

BIRMINGHAM LINK CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Birmingham LINK will support the provision of safe and secure environments in which children can thrive and develop, and where all aspects of their welfare will be promoted.

All those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes paid staff, volunteers, students on placement, parents who assist with the project's activities, sessional workers and so on. For this reason everyone working with children and families for or on behalf of Birmingham LINK must be familiar with, and follow, this policy and guidance.

The Child Protection Policy covers:

- Selection and Deployment of staff
- Behaviour
- Responding to Child Protection Issues
- Making a referral to Social Workers
- Our responsibilities after a referral is made

Birmingham LINK's Child Protection Policy follows the guidelines provided by the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. Full copies of these procedures are available in the policy documents folder, they are also available on the website of the Safeguarding Board (www.lcsbbirmingham.org.uk).

2. SELECTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF ELECTED MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Child Protection is not just about responding to specific allegations or incidents. It is also about the suitability of staff to work with children.

When Birmingham LINK elects members it should follow a selection process designed to assess the candidate's suitability to work with vulnerable groups including children.

Checks will be made to ensure that the information provided by any potential participant or ELECTED MEMBERS is accurate.

A Criminal Records Bureau check will be undertaken to screen ELECTED MEMBERS for any offences they may have committed against children.

All disclosures of any kind will be followed up with the potential Elected Member and where any possible risk is identified this will be considered in terms of impact on their ability to work as an Elected Member

3. ELECTED MEMBER'S BEHAVIOUR

All ELECTED MEMBERS, paid or unpaid, in whatever capacity they work, have a responsibility to ensure that their behaviour does not cause or allow the abuse of children through bullying, cruel or humiliating rituals, or behaviour designed to demean or do less than ensure that the welfare of the child is promoted at all times.

4. TRAINING

All ELECTED MEMBERS will receive a written outline detailing what is expected of them in their role and their responsibilities for child protection, including them being aware of and following this policy.

Training needs should be identified and met. Issues of child protection will have a priority.

5. RESPONDING TO A CHILD PROTECTION ISSUE

A Child Protection issue may come to the notice of a Birmingham LINK member in several ways:

- A child may make a direct allegation
- A child may make a comment which seems to suggest abuse
- A parent/carer may make a comment which suggests abuse
- A child may have bruises, marks or other injuries
- A child may be displaying behaviour which is outside their norm
- There may be something explicit in a child's behaviour which is of concern
- The behaviour of a staff member suggests they are not a suitable person to care for children.

In all cases:

- The adult must **not** promise to keep secrets.
- If a child makes an allegation or arouses suspicion about a specific person, the adult must not try to deal with the situation themselves. After listening to the child the adult should seek immediate support.
- The adult should try not to react to a child's statements with strong emotion. Showing shock, anger, distaste and so on may deter a child from speaking.

In all cases the Adult should discuss their concerns with the Senior Manager or make a direct referral to Social Care and Health.

6. IF A CHILD MAKES A DIRECT ALLEGATION

The adult should let the child speak but not question him/her. Clarification can be sought but no new information requested. If a child is clearly alleging abuse Social Care and Health and/or the Police will investigate and further questions must be left for them.

Allow the child to speak for as long as he/she wants to. A child should not be asked to repeat information for other adults.

7. IF A CHILD'S COMMENTS SEEM TO SUGGEST ABUSE

The member should listen carefully, remembering that a young child may not have the vocabulary to explain clearly what it is that distresses him/her.

The child should be allowed to speak freely and only asked questions if they are necessary to clarify if abuse has taken place.

What the child says should guide the conclusions and further action of adults.

8. MAKING A REFERRAL TO SOCIAL WORKERS

It is not the responsibility of the adult to judge whether or not a child has definitely been abused but it is their responsibility to voice their concern. Adults are not expected to be experts in identifying child abuse. If, after discussion, the Senior Manager does not feel there are grounds for concern but the adult raising a concern disagrees, the referral must still be made to Child Protection services. Child Protection is the individual responsibility of each person working with and around children.

Child Protection concerns must be passed on to Child Protection Services without delay i.e. on the same working day that the decision has been made to refer. Adult should record their concerns in writing. Care should be taken to distinguish between factual information and opinion/interpretation. If a child has alleged abuse their exact words should be recorded. Members should ensure they have factual information to hand, such as full name of child, date of birth, address, name(s) of carer(s), ethnic origin and first language. As a general rule, before making a referral to Child Protection services concerns should be discussed with the family and their views sought. However, this should only be done where it will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm. Adults should also ensure that their own safety and security is protected in any discussion with parents/carers.

BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE

Outside normal office hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team on **0121 675 4806**.

Please note, it is not possible to list specific addresses covered by each office, so where areas are covered by more than one office your call may be re-directed.

HEART OF BIRMINGHAM (HoB)

- **Small Heath / Sparkbrook - 0121 303 2344**
Acocks Green, Bordesley Green, Moseley, Kings Heath, Nechells, South Yardley, Sparkbrook, Springfield.
- **Ladywood / Perry Barr - 0121 303 2334**
Ladywood, Aston, Bordesley Green, Harborne, Lozells, Handsworth Wood, Nechells, Soho, Washwood Heath.

SOUTH

- **Edgbaston / Northfield - 0121 303 1888**
Bartley Green, Edgbaston, Harborne, Kings Norton, Ladywood, Longbridge, Northfield, Quinton, Selly Oak, Sparkbrook, Weoley Castle, Kitwell, Frankley, Rubery, Rednal.
- **Selly Oak / Hall Green - 0121 303 5050**
Billesley, Bournville, Brandwood, Hall Green, Kings Norton, Moseley, Kings Heath, Northfield, Selly Oak, Sparkbrook, Springfield, Weoley Castle.

NORTH AND EAST

- **Erdington / Sutton - 0121 464 8022**
Erdington, Kingstanding, Oscott, Perry Barr, Stockland Green, Sutton Vesey, Sutton New Hall, Sutton Four Oaks (all of Sutton Coldfield), Kingsbury.
- **Yardley / Hodge Hill - 0121 303 6541**
Acocks Green, Bordesley Green, Hodge Hill, Shard End, Sheldon, South Yardley, Stechford, Yardley North, Washwood Heath.

On telephoning, ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker. If you are not put straight through to the Duty Worker make it clear that you wish to make a Child Protection referral and this will then be treated as a priority.

The referral must be followed up in writing within 24 hours, using the inter-agency referral form. Copies of this form are available from named Birmingham LINK member of staff and electronic copies located on the [website address](#).

9. BIRMINGHAM LINK ROLE AFTER A CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL HAS BEEN MADE

Child Protection services will decide on the appropriate next steps within one working day. Referrers should be notified of their decision. Birmingham LINK members may be asked to further assist Child Protection services in a number of ways:

- Attend a Child Protection Conference or Strategy meeting
- Provide background information to aid an assessment
- Undertake further monitoring.
- Discuss their observations with the child's family

Any adult who would like support should discuss their personal needs with the named member of staff in the Host Organisation.

** Adult refers to person with concerns or suspicion of child abuse.*