

Wellspring Healthy Living Centre (WHLC Ltd)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES



Wellspring Healthy Living Centre Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Contents

Section I – Child Protection Policy

- I. Policy statement
- II. Indicative reading
- III. Purpose of these procedures
- IV. Definition of child abuse
- V. The tasks of Wellspring Healthy Living Centre in relation to child protection
- VI. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers/Appointment of Trustees, etc

Section 2 – Child Protection Procedures

- VII. Categories of abuse
- VIII. What to do if you are worried
- IX. Alleged abuse perpetrated by children and young people.
- X. Allegations of abuse made against staff, volunteers or trustees
- XI. Actions required of Designated Senior Officer/ Child Protection Officers
- XII. What will happen when an abuser is convicted?
- XIII. What will happen when allegations do not lead to a conviction?

Section 1 – Child Protection Policy

1 Policy statement

The Child Protection Policy recognises that young people have the right to dignity and respect at all times and will take swift and appropriate action if that dignity or respect is violated. The violation of the dignity of a child by any abuse is an offence that demands an effective response in line with the current guidance and mandatory procedures as defined by the Southwest Child Protection Procedures and Local Safeguarding Board.

Wellspring Healthy Living Centre has the legal and moral duty to ensure the safety and well being of every child or young person with whom it has contact and to take action against the abuse of the child by whomsoever it is perpetrated.

II Indicative reading

This policy document is produced in line with, and is supplemented by the current guidance and mandatory procedures as defined by the Southwest Child Protection Procedures and Local Safeguarding Board.

These policies and procedures should be read in conjunction with the relevant guidance documents available from:

http://www.swcpp.org.uk/swcpp/swcpp_procedures.htm

III Purpose of these procedures

Wellspring Healthy Living Centre adopts the following policy and procedures to be used in all its activities. The policy applies to all Wellspring Healthy Living Centre:

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Board Members and Trustees
- Contract staff

The aim of the policies and procedures is:

- The protection of all children from actual or possible harm.
- To ensure that criminal or inappropriate behaviour by those who have care of, contact with and responsibility for children can be identified and properly dealt with.

Wellspring Healthy Living Centre unhesitatingly accepts and will maintain the 'paramountcy principle' when dealing with any matter of alleged abuse of minors: that is that all other considerations are secondary to the protection of minors from actual or possible abuse.

IV Definition of child abuse

"The Children Act 1989 and the Adoption and Children Act 2002" define 'harm' as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; 'health' means physical or mental health; and 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical"¹

Categories of abuse are further explained in section 2 "child protection procedures".

V The tasks of Wellspring Healthy Living Centre in relation to child protection

- i. To comply with the mandatory actions and guidance procedures for safeguarding children as defined by the South West Child Protection Procedures and Local Safeguarding Board. Available from <http://www.swcpp.org.uk/>
- ii. To ensure that all staff, contract staff, volunteers and board members are familiar with the Child Protection Policy and assist them in understanding their obligations in regard to knowledge of any incidence of child abuse, and to help them take appropriate action.
- iii. To ensure that the child protection policy and procedures are annually reviewed to reflect changes in legislation.
- iv. To provide annual corporate training to all employees regarding company policy and procedures including Child Protection awareness, and developments in legislation.

¹ Local Safeguarding Board. South West Child Protection Procedures. Available from http://www.swcpp.org.uk/swcpp/swcpp_procedures.htm. Accessed 11/07/2007.
Child Protection Policy Under Reviewed May 2010

VI Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers/Appointment of Trustees, etc

It is understood and acknowledged that paedophiles are attracted to organizations which provide services for children.² Therefore, Wellspring Healthy Living Centre will ensure that criminal records are discussed and acted upon, prior to be appointment of staff or volunteers.

This will be done via a recruitment process. Appointments can only be made on condition that satisfactory "Disclosure" applications are received from the Criminal Records Bureau.

Staff and volunteers working directly with young people will be subject to an enhanced disclosure process. Enhanced disclosure applies to those adults in any position involving contact with/access (including to their records) to children and young people up to age 18, including those in positions of trust and supervisors/managers as well as people in frontline roles.

A rigorous and probing approach to the application process (e.g. using application forms designed to elicit the full, relevant history of applicants), interviews and selection for positions with Wellspring Healthy Living Centre will be adhered to.

² Bristol City Council Model Child Protection Procedure.
Child Protection Policy Under Reviewed May 2010

Section 2 - Child Protection Procedures

VII Categories of abuse

The 1989 Children Act identifies four categories of abuse:

Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect

- **Physical Abuse**

Actual or likely physical injury to a child or young person under age 18, or failure to prevent physical injury. Physical abuse also incorporates female genital mutilation, which is an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003).

- **Sexual Abuse**

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or young person.

- **Neglect**

The persistent, or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

- **Emotional Abuse**

Severe or persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection likely to cause adverse effects on the emotional and behavioral development of a child.

The following categories are also recognized as child abuse

- Female Genital Mutilation
- Fabricated Illness
- Forced Marriage

Wellspring Healthy Living Centre also adheres to the good practice guidelines in relation to the following:

- Sexually active young people.
- Young people involved in substance misuse.

These guidelines can be found on the Southwest Child Protection Procedures website - <http://www.swcpp.org.uk/index.htm>. **A**

- **Historical Abuse**

There may be occasions when an adult will disclose abuse (either sexual or physical), which occurred in the past, during their childhood. This information needs to be treated

in exactly the same way as a disclosure or suspicion of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

VIII What to do if you are worried

As a member, trustee, paid staff or a volunteer etc, you are not responsible for diagnosing abuse. However, you have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child or young person.

As someone in a childcare role as well as a citizen, when abuse is disclosed or observed you should take the following action:

- Inform whoever has disclosed the information that it cannot be kept confidential and will have to be passed on to appropriate agencies. Reassure the person who has spoken to you that they have done the right thing.
- DO NOT confront the alleged abuser.
- Inform your line manager about the disclosure within 24 hours. S/he to treat as top priority and seek advice urgently. You might be asked to make a written report to keep an accurate and contemporary record for future reference.
- CEO will report and discuss the disclosure with the **Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (0117 9454320) or the Child Care Duty and Assessment Team (0117 9036775)** The CEO will liaise with the statutory agencies on any issue of child protection arising out of the work of Wellspring Healthy Living Centre. Ask your line manager, who should also support you in taking your concerns through the Child Protection system.
- Line Manager to ensure that the employee is kept informed about what will happen next, so they can be reassured about what to expect.

IX Alleged abuse perpetrated by children and young people

Further guidance on responding to an allegation of child abuse concerning an alleged perpetrator who is under 18 years old can be found on the local Safeguarding Children Aboard Website, Children and Young Peoples Services at Bristol City Council on;

<http://www.bristol-cyps.org.uk/index.html>.

X Allegations of abuse made against staff, volunteers or trustees

Should a worker, paid or voluntary, with Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, be the subject of allegations of any form of child abuse, it is the duty of the Board of Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, in consultation with the appropriate authorities, to initiate a full enquiry.

Misconduct towards children involving staff, contract staff, volunteers, trustees etc, is (mandatory) reportable to the Protection of Children Act Service at the Department of Health for possible inclusion on the POCA List of unsuitable people to work with children.

If you have a concern that a person may have behaved inappropriately or you have received information that may constitute an allegation you should:

- Report it to the CEO, Wellspring Healthy Living Centre as soon as possible, however trivial it may seem
- Make a signed and dated written record of your concerns, observations or the information you have received to pass on to your line manager;
- Maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being considered or investigated and follow local information sharing protocols

You should not

- Attempt to deal with the situation yourself
- Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents;
- Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality;
- Take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents or carer.

XI Actions required of CEO (in cases of allegations against staff, volunteers or trustees)

When a report is made to the CEO, he/she must inform the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** within 1 working day.

The LADO will provide advice and guidance and be involved in the management and oversight of all allegations cases as well as liaising with you, all other parties and monitoring the progress of all cases.

Local Authority Designated Officer Contacts

Bristol

- Schools: Kate Cole 0117 922 3973
- Foster carers: Christine Teller 0117 353 4028
- Residential workers: Karen Gazzard 0117 353 4027
- Other CYPS staff: Ian McDowall 0117 903 7941
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Angela Clarke 0117 903 7790

The CEO of Wellspring Healthy Living Centre (or designated deputy in case of the unavailability of, or an allegation being made against, the CEO) should:

- Get written details of the allegation or concern, signed and dated by the person reporting it. Countersign and date this record

- Collate and record information you have and personal details about (i) the child/ren, parents/carers, siblings; (ii) the person against whom the allegation has been made; and (iii) details of any known or possible witnesses, including checking on and recording, with times, dates etc, any other incidents or concerns about the child/ren or the member of staff/volunteer concerned together with actions taken and outcomes. At the same time it's important to keep alert for patterns which might suggest the abuse goes further a field and involves other children and adults;
- Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) WITHIN 1 WORKING DAY of receiving the report of an allegation.
- Inform the person reporting the allegation or concern what action you will take, in accordance with local procedures and with regard to local information sharing protocols and the need to maintain confidentiality;
- Ensure that the alleged perpetrator or person about whom there is a concern is informed of the allegation or concern as soon as possible after consulting with the LADO and in accordance with any restrictions on information sharing that may be imposed by the police or social care. How enquiries will be conducted and possible outcome e.g. disciplinary action, dismissal, referral to regulatory body should be explained together with sources of support and advice, e.g. from professional organization/trade union.
- Help all parties understand the process throughout.

You should not

- Take any action that might undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing or interviewing the alleged perpetrator, prior to contacting the LADO, (or without the go-ahead from police or social care if a direct referral has been made) The LADO will liaise with the police and/or social care as necessary, as they may want to place restrictions on the information that can be shared.
- Automatically suspend or dismiss the member of staff without seeking further advice.
- Inform parents/carers of the child/ren until advised to do so by the LADO or a strategy meeting, other than in emergency situation, such as when a child has been injured and needs medical attention. The LADO will advise on how and by whom parents/carers should be informed and will liaise with police or social care where they are or may need to be involved.

The CEO of Wellspring Healthy Living Centre should consult the guidance framework, "Allegations made against staff" for the mandatory procedures. These are available from the Southwest Child Protection Procedures website

http://www.swcpp.org.uk/Allegationsagainststaff/Allegations_against_staff.htm

XII What will happen when an abuser is convicted?

A conviction of an offence of abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) against a child by any person associated with Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, deeply damages the work done by Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, and the trust the community places us.

If a member of staff, contract staff, volunteer, management committee or Board Member is convicted of abuse, the company will take action under the Wellspring Healthy Living Centre Disciplinary Procedures, gross misconduct.

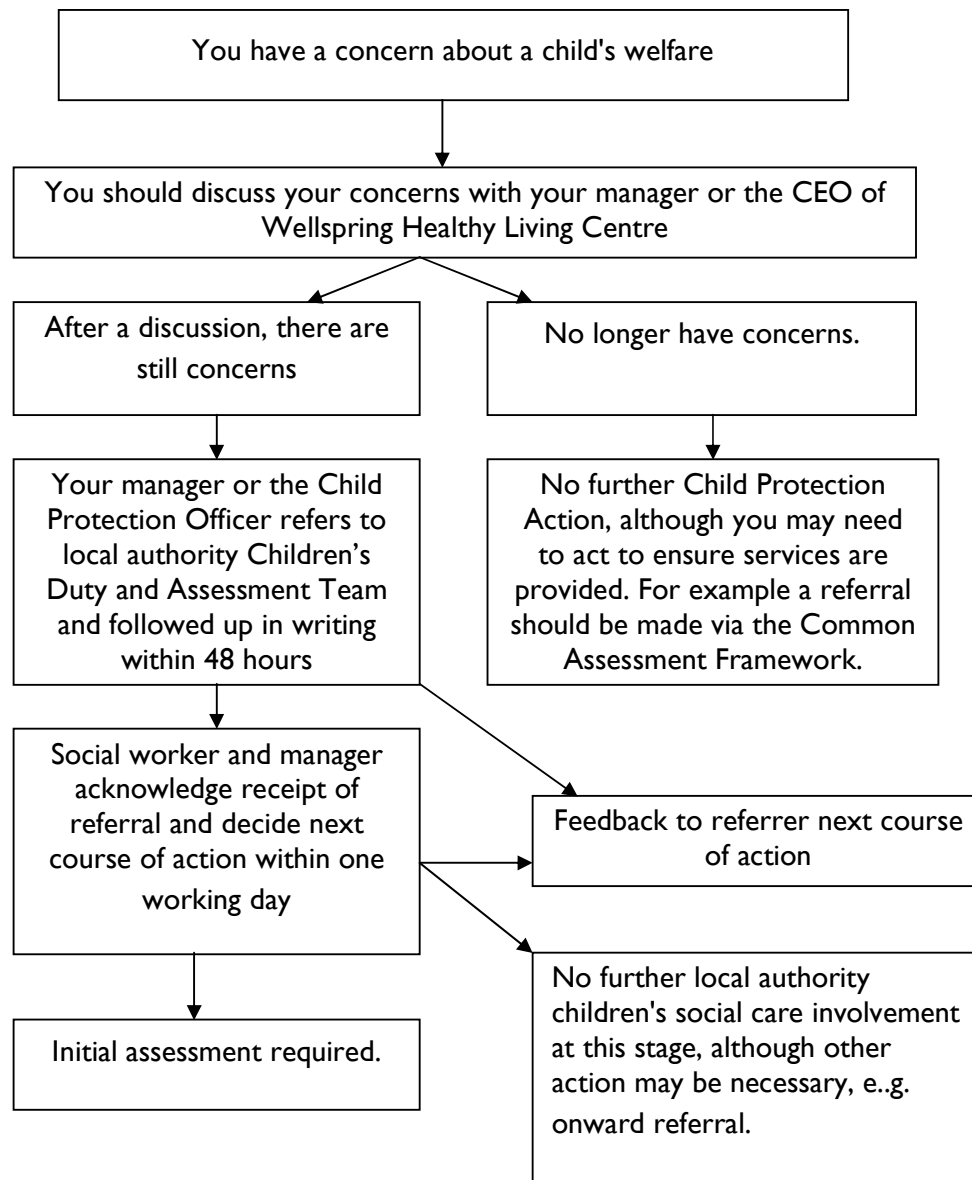
Adequate protection of children demands that any employee or volunteer with Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, so convicted can no longer hold any job, role or task in Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, that any way brings them into contact with children or young people.

XIII What will happen when allegations do not lead to a conviction?

Most allegations do not result in either a criminal prosecution, or a conviction, even if there is a weight of evidence in support of the allegations. Wellspring Healthy Living Centre however, remains responsible for ensuring the welfare of any child or young person in their care, especially those who might come in contact with an alleged abuser. Wellspring Healthy Living Centre cannot avoid this issue. The absence of criminal conviction is not by itself a sufficient guarantee of suitability for any particular kind of work with children.

Therefore, the Management Committee of Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, in consultation with the appropriate authorities, will ensure that any future work entrusted to an alleged abuser carries no risk whatsoever to children and young people, or prejudices the work of Wellspring Healthy Living Centre. Furthermore, in the event of there not being a criminal prosecution, Wellspring Healthy Living Centre retains the right to institute a formal disciplinary procedure that might result in the dismissal of the employee from Wellspring Healthy Living Centre or any of its subsidiary companies or joint ventures.

Referral flowchart: Reporting suspected or actual child-abuse.



To make a referral to the Child Care Duty and Assessment Team contact;
Child Care Duty and Assessment Team, Welsman, Wilder St, St Pauls
Tel: 0117 903 6500.