

**SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE
FOR
SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION SETTINGS
ON
CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

These Procedures should be read in conjunction with:

Tower Hamlets SCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Thresholds Guidance - see Tower Hamlets SCP Website:

<http://www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/the-lscb/>

Tower Hamlets SCP LADO Procedures and Flowchart re Allegations made against staff working in the children's workforce - Information about reporting and managing allegations - see Tower Hamlets SCP Website:

<http://www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/the-lscb/>

Tower Hamlets SCP Supplementary Guidance for Schools and Education Settings on Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff – September 2021 – see Tower Hamlets SCP Website:

<http://www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/the-lscb/>

and

The London Child Protection Procedures – see the London Child Protection Committee Website:

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

INTRODUCTION

Sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the supporting Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance in “Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – 1 September 2021” (DfE, Sept 2021) specify the need for all schools and education settings, including non-maintained schools, independent schools, Academies, Further Education institutions, and Local Authorities exercising education functions to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The guidance from the DfE (Sept 2021) defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

‘Children’ includes everyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is emphasised to be **everyone’s** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child. It is recognised that no single professional can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances and that if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time then **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

These provisions are extended to other local authority settings and to partner agencies by Sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.

These provisions underpin and reinforce the common law duty of care and sit alongside other statutory responsibilities in this area, such as those for health and safety, and dealing with bullying.

These requirements are reinforced in “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018” (HM Govt, July 2018) which specifies that under The Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, within a local authority area the Police, Clinical Commissioning Group and the Local Authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. This includes developing local procedures for the reporting, investigation and follow-up of concerns of a child protection nature that comply with the legal requirements detailed in the guidance.

Within London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP) has strategic responsibility for these arrangements.

The Children Act 1989 and national guidance such as “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018” and “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2015” (DfE, March 2015) clearly specify that those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work, including practitioners who do not have a specific role in relation to safeguarding children, have a duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children. This includes having a duty to report concerns of a child protection nature and a duty to cooperate with those agencies empowered to investigate such concerns and support plans to safeguard the welfare of the child(ren).

In addition, ‘Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers’ (HM Govt, July 2018) emphasises the importance of appropriate information sharing in child protection and safeguarding the wellbeing of children.

Tower Hamlets SCP formally adopted the revised 6th edition of the London Child Protection Procedures issued by the London Safeguarding Children Partnership Updated March 2021. These Tower Hamlets SCP procedures for staff in schools and education settings should be viewed as supplementary to the Pan-London Child Protection Procedures.

These procedures apply to all staff working in schools and education settings including Teachers, Setting Nurses, Primary Helpers, General Assistants, Learning Mentors, other Support Staff in schools and education settings, Attendance and Welfare Advisors (AWAs), Careers Advisors, Home/School Liaison Workers, Educational Psychologists, Behaviour specialists, Support for Learning practitioners, Home Tutors, School Development/Improvement Advisors and Youth Workers.

Only Children’s Social Care (Social Services), the NSPCC and the Police can carry out Child Protection Investigations. Staff working in schools and education settings should not attempt to investigate a child protection matter as it may

compromise any possible legal proceedings. There is a need only to establish sufficient details and information for a decision to be made about making a referral.

It is vital that any concerns are reported as soon as possible, and that unnecessary delay is avoided. In order for the investigative agencies to carry out their statutory duties, they will need to access records and collate information. They will have to contact parents/carers and may need to arrange a medical examination.

When Child Protection referrals are made late in the day this may delay appropriate action until the following morning, which may be potentially serious. Staff members working in schools/settings have no powers to retain a child or to refuse to release a child to the parent/carer at the end of the school day.

The requirements of “Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – 1 September 2021” (DfE, Sept 2021) apply to all types of schools and education settings and the Governing Body/Management Committee/Proprietor are responsible for ensuring that these requirements are met and fulfilled.

THE ROLES OF THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD AND THE DESIGNATED GOVERNOR

In Annex C of “Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – 1 September 2021” (DfE, Sept 2021) detailed information is given on the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Every school and education setting in the borough is required to have a Designated Safeguarding Lead. School/Setting Governing Bodies and the Headteacher/Manager have responsibility for ensuring that a Designated Safeguarding Lead is appointed. In some cases, particularly in primary schools, the Headteacher will take on the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Schools/settings will also have Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, but they must be trained to the same standard as the DSL and the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and cannot be delegated.

The Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service (THESS) conducts an annual survey at the start of each academic year to collate the identity and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Leads, which is then shared with appropriate services as necessary. ~~this information.~~ It is the responsibility of the

school to update THESS with any in-year personnel changes to the DSL or Deputy DSLs.

Each of the support services within the Local Authority where staff members work in schools and/or settings or work with children and young people and their families should also have a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Designated Safeguarding Leads should be familiar with these procedures and must attend the multi-disciplinary foundation and post-foundation training courses in safeguarding and child protection provided by the THSCP. Their role is to ensure that these procedures are followed in their respective schools/settings and to liaise with other agencies as required to ensure that advice is sought and referrals made in accordance with the procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead also carries responsibility for maintaining the records of ~~which~~ children within the school/setting who are known to Children's Social Care ~~subject to a Child Protection Plan~~ and of concerns that have arisen about the wellbeing of children at the school/setting. This information is confidential and should only be shared on a strict need to know basis. These records should be safeguarded in a secure place away from the children's academic records.

It is also required that the Governing Body and/or Board of Trustees appoint a board member to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding. The Designated Governor must be familiar with these procedures and should also attend the multi-agency training courses in safeguarding and child protection provided by the THSCP. Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service also offers bespoke safeguarding training for the governing body as well as safeguarding lead governors.

The Designated Governor takes lead responsibility to ensure that the school/setting complies with these procedures. The Designated Governor should work in liaison with the Designated Safeguarding lead and report to the school/setting Governing Body on an annual basis as a minimum. However, the Governing Body takes strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements and have a collective responsibility to ensure that the school or setting complies with these procedures.

Where there are concerns relating to the involvement of members of staff in allegations or incidents of a child protection nature, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that the Headteacher/Manager is informed and that procedures are followed. In the case of an allegation against or incident involving the Headteacher/Manager, the Chair of Governors or LA Officer with responsibility for the school/setting must ensure that procedures are followed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Governor in collaboration with the Headteacher or Manager should ensure that the school/setting fully complies with DfE requirements in relation to safeguarding training for staff, policies and procedures being in place and should provide an annual report to the Governing Body on safeguarding compliance and issues that have arisen in relation to safeguarding.

The DfE requires that all staff in schools/settings read and understand Part 1 of “Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – 1 September 2021” (DfE, Sept 2021). At Induction all staff members including temporary staff and volunteers must be made aware of the safeguarding systems in place and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

At induction and whenever there are updates staff members should be provided with copies of Part one of the DfE statutory guidance and of the school/setting’s safeguarding policies (the Child Protection Policy, Pupil Behaviour Policy, the Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct and the Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and which should amongst other things include staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media, and the safeguarding response to children missing education.

It is emphasised that all staff members should be aware of:

- **the local Early Help process and understand their role in it**

- **the process for making referrals to children’s social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 that may follow a referral, along with the role that they might be expected to play in such assessments**

- **what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected**

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for Early Help for a child who:

- • is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;

- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of so-called honour based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care; and
- is a privately fostered child;
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

Advice and guidance in relation to Early Help can be obtained from **Tower Hamlets Early Help Hub on 020 7364 5006 - choose Option 2.**

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. In relation to types of abuse it is highlighted that all school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most case multiple issues will overlap with one another.

In addition, the DfE guidance specifies that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy) should undergo updated safeguarding and child protection training every two years. Tower Hamlets SCP recommends that this should be at least 2 days of appropriate safeguarding and child protection training. All staff members should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated - Tower Hamlets SCP recommends that all staff members should receive formal safeguarding and child protection training at least every 2 years. It is also stated that all staff members should receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually to provide them with relevant knowledge and skills to safeguard children effectively.

Staff members and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school/setting's safeguarding regime. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures should be put in place for such concerns

to be raised with the management team. These procedures should be included in staff training and staff behavior policies.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Governor in collaboration with the Headteacher or Manager should ensure that the school/setting fully complies with DfE requirements in relation to safeguarding training for staff and to policies and procedures being in place and should provide an annual report to the Governing Body on safeguarding compliance and issues that have arisen in relation to safeguarding.

RECORDING OF INFORMATION RELATED TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD'S WELLBEING AND USE OF THE TOWER HAMLETS EARLY HELP ASSESSMENT (EHA) FORM

As stated above the Designated Safeguarding Lead carries lead responsibility for maintaining the records of children within the school/setting who are known to Children's Social Care and of concerns that have arisen about the wellbeing of children at the school/setting.

Records should be clear and accurate with fact and opinion differentiated and be in chronological order. This information is confidential and should only be shared on a strict need to know basis. These records should be safeguarded in a secure place away from the children's academic records. Schools that make use of electronic safeguarding record systems must be reassured that the data which includes personal and sensitive information is stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

When a child is deemed to be in need of Early Help, the DSL may decide to support the child through the school's internal pastoral support system. However, where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency, the DSL or identified Lead Professional should, with the consent and input of the child/family, complete the Tower Hamlets Early Help Assessment (EHA) online form. The Early Help Assessment needs to be evidence-based, have clear actions, and should identify what help the child and family require. The purpose of the EHA is to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention is required under the Children Act 1989. The EHA should be reviewed at regular intervals and if the child's well-being is not improving the Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider making a referral to the Tower Hamlets MASH for statutory intervention. The Tower Hamlets Early Help Assessment may also be useful when there is single agency involvement, for example, to collate information about a child and family and to help coordinate plans of action.

It is vital that any concerns are reported as soon as possible, and that unnecessary delay is avoided. **If at any time there is concern that a child has suffered from serious harm or is at risk of immediate serious harm then**

this must be reported immediately – anybody can make a referral under such circumstances.

Schools/settings need to be alert to the possible signs and symptoms of all forms of abuse. In “Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – 1 September 2021” (DfE, Sept 2021) detailed information is provided by the DfE in Annex B relating to:

- Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents
- Children and the court system
- Children missing from education
- Children with family members in prison
- Child criminal exploitation & Child sexual exploitation
- County lines
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse
- Homelessness
- So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse including FGM and forced marriage
- Preventing radicalisation, The Prevent Duty and Channel
- Peer on peer abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment
- Upskirting
- Additional advice and support.

School leaders and staff working directly with children are required to read this.

All staff should be reminded how the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation with technology often providing the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety is seen to be one that empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate.

Schools and settings are reminded of the particular legal duties related to:

- **Children Missing from Education** and the legal duties on all schools under the Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 (DfE, 2006) and The

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations September 2016 (DFE, 2016) to inform the local authority of:

(i) any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more;

(ii) any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admissions register, and;

(iii) of every non-standard joiner and leaver i.e. of any pupils who join or leave the school at any time other than standard transitions within 5 days commencing from 1st September 2016.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation** and sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.
- **So called “Honour Based” Abuse** including forced marriage, breast ironing and the mandatory reporting duty introduced under Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) which places a statutory duty upon teachers along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- **Preventing Radicalisation** and the duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (“the CTSA 2015”) to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism” (‘the Prevent duty’) and to ‘have regard to the statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015’ (‘the Prevent guidance’). Requirements are detailed in terms of risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training and Information Technology policies.
- **Upskirting** is now a criminal offence and is defined as “taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm”.
- **Serious youth violence** has been added to support schools in recognising where pupils may be at risk. The guidance states that “All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships

with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs” and that “All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to measure these. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office’s Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.”

Comprehensive information on the signs and symptoms of abuse can be found at:

Tower Hamlets SCP Website:

<http://www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/the-lscb/>

and

London Child Protection Committee Website:

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

GOOD RECORD KEEPING, INFORMATION SHARING AND THE TRANSFER OF INFORMATION WHEN CHILDREN CHANGE SCHOOLS /SETTINGS

Good record keeping, information sharing and the transfer of information when children change schools/settings have a very important role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children. When children change schools it is essential that their full records are transferred so that it can be ensured that they receive appropriate curriculum and teaching support at their new school and so that any concerns about their welfare are known about and monitoring undertaken.

When a child joins the school/setting and full records have been requested and not received then the Tower Hamlets Behaviour & Attendance Support Service (THBASS) should be notified. The THBASS will support your efforts to obtain the records and will also in turn notify the Specialist Advisor for Children Missing Education (CME).

Similarly, where a pupil moves to another school/setting or Local Authority area and no request for records is received then a referral should be made to the THBASS for follow-up to try to ascertain the destination and wellbeing of the child.

It is vital that full records of actions taken are kept in relation to cases where pupils change school. These records can be used for reference if any issues subsequently arise in relation to the whereabouts of the child and the steps taken by the school at the time when the child moved.

Records related to concerns about the wellbeing of a child should be sent separately from the academic records in a sealed envelope marked private and confidential to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the receiving school. Schools sending records electronically must be assured that the process is secure and compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. A confirmation of receipt should be obtained. A full copy of the records should always be retained by the sending school and kept locked in a secure location or stored securely electronically with restricted access, in the event of a query being received at a future date and records should only be deleted in accordance with the school's Policy on the Retention of Records.

TOWER HAMLETS MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH) – 020 7364 3444 / 5601 / 5606

If there is a concern about the welfare of a child or young person and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, parent or pupil would like to talk it through then they can contact the Tower Hamlets Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and speak to the Duty Social Worker.

The Duty Social Worker will be able to discuss the concern, assist in deciding whether a formal child protection referral is appropriate and facilitate the reporting of a formal child protection referral in accordance with Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures and to offer advice.

When there is a specific concern of a child protection nature whereby it is thought that a child has been harmed or at risk of being harmed then the Designated Safeguarding Lead must contact MASH on 0207 364 3444 / 5601 / 5606 to discuss the matter and afterwards complete the Inter-Agency Referral Form and email it through.

In the case of more general/ongoing concerns about the wellbeing of a child and/or family then an assessment on the EHA Form should be completed to give as detailed a picture of the situation as possible. The completed assessment can then be sent to the MASH for advice and consideration for other support.

The Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) provides advice and guidance to Headteachers/Managers, Governing Bodies and the LA in relation to allegations involving professionals and other carers working with children. The LADO coordinates the progress of such cases and is responsible

for liaising with the other agencies. School/settings should always contact the LADO in the first instance to discuss any allegation or concern of a child protection nature relating to a member of staff. The LADO will inform the school when to involve their HR Provider. In the event that the LADO is not available then the MASH should be contacted.

Emails must not be sent to report/log concerns about children and/or families without contacting the MASH or LADO first. This is contrary to statutory guidance and serves to clog up systems whilst such emails are worked through to try to establish why they are being sent. There is also the risk that information may get lost.

The MASH operates between 9.00am and 5.00pm except at weekends and on public holidays. If the concern arises outside of the hours operated by the Advice Line and it is believed the child may be at immediate risk then the Children's Social Care Emergency Out of Hours Team (020 7364 5006 – choose Option 3) or the Police should be contacted without delay.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN – PHYSICAL INJURY, NEGLECT OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

These procedures should be followed by any member of staff who has evidence of or suspects abuse of a child or is concerned about the ability of the parents/carers to provide for the child's protection, safety or well-being. It should be noted that this includes concerns about incidents which may have taken place outside the school/setting but which have been brought to the attention of the member of staff by another child, parent/carer or neighbour etc.

Staff members should be encouraged to report their concerns about possible abuse and be able to raise concerns if they feel inappropriate or insufficient action has been taken. It is particularly important junior staff should not feel intimidated about discussing concerns that do not appear to have been taken up by more senior colleagues. No member of staff should be victimised or suffer adversely for reporting concerns. This also applies where there are concerns that a member of staff may have perpetrated abuse.

Any members of staff noticing an injury, however slight and for which the explanations are unsatisfactory or inconsistent must report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead decides that there is cause for concern, they must telephone the MASH/Child Protection Advice Line and report the concern. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead decides that it is not a child protection matter, a record must still be made of the incident and kept.

Where a member of staff is concerned about the ability of the parent/carer to provide for the child's protection, safety or physical or emotional well-being, this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the matter and decide whether to report it to the Duty Social Worker. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead decides that it is not a child protection matter a record must be made of the concern.

If a child makes a direct allegation of abuse or has a distinct injury and/or is experiencing pain and/or discomfort and for which no reasonable and consistent explanation is available this should not be discussed with parents/carers in the first instance. The concern must be reported to the MASH/Child Protection Advice Line.

If a less distinct injury is noticed or if the child makes a reference to having been physically punished but no injury is evident and no pain/discomfort is reported, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should call the Child Protection Advice Line (CPAL) to seek advice and act according to the advice given by CPAL.

The Duty Social Worker will liaise with the Team Manager or Duty Manager in the MASH and with the Assessment & Intervention Team in Children's Social Care for the area in which the child lives, whether in Tower Hamlets or in another Local Authority, as necessary. Children's Social Care will then in turn consult with other investigative agencies and with the referrer on how and by whom the carer(s) will be informed of the concerns and of what action if any will be taken.

When a child is the subject of a statutory plan and/or the case is open to an allocated social worker then any new or additional concerns about the child's wellbeing must be reported directly to the allocated social worker in the first instance. If the child has learning difficulties and/or has a physical/sensory disability and attends a school for children with special educational needs then any new or additional concerns about the child's wellbeing must be reported directly to the allocated social worker or to the Children with Disabilities Duty Team in the first instance.

The referrer will be informed of the outcome of consideration of the referral by Children's Social Care within 1 working day. The school/setting must keep a full written record of events.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN – SEXUAL ABUSE

Any suspicion of sexual abuse or actual disclosure by a child that he or she has been sexually abused must be reported immediately.

Parents/carers should not normally be informed at this stage as this may jeopardise the investigation and the safety of the child.

In cases where there is an allegation of or concern about sexual abuse a strategy meeting will be held in order to decide on the most appropriate way to proceed. The referrer will normally be invited to the strategy meeting.

CONCERNS ABOUT SEXUALLY ACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 18

The London Child Protection Procedures (2020) contain guidance in the form of a Protocol to assist professionals in identifying where children and young people's sexual relationships may be abusive and the children and young people may need the provision of protection or additional services.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 children under the age of 13 are considered of insufficient age to give consent to sexual activity. For this reason all cases of children under the age of 13 who are believed to be or have been engaged in sexual activity must be referred to the Child Protection Advice Line. Penetrative sexual activity represents a potential case of rape (rape is penetration of any orifice by a male penis).

Whilst sexual activity for young people under the age of 16 remains illegal, 13 – 16 year olds are deemed competent to give consent. However, for all young people aged 13 through to their 18th birthday, concerns relating to risk of harm in the form of possible abuse, coercion, exploitation or neglect must be referred to the Child Protection Advice Line/MASH.

CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

If an Initial Child Protection Conference is called following an investigation it is essential that the school/setting is represented by someone who has informed knowledge of the child. This would normally be the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It may be appropriate for other staff involved with the child in the school/setting to attend but this should only be on a need to attend basis. The school/setting should also provide a written report to the conference in accordance with the format provided by Children's Social Care.

Parents will usually be invited to attend Child Protection Conferences and will have access to any written report. If a member of staff has information that they

feel unable to share with the parents/carers, they should contact the chair of the conference prior to the meeting.

MONITORING CHILDREN WHO ARE THE SUBJECT OF A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN (CPP) AND THE CORE GROUP

If at the Initial Child Protection Conference it is decided that a child is at risk of significant harm then the child will be made the subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP). The school/setting will be officially notified and given the name of the key worker who will be a Social Worker from the Local Authority in which the child lives.

It is also likely that the school/setting will be asked to nominate an appropriate member of staff to participate as part of the Core Group that monitors and liaises closely about the progress of the action plan in the CPP and the child's wellbeing.

It is particularly important to keep a careful watch on the attendance and well-being of pupils who are the subject of CPPs. The key worker must be notified as soon as attendance breaks down or if there are other concerns as discussed and agreed at the Child Protection Conference and specified in the Child Protection Plan. There must be close and continuous liaison with the key worker, which may include attendance at Core Group and other meetings.

When a child is the subject of a statutory plan and/or the case is open to an allocated social worker then any new or additional concerns about the child's wellbeing must be reported directly to the allocated social worker in the first instance.

STAFF FROM EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES WORKING WITH SCHOOLS/SETTINGS

Including After-School Club Staff, Attendance & Welfare Advisors, Careers Advisors, Educational Psychologists, Behaviour Specialists, Support for Learning Practitioners, School Social Workers, Home Tutors, Home School Liaison Workers, Play Centre Staff, School Improvement Advisors, Study Support Staff and Youth Workers.

Actual or suspected abuse might be brought to/come to the attention of a member of staff from a support service when she/he is working in a school/setting. In such a situation they must ensure that the matter is brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school/setting so that the matter can be reported to the Duty Social Worker.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead decides not to report the matter to the Duty Social Worker but the member of staff remains concerned then he/she should consult their own service's Designated Safeguarding Lead or, if this is not possible, telephone the Duty Social Worker directly.

CONCERNS ARISING DURING HOME VISITS OR OFFICE BASED INTERVIEWS

If a child makes a direct allegation or a member of staff suspects that a child may have been injured or has any concerns about the child's wellbeing they must make a written record of the concern and any explanations given by the child or parents/carers. They should then contact their Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Duty Social Worker without delay. No attempt should be made to carry out an investigation.

If the concern is after office hours and it is believed the child may be at immediate risk the Children's Social Care Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team or the Police should be contacted without delay.

PARENTS ARRIVING TO COLLECT A CHILD WHEN AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE MISUSE

If when a parent/carer arrives at a school/setting to collect their child it is thought that they are suffering from the adverse effects of misuse of alcohol or other substances, a decision needs to be taken regarding whether the child's safety may be placed at risk by releasing the child to the parent/carer. Parents/carers cannot normally be prevented from taking their own children but if it is believed that the child would be placed at serious risk then Heads/Managers can intervene to ensure the child's safety. The Head/Manager could try to reason with the parent/carer and, for example, could assist the parent/carer in contacting another adult who was in a suitable position to collect and look after the child.

The event should be recorded in the school's safeguarding record system. If this is a situation that occurs regularly, then Heads/Managers would want to complete a full EHA form with the parent and possibly get help for them from local drug and alcohol services, accessed through your Primary Care Trust.

If a school/setting feels the child is at risk of significant harm from the parent/carer then they should immediately telephone the MASH to get advice (or

the Children's Social Care Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team or the Police if after normal office hours).

CHILDREN NOT COLLECTED FROM SCHOOL/SETTING

Where children are uncollected at the end of the school day whether due to the parents/carers being unavoidably delayed for a prolonged period or due to all efforts to contact the parents/carers being unsuccessful and there is serious concern about safeguarding their welfare (as opposed to children where the parents are just late in collecting them) then it is essential that the protection of the welfare of the child is the priority.

Where parents/carers do not collect a child from a school/setting on time staff should make a record of this using the school's safeguarding record system. If the problem is repeated then the parents/carers should be asked to cooperate in the completion of an assessment on the EHA form, so that the school/setting can work with the parent/carer to find solutions to the problem.

If the parent/carer has contacted the school/setting to explain reasons for lateness then the school/setting should make arrangements for the child to be able to safely remain to allow time for the parent/carer to get there or for her/him to arrange for another, known, responsible adult to collect their child.

In the event that there is no contact at all from the parents/carers or there is good reason to believe that the parent/carer would not be in a fit state to look after their child and there is serious concern about safeguarding their welfare (as opposed to children where the parents are just late in collecting them), staff should telephone the MASH to get advice (or the Children's Social Care Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team or the Police if after normal office hours) as detailed in Appendix. 1.

CONCERNS ABOUT RESPONSES TO REFERRALS/NEED FOR FURTHER ADVICE

Any concern about a lack of response from the MASH or about the quality of the advice given should be reported to the Duty Manager in the MASH.

When referrals are progressed through to Assessment & Intervention (A&I) in Children's Social Care and the referrer is concerned about a lack of response or the type of response then the referrer should discuss this with the appropriate Team Manager/Duty Manager for Assessment & Intervention (A&I) in Children's Social Care.

If this proves difficult or unsatisfactory then the referrer should ask to speak to the Service Manager – Assessment & Intervention.

In the event that the situation continues to be unsatisfactory the referrer can ask to speak to the Divisional Director – Children’s Social Care.

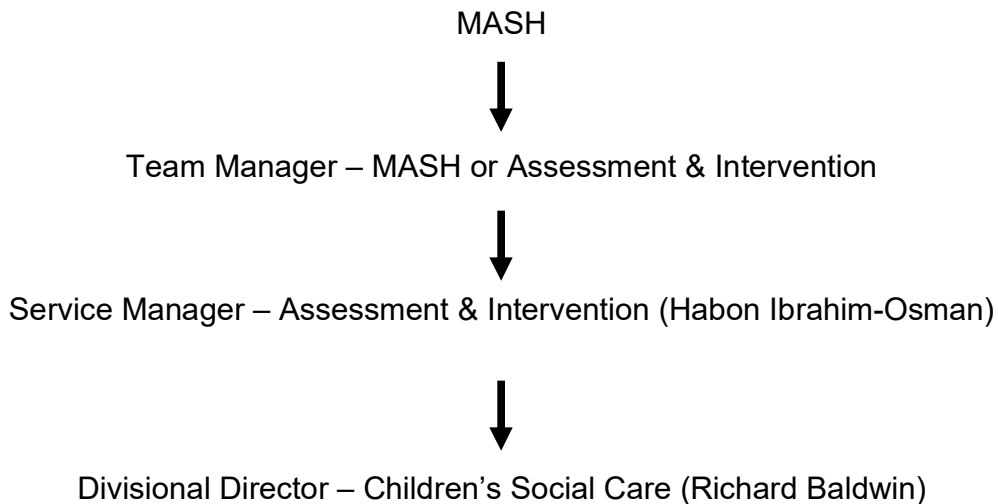
Where a situation is acute and a practical response from Children’s Social Care is not forthcoming then the referrer can contact the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team. The Police Child Abuse Investigation Team will then contact the Assessment & Intervention Team in Children’s Social Care to discuss the matter and how it should be dealt with.

In case of any difficulty and the referrer is unsure what to do then she/he should call the Duty Social Worker for further assistance.

Where there is particular concern about how cases are being dealt with despite the steps detailed above having been followed then the Designated Safeguarding Lead can also discuss any ongoing concerns with the Education Safeguarding Manager or the Service Manager – Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service.

ESCALATING CONCERNS ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION

If you are worried about the initial response from the MASH and feel a different response is needed then you may escalate your concerns as follows:



Where there is particular concern about the progress of cases involving allegations against members of staff then the Headteacher or Chair of Governors of the school or the Manager or LA Officer with responsibility for the setting should contact:

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – Melanie Benzie

Should the LADO not be available then the following can be contacted:

- Tower Hamlets MASH
- Service Manager – Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service (Geraldine O'Donnell)
- Education Safeguarding Manager (Sharifa Chowdhury) / Education Safeguarding Quality Assurance and Training Officer (Chris Jordan);

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS AND SETTINGS -

Designated Safeguarding Lead for Schools and Education Settings Accreditation Guidance

To receive or renew DSL accreditation it is required that a minimum of 2 days of safeguarding training is received every two years. For initial accreditation as the DSL in a school or education setting in Tower Hamlets it is required that the following courses offered by Tower Hamlets SCP are attended:

- The bespoke 2 day safeguarding course for new Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy DSLs facilitated by Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service (THESS)

When seeking to renew DSL accreditation, it is recommended that at least one of the courses in the following list be attended as part of the training requirement:

- THESS DSL Renewal Safeguarding Training
- Neglect Level one
- Neglect Level two
- Domestic Abuse Introduction
- Domestic Abuse Advanced
- Impact of the Toxic Trio on Families: Drug Misuse, Domestic Abuse and Mental Health
- Impact of Parental Mental Health
- Safeguarding Children from Exploitation

Details of these and other Tower Hamlets SCP courses can be accessed through the Tower Hamlets SCP Website:

<http://www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/the-lscb/training>

Whole School/Education Setting Certified INSET on Safeguarding and Certified attendance at the termly meetings of the Tower Hamlets DSLs for School and Education Settings Forum can also count towards meeting the 2 day safeguarding training requirement for re-accreditation.

For further information, queries and requests related to bespoke Safeguarding training contact:

Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service:

Tel: 020 7364 3431 or email: thesstraining@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Contact Information

Early Help Hub
(9.00am to 5.00pm)
Email:

020 7364 5006 -
choose Option 2
earlyhelp@towerhamlets.gov.uk

MASH
(9.00am to 5.00pm)
Email (Note – information should only be
emailed following prior discussion with the
Duty Officer.)

020 7364 3444 / 5601 / 5606
MASH@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer
Email:

020 7364 0677
LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Children’s Social Care Emergency
Out of Hours Duty Team (5.00pm onwards)

020 7364 5006 -
choose Option 3

(Note: The Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team should only be involved if they absolutely have to be and there is no other option.)