



Choices  
*for crisis pregnancy and post abortion support*  
390, Caledonian Rd  
Islington  
London N1 1DN  
020 7700 4475  
[info@choicesislington.org](mailto:info@choicesislington.org)  
[www.choicesislington.org](http://www.choicesislington.org)

# Safeguarding Children

## Including Child Protection Policy

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### Contact Details

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Jeni Kenson / Simone Burnett (Maternity Cover)

**Email:** [jeni@choicesislinton.org](mailto:jeni@choicesislinton.org) / [simone@choicesislinton.org](mailto:simone@choicesislinton.org)

**Work Number:** 0207 700 4475 / 07795392189

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Sophie Guthrie-Kummer

**Email:** [sophie@choiceislinton.org](mailto:sophie@choiceislinton.org)

**Work Number:** 0207 700 4475 / 07471188581

**Designated Safeguarding Trustee:** Hannah Carter

**Email:** [hannah@choicesislinton.org](mailto:hannah@choicesislinton.org)

**Work Number:** 0207 700 4475

### **Choices Details**

Choices is all about caring for and respecting people through the dilemma of unplanned pregnancy. We create a safe space for women and their partners to talk with a trained counsellor. Our support is free from judgement and free of charge. We believe no one should go through unplanned pregnancy alone.

Some of the women we speak to want to continue their pregnancy but face difficult circumstances. We provide a service offering free baby clothes and equipment called The Boutique. We also run a community mums' group and one-to-one befriending sessions to reduce the stress of parenthood and maximise good outcomes for both mother and child. We regularly run courses to support mums and their children.

Registered charity no. 1124209. Member of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy

### **Choices Statement**

Choices takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

The London Child Protection Procedures (2017) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (April 2018) outline the duties of all organisations in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their care.

### **Child Protection-Introduction and Policy**

At Choices the safety and welfare of our children is of the utmost importance. We recognise that all employees and volunteers within Choices must protect children from harm and abuse. We have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our children (under 18 years) under the Children Act 1989, the London Child Protection Procedures (2017) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) through identifying any child welfare concerns and taking action to address them in partnership with families and other agencies where appropriate.

We also recognise that:

- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

In accordance with Paragraph 4, Chapter 2 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) Choices has the following arrangements in place:

- A clear line of accountability for the provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- a 'Named Trustee for Safeguarding' is responsible for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements;
- a culture of valuing, listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings;
- arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information with professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board;
- designated leads for safeguarding called 'The Designated Safeguarding Leads';
- ensuring safe recruitment practice in checking the suitability of all our staff and volunteers to work with children;
- mandatory induction and training and raising awareness of child protection issues amongst all staff and volunteers and of what to do if they have concerns;
- developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse;
- developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operating as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters and attending relevant meetings;
- supporting children who have been abused or may be at risk of harm in accordance with any agreed child protection plan;
- ensuring we respond appropriately to any concern or allegation about a member of staff or volunteer and;
- ensuring staff follow accepted "safe practice" principles when working with children.

If there are Child Protection concerns the London Child Protection Child Protection Procedures (5th Edition London Safeguarding Children Board, 2017) must be followed. This is available from the child protection co-ordinator and available electronically by following this link:

<http://www.londoncp.co.uk/>

## **The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Any staff or volunteers within Choices who are concerned about a child must report concerns as soon as possible to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads who are nominated by the Trustees to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In urgent situations and if these people cannot be contacted, referral must not be delayed and individual volunteers must make a referral to the Childrens Service Contact team (CSCT) or the Emergency Duty Team (EDT). In an emergency contact the Police.

The referrer must notify one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads as soon as possible.

They may also be required by conditions of the Charity Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company. In their absence the matter should be brought to the attention of the named Trustee for Safeguarding.

In addition the designated safeguarding leads:

- Act as the contact person within Choices, providing advice and support and ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of their role;
- are responsible for co-ordinating action within Choices on child protection issues;
- discuss individual cases with staff on a “need to know basis” to protect children's right to confidentiality;
- may need to represent Choices at child protection meetings;
- raise awareness about child protection on an ongoing basis;
- arrange child protection training for all staff (paid or unpaid) regularly and keep it up to date and;
- ensure that they receive training suitable to their role every 2 years.

Staff and volunteers **should not investigate** child protection concerns. This is done by Children’s Social Care, NSPCC or the Police. However, if a child says something, it is vital to listen carefully, so you can record and report it accurately. Records will also assist other members of staff who may have concerns and will evidence any action taken by Choices.

## **Types of abuse and their recognition**

### **Definition**

Safeguarding and promoting welfare relates to any child or young person (i.e. under 18 years of age) who has suffered from, or may be at risk of physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

### **Recognition**

Type of abuse	Some possible signs of this abuse
<p><b>Physical Abuse</b> 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Unexplained injuries, for example, bruising, bite marks, burns and fractures, particularly if recurrent.</li> <li>-Improbable explanations given for injuries.</li> <li>-Several different explanations provided for an injury.</li> <li>-Refusal to discuss injuries.</li> <li>-Untreated injuries.</li> <li>-Withdrawal from physical contact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b> 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Acting in a sexual way inappropriate to their age.</li> <li>-Continual or excessive masturbation.</li> <li>-Asking if you will keep a secret if they tell you.</li> <li>-Unexplained sources of money, sweets or presents.</li> <li>-Reluctance to changing for an activity.</li> <li>-Chronic ailments such as stomach ache or headaches.</li> <li>-Involving other children in sexual activity.</li> <li>-Self-harm.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional Abuse</b> is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.</p> <p>It may involve conveying to children 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Withdrawal</li> <li>-Nervousness</li> <li>-Aggressive behaviour</li> </ul> <p>Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse. You can't have any type of abuse without an</p>

<p>imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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. This could involve constant criticism, name-calling, ridicule, sarcasm, bullying, or unrealistic expectations of parents/carers over what a child/young person can achieve.</p>	<p>element of emotional abuse.</p>
<p><b>Neglect</b> is 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);</li> <li>• protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;</li> <li>• ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or</li> <li>• ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.</li> </ul> <p>It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. This could be when a child's/young person's personal or intimate requirements are ignored, not ensuring children/young people are safe, or exposure to undue cold, heat or unnecessary risk of injury.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Constant hunger</li> <li>-Poor personal hygiene</li> <li>-Constant tiredness</li> <li>-Poor state of clothing</li> <li>-Untreated medical problems</li> <li>-Compulsive eating</li> <li>-Scavenging</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Exploitation:</b> 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation;</li> <li>• Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social</li> </ul>

<p>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. Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners (February 2017).  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners</a></p>	<p>networks;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;</li> <li>• Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;</li> <li>• Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;</li> <li>• Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;</li> <li>• Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;</li> <li>• Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;</li> <li>• Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);</li> <li>• Frequenting areas known for sex work;</li> <li>• Concerning use of internet or other social media;</li> <li>• Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and</li> <li>• Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.</li> </ul>
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### **Other Safeguarding issues**

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. All staff need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. Child protection procedures must be followed. From October 31st 2015 there is also a mandatory reporting duty on teachers, social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police:

- If they are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her or;



- If they observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

**Children at risk of forced marriage:** Forced marriage - Detailed guidance - GOV.UK Advice is available from the Forced Marriage Unit: [fmu@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk) Telephone: 020 7008 0151. Forced marriage is a crime in England and is a marriage entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used.

Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. For example, honour based violence might be committed against people who:

- Become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
- Want to get out of an arranged marriage
- Want to get out of a forced marriage
- Wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture

**Violent Extremism/Radicalisation:** Since 1 July 2015 specified authorities are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("the CTSA 2015"), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

**Children Missing from Education:** A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. If choices staff or volunteers become aware of a child who is not in education they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or if unavailable contact the Children's Service Contact Team (CSCT) or if you think the child is in immediate danger contact the Police.

**Children with special educational needs and disability** are four times more likely to be abused than other children. These children may need a signer or communication aid to communicate and if they are non-verbal changes in behavior may be indicators of distress.

**Peer on Peer abuse:** At Choices we recognize that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse in which children and young people may be harmful to one another in several ways.

This is most likely to include, but not limited to the following:

*Bullying:* This is the abuse and/or intimidation by a person, people or an organisation against another or others. It may be a specific act or it may be institutional. It is an abuse of a perceived power relationship. Children can also bully other children. Bullying may include verbal abuse and intimidation, acts of physical or sexual abuse and coercion, e-bullying, through texting, filming on mobiles and posting on social networks. Whatever its form it is unacceptable. It must be challenged and appropriately addressed.

*Sexting:* occurs when:

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18.
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult.
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.

It does not include:

- The sharing of sexual imagery of people under 18 by adults as this constitutes child sexual abuse and the police should always be informed.
- Young people under the age of 18 sharing adult pornography or exchanging sexual texts which don't contain imagery.

For more information go to this link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609874/6\\_2939\\_SP\\_NCA\\_Sexting\\_In\\_Schools\\_FINAL\\_Update\\_Jan17.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609874/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf)

## What to do?

### **Concern from something a child says**

**Listen** - do not ask questions or interrogate.

**Remain calm** - if you are shocked, upset or angry the child will sense this, and this could stop them from saying more.

**Reassure** - the child has done nothing wrong - tell them it is alright to talk.

**Do not promise to keep it secret** - tell them you cannot keep the matter secret and will need to take advice from someone who can help.

**Do not interrogate:** Ask questions for clarification only. Avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer or that investigate.

If concern arises about the welfare of a child, the following procedure must be followed.

Do NOT delay
Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as you can ( <i>details pg.21</i> ) <b>The DSL will explain to you anything that you need to do</b>
If you cannot reach her contact the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead ( <i>details pg. 21</i> ) <b>The Deputy DSL will explain to you anything that you need to do</b>
If you cannot reach either of these call the Designated Safeguarding Trustee ( <i>details pg.21</i> ) <b>The safeguarding trustee will explain to you anything that you need to do</b>
If none of the above can be reached you have a responsibility to act without delay. Referrals should be made to the Children's Social Care team in the area where the child lives. These contact details can be found at the end of this policy or via the website <a href="https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council">https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council</a> . Children's Social Care Islington: 020 7527 7400 (csctreferrals@islington.gov.uk) Emergency Duty Team: 020 72226 0992 <b>Go to next step</b>
Once you have called the Children's Social care team please follow up with an email to ( <a href="mailto:csctreferrals@islington.gov.uk">csctreferrals@islington.gov.uk</a> ) outlining what information you passed on <b>Go to next step</b>
At the earliest possible time inform the designated safeguarding lead of your actions.

### **Make written notes**

- At the earliest opportunity make a written record of your concerns, using the 'child welfare form' as a template - record facts accurately and be clear when you are expressing an opinion and the basis for this - these forms will help to ensure accuracy in recalling events later - notes should be legible, signed and dated
- These forms must be given to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads as soon as possible who will store these in a locked filing cabinet.

- Child welfare forms can be found in the boutique, in the Choices office and in the box for the kitchen items at the Community mums Group.

### **Remember**

- If in doubt, consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the safeguarding trustee and if they are not available, the relevant local authority
- Do not ignore concerns, even if these are vague
- Your first responsibility is to the child
- If you need help or support to manage your own feelings, this can be provided or alternative, appropriate services will be sought.

## **Designated Safeguarding lead important info**

In the case that the following happens follow the guidelines below:

### **Allegation of Physical Injury or Neglect**

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the Children's Social Care Team (CSCT) or Emergency Duty Social Work Team (EDT out of hours) for advice. In cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the child's safety: advice should be sought from statutory agencies before the parents are informed. Information will be shared with other staff who have close contact with the child on a 'need to know' basis.

Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse and speak with the parent/carer unless to do so would place the child at greater risk.

### **Allegation of Sexual abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the designated safeguarding lead will:

- Contact the CSCT, Emergency Duty Team (EDT) or The Police directly. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will NOT speak to the parent/carer (or anyone else).
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unsure whether or not to refer, then advice from CSCT, EDT or the Police will be sought and followed.

- Under no circumstances will the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Staff attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the designated safeguarding lead is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the social care services, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy referral should not be delayed. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Designated Safeguarding Lead as to the appropriateness of a referral that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters as above and should do so without hesitation.
- The Trustees will support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

### **Contact with the Family**

In cases where a minor physical injury causes concern, it is usual practice to discuss this with the parent or carer. If the explanation suggests a non-accidental cause for the injury (or a failure to protect the child from harm), the parent or carer should be informed that the matter must be referred to the CSCT.

In cases of possible neglect or emotional abuse, the concern may have built up over a period of time. There may have been discussion previously between Choices staff and the family about sources of help (e.g. the Children and Family Social Work Service), but if concerns persist, the designated safeguarding lead will need to refer to the CSCT and will normally advise the family of this.

In cases where there are suspicions of sexual abuse, or fabricated or induced illness, or if to do so would put a child at greater risk, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will seek immediate advice from the CSCT, Emergency Duty Social Worker, the Police and NSPCC before discussing this with the family.

## **Records**

### **Confidentiality of Records**

All children and their parents have the right to expect that all staff will deal sensitively and sympathetically with their situation. It is important that information is only available to

those who need to know it. Parents, and where appropriate, children should be told their right to confidentiality may be breached if information comes to light suggesting possible harm to a child/young person.

Child protection issues relating to individual cases must not be subject to open discussion.

Members of staff should also remember not to promise children to keep “secrets”.

- All records relating to child welfare concerns will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet at the choices office - a chronology of concern should be kept.
- We will keep written records of any concerns about children even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Information from records will only be used on a "need to know" basis.

## Responding to allegations against a member of staff/volunteer or another child/young person

- Allegations about a paid or unpaid member of staff must immediately be notified to the Safeguarding Trustee (or another Trustee if they are implicated).
- The Safeguarding Trustee must notify the Designated Officer in the Local Authority (Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in Islington) of all allegations against staff (paid or unpaid) within one working day.
- Following consultation, the Safeguarding Trustee with the Designated Officer (if appropriate) will agree on appropriate action.
- It is important to bear in mind that although the concern may relate to an individual child other children may also be at risk.
- If Choices removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work with children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, Choices must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.
- If there is an investigation into a member of staff in regard to their own children's care; staff will be taken off working with children until the outcome of an investigation is known and Choices have been notified by the Designated Officer in the Local Authority.

**Islington's LADO is Timur Djavit, Service Manager Children Protection and Laura Eden, Head of Service, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. For advice and information about allegations against staff and volunteers please contact [LADO@islington.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@islington.gov.uk), 020 7527 8102. An online LADO form is available from**

<https://seuresurvey.islington.gov.uk/selectsurvey/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=n2M0m92>

### **Harm, from or to, other children:**

- Abuse or concerns about abuse or harm by other children/young people should be subject to the same safeguarding procedures as in respect of children/young people being abused by an adult.
- Staff responding should be alert to the risk a child may pose to children other than any “current” victim; and
- Children/young people who harm others are likely to have considerable needs themselves (e.g. subjected to abuse, witnessed domestic violence or committed criminal offences).

## **Recruitment, selection, Training and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers**

In our recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers we will at all times adhere to the appropriate guidance which followed the Bichard Enquiry Report ("Working Together to Safeguard Children", HM Government 2015, Revised April 2018).

Choices is committed to ensuring that everyone working with children or young people:

- Complete an application form
- Receive reference forms
- Undergo an informal interview
- Have undergone a disclosure check at enhanced level
- Are adequately trained and supervised
- Understand and follow Choices' child protection policy

At Choices, we work with mothers and their children and much of this work is carried out by volunteers. It is important that these voluntary workers are chosen with care. In each case, the following appointment process will be completed:

- All prospective workers will be asked to complete relevant disclosure checks when requested, they may also be asked to complete a voluntary disclosure form. When the results of the checks are received the decision to appoint will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Before disclosure checks have been completed a helper will NOT be left in sole charge of any child.

- Alternatively, if a volunteer is a member of the DBS update service and consented to Choices checking their details online their current disclosure certificate can be accepted provided the system says there is no new information held on them.

The criteria for NOT appointing workers who would have contact with children are:

- Disclosure of a previous offence against children or lack of a disclosure certificate.
- Refusal to fully complete the application procedure.
- In the opinion of the Designated safeguarding lead, the applicant is not suited to the job.
- Refusal to attend the relevant training session.

We always keep a single central record of all staff/volunteers with the date and outcome of their disclosure check so that carers and parents can be assured this has been done.

## General Issues

All staff must always observe the above policy and procedure. They will be reviewed annually and as required in line with changes in local or national guidance.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed in December 2022 by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Working with under 18's.**

Choices recognises that there is a need to provide unplanned pregnancy, post abortion counselling and support for parenting to children under the age of 16 and is sometimes approached by teenagers facing these issues. Choices will always signpost under-16s to other organisations working in the local area that focus particularly on young people. e.g.:

Brook Sexual Health: <https://www.brook.org.uk>

Brandon Centre: <http://brandon-centre.org.uk/>

## Child Protection: Good Working Practices



We will strive to provide a safe environment for children. We aim to provide clear access and good lighting thus reducing the risk of physical injury. Team members will attempt to be aware of possible hazards in the room or in an activity and do what they can to limit the risks. We will attempt to prevent or stop dangerous behavior by the children.

Staff and volunteers should not normally be alone with a child or young person. The occasions when a single adult is alone with a young person should be kept to a minimum, arranged so that other people are around, for example in a public place, or in an office with the door open and another member of the team should know that the meeting is taking place.

Staff and volunteers cannot depend on their reputation to protect them if an allegation was to be made. It is always possible that someone else may misinterpret their actions, however well intended.

All children/young people should be treated with warmth, respect and dignity. Staff and volunteers should be aware how language style, voice tone, body language and dress may be perceived by individual children/young people.

### **Guidelines for touching**

- Everything should be kept open. A hug in the context of a group is vastly different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the children's, rather than the worker's, needs.
- Touch should be age appropriate and initiated by the young person rather than the worker.
- Physical activity that is, or may be construed to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child must be avoided.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others except in the circumstances when they need emergency medical attention.
- Under no circumstances should physical (or emotional) punishment be used.
- Workers should monitor one another in the area of physical contact and point out anything that could be misconstrued.

### **First Aid**

Every effort is made, through planning and supervision, to ensure the safety of our children. However, from time to time, accidents do happen.

- There will be clearly marked First-Aid boxes available at all activities. First aid should be carried out by a trained first aider if one is on site. Choices Islington will check the First Aid boxes on a regular basis.

- Any accidents or incidents must be recorded in the Accident/Incident Book, and the parent/carer should sign to show that they have been made aware. The project lead should also be informed, and the accident book filled in.
- First Aid boxes are available for use by First-Aiders and by parents treating their own children.
- Volunteers must notify any issues which might affect their ability to function as a volunteer e.g. misuse of alcohol and other substances, including some prescription medications may affect their judgement and/or character and/or ability to put the child's safety first.

### **Using images**

It is not the intention to prevent parents/carers from taking pictures, but to ensure that photographic practices are monitored and to reduce the risks of inappropriate photography/filming.

- Choices volunteers and staff should not take any photographs of children and adults unless they have received both written permission from the parent and permission from the project lead.
- It will be made clear in CMG that parents only have permission to take photos of their own children and in no circumstance should they post pictures of other children online.
- Any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography/filming reported to, or observed by, the organiser must be followed up by them with the person in question. If concerns persist this person can be requested to leave.

### **Partnership Working**

Where Choices works in partnership with other organisations as a signed partnership agreement detailing each organisations responsibilities in regards to child protection should be agreed and signed before any work commences. Choices will not work in a setting if we are not confident that children and young people will be adequately safeguarded there.

Choices delivers ongoing work in HMP Bronzefield, HMP SEND and HMP Downview and these volunteers must adhere to that setting's policy and procedure in addition to these procedures, not instead of.

## **Useful Contacts**

### **Contact details for reporting details to different councils**

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

This website allows you to put in the postcode of the child and will show the appropriate contact details for reporting child abuse to the local council.

### **Islington Safeguarding Children Board**

Melissa Friedberg

020 7527 4209 [melissa.friedberg@islington.gov.uk](mailto:melissa.friedberg@islington.gov.uk)

[www.islingtonscb.org.uk](http://www.islingtonscb.org.uk)

### **Children's Social Care**

Referral and Advice team 020 7527 7400 [csreferrals@islington.gov.uk](mailto:csreferrals@islington.gov.uk)

Emergency Duty Team, 020 7226 0992

### **Police**

Camden & Islington Child Abuse Investigation Team

4th Floor, Holborn Police Station, 10 Lamb's Conduit Street, London, WC1N 3NR

020 8733 4286/6502

### **Emergencies - 999**

### **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)**

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2 3NH

020 7825 2775 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### **ChildLine**

Free helpline for children / young people to talk about any problem.

0800 1111 <http://www.childline.org.uk>

### **Parentline Plus**

Free helpline offering support and information on parenting issues.

0808 800 2222 [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

### **Domestic Violence Helpline**

For women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

24-hour Freephone Helpline

0808 2000 247

### **NSPCC Helpline**

Advice and support to adults who are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child  
24-hour Freephone Helpline.  
0808 800 5000  
E-safety <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk> <http://www.ceop.police>.

## Designated Safeguarding Lead Contact

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Jeni Kenson / Simone Burnett (Maternity Cover)

**Work Number:** 0207 700 4475

**Mobile:** 07736950345

### **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**

**Deputy-Designated Lead:** Sophie Guthrie

**Work Number:** 0207 700 4475

**Mobile:** 07780660839

### **Designated Safeguarding Trustee**

**Designated Safeguarding Trustee:** Hannah Carter

**Work Number:** N/A

**Mobile:** 07950187823

**Last reviewed December 2022**