will decide upon necessary action, and whether the parents should be informed.

We respond to any allegations/disclosure by children, parents, or staff by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.

We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's Services in conjunction with the police.

Where the management and the LADO agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the company director will suspend the member of staff or volunteer, on full pay. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

In terms of investigation or suspension, any actions should be carried out alongside the company *Disciplinary Policy* document, and *Whistleblowing Policy*, if appropriate

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