

**AL MUSTAFA WELFARE TRUST  
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY**

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# Al Mustafa Welfare Trust

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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### 1. Our Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Al Mustafa Welfare Trust

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children and young people who receive The Charity's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

Al Mustafa Welfare Trust believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

#### 1.1 Safeguarding or Child Protection

The term child protection has been changed to safeguarding as it reflects the wider responsibility for health & safety & prevention as well as just protection from abuse. The word safeguarding has been used with increasing frequency over the last few years in a wide range of settings and situations, going well beyond the world of children and child protection. At a broad level, **Al Mustafa Welfare Trust** defines safeguarding as:

**Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people.**

Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with children to ensure that children are going to be kept safe. This could include:

- Ensuring staff are properly checked when they are recruited
- Guidelines for people who come into contact with children as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do to keep children safe
- Guidelines for planning an event or activity with children and putting measures in place to minimise the risk of safeguarding issues occurring.

### 2. Legal Framework

The overriding legislation that addresses child protection issues is the Children and Young Person's Act 2004. "The welfare of the child shall be paramount ...." This principle known as the "paramountcy principle", means that when there is a child protection

concern, priority should be given to ensuring the safety and welfare of the child. This may mean that the needs or wishes of adults are overridden.

It is important to work in partnership with parents/carers of the children but in the final analysis, the welfare of the child must always come first.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Guidance from the Wakefield Safeguarding Children's Board
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children
- Working Together 2015

### **3. Policy Statement**

We at ***Al Mustafa Welfare Trust*** are committed to good practice which protects children from harm. Staff and volunteers accept and recognise their responsibility to provide an environment which promotes the safety of the child at all times. We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- 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 or 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

#### **3.1 We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection practices and safeguarding guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately

- Developing an awareness of the issues which may lead to children being harmed.
- Creating an open environment by identifying a 'Designated person' to whom the children can turn to if they need to talk.
- Adopting child centred and democratic staffing styles.
- Ensure complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures are adhered to.
- Provide information as required to the board.
- Ensure good and safe working/playing environment.
- Be involved in training made available through the various agencies and strengthen links with these agencies.
- Keep Safeguarding policies under regular review (every 3 years minimum).
- Have procedures relating specifically to bullying, away trips, transport and use of photography
- Have an induction document available for staff and volunteers clearly outlining their rights and responsibilities

#### **4. Equality Statement**

- Al Mustafa Welfare Trust is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its delivery.
- Al Mustafa Welfare Trust respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of their work, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.
- Al Mustafa Welfare Trust is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their activities in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.
- All Al Mustafa Welfare Trust staff and volunteers have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity.
- Al Mustafa Welfare Trust will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour seriously, according to Al Mustafa Welfare Trust disciplinary procedures.

To address the vulnerability of children with a disability staff will seek guidance on working with children with a disability from external agencies, parents / guardians and the children themselves.

#### **5. Confidentiality Statement**

We at Al Mustafa Welfare Trust will never promise to keep secrets. Information can be disclosed without consent in certain circumstances. One of those situations is if disclosure is

justified in the wider public interest. Further protection is given following disclosure, by limiting the availability of the information and allowing access by individuals or groups on a strictly “need to know” basis with the welfare of the child paramount.

Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young members to be protected from harm.

## **6. Awareness of the Issues**

Background knowledge in relation to child abuse, the general principles of Safeguarding and the ability to recognise and respond to abuse are important issues. Of primary concern for Al Mustafa Welfare Trust is the issue of Safeguarding of our young members within the operation of Al Mustafa Welfare Trust. However, being aware of the indicators of abuse in respect of young members caused by others outside Al Mustafa Welfare Trust, are of an equal importance for the safety and well being of that child.

## **7. Recognising Different Forms of Abuse**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Someone 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 institutional or community setting by those known to them or by a stranger for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **7.1 Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

### **7.2 Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. 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 involve 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 ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

### **7.3 Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## 7.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

## 7.5 Bullying

In addition to these ***Al Mustafa Welfare Trust*** recognises that we have a responsibility to: ***“protect children from bullying and to have policies and procedures in places to do so”***

Staff should appropriately challenge bullying in any form i.e. physical or emotional.

Physical bullying can take the form of attacks, such as hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings.

Emotional bullying may be a verbal assault, including name-calling, insults, repeated teasing, sectarian/racist assaults, or it may take more indirect forms, such as spreading malicious gossip, rumours or excluding someone from a social group.

Bullying is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone at ***Al Mustafa Welfare Trust*** be they child, staff, volunteer or parent. Anyone found to be bullying others will be dealt with seriously both in regards to the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour. ***Al Mustafa Welfare Trust*** has an anti-bullying policy in place.

## 7.6 Child Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery

A child has been trafficked or enslaved if he or she has been moved within a country, town or city, or across borders whether by force or not, with the purpose of exploiting the child. This may include forced labour such as domestic servitude and forced criminality such as begging or cannabis cultivation. Any form of slavery or trafficking children is abuse. Children who are coerced, deceived or forced into the control of others who seek to profit from their exploitation and suffering would be in need of protection.

## 7.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Sexual exploitation of children and young people involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young

person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. (HM Government, 2009).

**7.8 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to procedures that intentionally alter, mutilate or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is medically unnecessary and can have serious health consequences, both at the time it is carried out and in later life. FGM is prevalent in 28 African countries and areas of the Middle and Far East, but it is increasingly practiced in the UK in communities with larger populations of first generation immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. It is usually carried out on girls before they reach puberty, but in some cases it is performed on new-born infants or on women before marriage or pregnancy. It is often justified by the belief that it is beneficial for girl or women, but FGM is illegal in the UK and is considered as a criminal offence.

If a practitioner becomes aware of a FGM risk to a child they must contact the relevant Social Services department for the local authority where the child resides, who may, in partnership with the police undertake appropriate enquiries and also liaise with health services regarding medical assessments.

**8. Indicators of Abuse**

The following is a list of some indicators of abuse, but it is not exhaustive:

<b>PHYSICAL INDICATORS</b>	<b>BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas</li> <li>• Repeated injuries</li> <li>• Black eyes</li> <li>• Injuries to the mouth</li> <li>• Torn or bloodstained clothing</li> <li>• Burns or scalds</li> <li>• Bites</li> <li>• Fractures</li> <li>• Marks from implements</li> <li>• Inconsistent stories/excuses relating to injuries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained changes in behaviour - becoming withdrawn or aggressive</li> <li>• Difficulty in making friends</li> <li>• Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults</li> <li>• Sudden drop in performance</li> <li>• Changes in attendance pattern</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language</li> <li>• Reluctance to remove clothing</li> </ul>

**9. Responding to Disclosure of Abuse**

**What to do if a child/young person discloses abuse to you**

- Remain sensitive and calm
- Do not transmit shock, anger or embarrassment



- Tell them that you know it is not their fault
- Believe the child/young person, and tell them that you believe them
- Reassure the child that they
  - are safe
  - were right to tell
  - are not to blame
  - are being taken seriously
- Let the child talk - don't interview or ask leading questions or press for information
- Listen & hear, give the person time to say what they want.
- Be non-judgemental
- Check you have understood correctly what the child/young person is trying to tell you
- Explain that you must tell, but it will need to be on a need to know basis
- Tell the child what will happen next
- Involve appropriate individuals immediately
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately.
- Be aware that the child/young person may try to retract all they have told you
- Record what has been said as soon as you can, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's/young person's own language
- Discuss concerns with Line Manager/designated lead
- Complete Incident Reporting Form

### **9.1 Never**

- Never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child/young person. Assure them that you will try to help and have to tell other people in order to do this
- Question unless for clarification
- Add comments or opinions
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility, consult the designated officer so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

## 10. Designated Person

The Designated person within *Al Mustafa Welfare Trust*, is



Designated person with overall responsibility for safeguarding within the organisation. The designated person is responsible for taking any necessary action when abuse/concern is seen or alleged. If the concern is about the designated person, please report this to a trustee of Al Mustafa Welfare Trust.

## 11. Guidelines for Reporting Allegations/Incidents

- Any concerns or allegations should be brought to the attention of the Line Manager and the designated person, via the Incident Report form within 24 hours
- All practitioners or staff should document concerns, facts, allegations and actions in the case record.
- Such concerns must be discussed with the Line Manager
- If the Line Manager is unavailable, a designated person should be contacted.
- Record all incidents reported or observed on an Incident Report form must be fully completed, with support from Manager if needed. See Appendix 3
- The completed Incident Log must be signed by the staff member and Line Manager
- The original Incident Log must be forwarded to the designated person, to ensure that the correct outcome is achieved.
- The designated person will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment appropriate to the project office.
- Ensure confidentiality - only "need to know basis" (reference confidentiality statement)
- Inform parents, unless to do so may put the child at further risk
- A copy of the Incident Log will also be kept in the client record.

Whilst it is not the role of individual staff members to investigate allegations, all staff and volunteers must bear in mind that it is their responsibility to take any safeguarding concerns seriously. **A failure to do so could result in disciplinary procedures being implemented against them.**

## 12. Making a referral to Social Care Direct

- The decision to refer to Social Care Direct will be made following a discussion between the staff member and their Line Manager. This decision will be made if there are concerns for the safety of the child or if it is deemed they are significant risk of harm.
- The referral is made via Social Care Direct Tel. 0345 8503503 (this is available 24 hours).
- This is followed up within 48 hours with a written referral using the form attached as Appendix 3.
- A copy of the completed form will be kept in the case files.
- Where a child or family is not supported on a one to one basis and does not have a case file, the form will be kept centrally with management of relevant project team.
- The designated person, must be informed of the request for service/referral via the Incident Log.
- The referrer should maintain contact with Children's Social Work Service to ascertain the outcome of their request for service/referral.
- Service users should be told that the concern will be discussed with another staff member and a decision may be made to refer to Children's Social Work Service.
- Once a decision has been made to report a child protection concern to Children's Social Work Service, it is best practice to inform the parent/carers of the referral unless, by doing so, the child or young person will be at risk of further harm.

**“While professionals should seek, in general to discuss any concerns with the family and, where possible seek their agreement to making referrals to Local Authority Social Care, this should only be done where such discussion and agreement- seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.”**

(Working Together in Child Protection 2015)

**NB** Parent refers to the person with legal parental responsibility for a child. Parental responsibility continues until a child reaches 18 years of age. Child or children refers to children or young people under the age of 18 years.

**Safeguarding/child protection referrals must still be made even if all the information required on the form is not known.**

- The child's full name and any other names they are known by
- Date of birth
- Address including post code
- Parents /carers names (including any aliases) and dates of birth
- Other members of the family in the household
- Family GP, Health Visitor, School nurse
- Relevant phone numbers
- Child's language and dialect

- School or nursery attended
- Care network of the child, including where the child is, if known
- The nature of the referral – details of the alleged abuse (it may be helpful when reporting
  - physical injuries to make a sketch indicating where the injuries are, including the size, shape and colour)
- Information regarding any disability the child may have and its implications
- Your name and number and where you can be contacted
- If Early Help Assessment has been initiated

### **13 Safe Recruitment Procedures for Volunteers/Staff**

- Volunteers and staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised. The relevant line manager within Al Mustafa Welfare Trust must ensure appropriate checks have been carried out prior to the involvement and participation of new staff/volunteers in delivering activities to young people.
- All applicants, whether paid or voluntary, will be subject to an interview to assess their suitability to work for the organisation.
- It will be made clear to all applicants for all posts within the organisation are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Any applicants for employment deemed to be in regular contact with children and vulnerable young adults will be subject to enhanced DBS checks prior to commencement of employment.
- All applicants will be requested to provide two referees who will be contacted to provide written references' prior to employment and if necessary further checks should be undertaken by the line manager.
- References will be closely examined by the appropriate Line Manager and any queries discussed with the referee prior to job offer
- Declaration of past convictions or cases pending and agreement to have a DBS check completed, is of course a pre-requisite to approval to staff/volunteer to work with young people.
- In cases where applicants have unexplained gaps in their employment, or there is a history of frequent moves between jobs, explanations will be sought.
- Volunteers that take part in 'regulated activities' with children and/or vulnerable young adults will require enhanced DBS checks prior to undertaking a voluntary role.
- All staff, will be subject to a 6 month probationary period. Positions will not be confirmed as permanent until the organisation is confident that staff members are considered safe and suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable young adults.
- All commissioned workers (e.g. trainers) will be required to produce current DBS check and their professional testimonials to ensure their suitability to deliver their services.

- **ALL** volunteers/staff must agree to abide by the Charity's Safeguarding Policy and all are required to sign the Code of Conduct. Any concerns or objections with regard to suitability of a staff member should be submitted to the CEO. These matters will be raised with the relevant external agencies with appropriate action taken including a formal response in writing to the concerned party if required. Al Mustafa Welfare Trust should not deal with concerns about a staff member in isolation.

#### **14 Training for Volunteers/Staff**

Al Mustafa Welfare Trust will facilitate training opportunities for all paid staff and volunteers within the organisation. Priority will be given to those staff groups who work with children and families on a regular basis, to ensure that they recognise the signs of possible abuse and neglect and are able to report those concerns in line with this policy and Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.

**Al Mustafa Welfare Trust** will ensure that all new staff have attended a Safeguarding awareness workshop within three months of taking up their post. This opportunity should also be made available to volunteers to enable a culture of a child-focused Al Mustafa Welfare Trust to prevail. When appointing volunteers /staff consider their current or previous experience in working with young children.

- **Al Mustafa Welfare Trust** will ensure that all staff and volunteers receive an induction, and training appropriate to their role. Training should be updated and reviewed regularly for new staff/ volunteers and in line with changing legislation. Safeguarding training should include
  - Basic awareness of Safeguarding issues
  - The Charity's Safeguarding policies and procedures including our Code of Conduct

## **15 Good Practice Guidelines - Safeguarding Children**

### **Group situations**

- Staff will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or small groups. Staff will endeavour to seek support if a staff member who needs to take a child aside – for example, for time out for behaviour issues, will choose a suitable place within the same room.
- A minimum of two staff, wherever possible, will work together with groups of children.
- The layout within our activity venues will permit constant supervision of all children and the staff working with them.
- Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through staff support in making choices about their care and safeguarding.
- Risk assessment to be carried out where appropriate

### **One to one situations**

#### **Al Mustafa Welfare Trust does not encourage a policy of working one to one with young children**

However to safeguard both children and staff, the following guidance must be followed:

- One to one work must be undertaken in premises where there are other people in the building i.e. Al Mustafa Welfare Trust premises, school, children's centre, client's home, health centre etc.
- It is good practice not to undertake one to one session if staff are alone with the child in any venue.
- Staff must inform their Manager of all one to one sessions and these must be included into the weekly timetable/time sheet.
- Prior to the start of the session, the worker must contact the Manager to confirm that the session is going ahead; how long it will last; and when they will be expected to return to the office/go home if at the end of the working.
- If during a visit you feel uncomfortable at any time, you should leave and report this to your Line Manager. Complete incident form.
- If the worker is not returning to base then the Manager must be given a reason for this.
- On completion of the one to one session, the worker must contact their Manager informing him/her that the session is over. If the Manager is unavailable then a message must be left.

## **Transporting children and young people**

On the grounds of safeguarding children, health and safety, and litigation, staff and/or volunteers should never under any circumstances transport unaccompanied children and young people in their own vehicles.

## **Away Days and Residentials**

Travelling on day trips and residentials may form part of the volunteer programme at Al Mustafa Welfare Trust. Trips may vary from short journeys across town or involve more complicated arrangements involving overnight stays. Al Mustafa Welfare Trust are committed to ensuring that we follow certain standards to ensure the safety of our members.

## **Photography / Visual Records**

Photographs of children and young people and families may be considered as personal data as defined by the data Protection Act 1988, if any individual can be identified from the photograph/image. Photographs cannot be displayed in public places without the specific consent of the child, young person, parent or carer.

Permission should always be sought from parents, carers, children and young people (who are deemed Fraser competent) before photographs/images are taken and displayed in any form.

In no circumstances must staff or volunteers use their personal phone to take or store any images of young children. Staff are not always permitted to use their personal phones to contact any young people.

## **Social Networking Websites**

All staff and volunteers that use social networking websites must not, under any circumstances, release or discuss any images or aspects of work relating to children and families as this may have safeguarding implications.

## **Use of internet at work**

Staff (including volunteers and trustees ) are responsible for using the internet and email in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner. ( Refer the Charity's Internet policy)

## **17 Consent and Information Sharing**

### **17.1 Consent**

The issue about whether or not to seek the consent from parents/carers regarding sharing information about their child to another agency or professional must be governed by whether or not the child is at risk of significant harm.

## 17.2 Sharing Information

Following a child protection referral to Children's Social Work Service, or where "a cause for concern" is identified, this information should be shared, on a "needs to know basis" with other professionals/agencies, (within and outside the organisation) working with the child/young person and family.

## 18. Guidance on Information Sharing for Staff

- Stay Calm
  - Do not transmit shock, anger or embarrassment
  - Data Protection Act is not a barrier to information sharing but provides a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately
  - Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
  - Seek advice from your line manager if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
  - Ensure that the information you share is necessary, proportionate, and relevant for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
  - Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
  - Consider safety and wellbeing of the person and others who may be affected by their actions
  - Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose
  - Please bring this to the attention of named safeguarding lead if you decide to make a request for service to Children's Social Work Service / Adult Social Work Service / Police
  - Complete appropriate incident log as advised by the named safeguarding lead
- DCSF, 2015, Information Sharing: Pocket Guide



## **19 Professional Relationships/Duty of Care**

Staff must be aware of professional boundaries between supporting children, young people and families and becoming personally involved. E.g. It is not acceptable for staff to befriend a child they are supporting on social media such as facebook. Such involvement could impact on their judgement in safeguarding situations.

Staff members are in a position of trust and responsibility and this should not be compromised under any circumstances. If any staff member feels that their relationship with a particular client/service user is becoming unprofessional, they should discuss this with their Manager.

If any staff member or volunteer becomes aware of any unprofessional or inappropriate relationships they must inform their Line Managers.

## **20 Dealing with Concerns about a Colleague**

The vast majority of people who work with children are well motivated and would never harm a child. Unfortunately a few do and it is essential that the organisation creates a culture that makes staff / volunteers willing and comfortable to voice their concerns, particularly those about someone with whom they work or whom they know. Again, the organisation's Safeguarding procedures should be followed.

All staff including volunteers and trustees should:

- Adopt a "whistle blowing approach" if they suspect any form of abuse of children including taking / circulating photographs /images of children by a staff member, volunteer or trustee;
- Report their concerns immediately to the designated safeguarding lead

Failure to report suspicions or actual facts could be seen as collusion and a failure in your duty of care. This could result in disciplinary procedures being instigated by the organisation.

During an investigation, support should be given both to the individual who voices concerns and to the suspected abuser. Once the investigation is completed, the organisation must decide what action, if any, is necessary to prevent a similar situation arising again.

See Appendix 4 Internal Concerns Flowchart

In order to manage allegations against child care professionals, the local authority has an appointed Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO works within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk to children. (Working Together 2015)

In this context, the term “professional” includes paid employees, volunteers, casual/agency staff and self-employed workers who will have contact with children as a part of their role. The LADO ensures that all allegations or concerns about professionals or adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way. The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. The LADO provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process

1. Any allegation should be reported immediately to a senior manager within your organisation. The LADO should also be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer’s attention or that are made directly to the police. The LADO must also be informed of any assessments/allegations about a professional’s personal /family life which could suggest that they may be a risk to children with whom they are working.
2. All cases will be subject to an initial joint evaluation between the LADO and referring agency, involving relevant sectors as and when appropriate including, the Police, Children’s social work services, employers and regulatory bodies .The assessment will focus on the nature of the concern, safeguarding for the particular child/children and appropriate consideration for the professional/volunteer involved. An allegations management meeting will be convened where necessary to agree an appropriate way forward.
3. The protection of a child/young person will be the prime consideration in the process of managing an allegation .The child/young person’s involvement in the process including support and feedback will be given careful consideration with the LADO ensuring that the child’s voice is heard.
4. For the professional involved, the assessment and subsequent action will be stressful whatever the outcome and support for each individual must be considered and acted upon.
5. If an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.