

## **WALTHAM FOREST MIGRANT ACTION SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

It is the policy of Waltham Forest Migrant Support Centre to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from all forms of abuse. Children remain the responsibility of their parents or carers whilst they are at the Centre drop-in, however Centre staff and volunteers will be proactive in trying to detect and protect children from abuse.

#### **Definition: Child abuse**

A child is a person under the age of 18 years old. Abuse can be a single or repeated acts.

Child abuse can include; physical, sexual, psychological, discriminatory and emotional abuse and neglect or an omission to act. It may be something that is done to the child or something not done when it should have been. It does not necessarily have to be intentional, if the child experiences it as abusive it is considered abuse.

Children may be abused and/or neglected by their parents, carers, guardians or other trusted adults as well as by strangers and other children. Child abuse may be perpetrated by individuals, groups or networks of individuals.

#### **Appropriate conduct and behaviour for Centre volunteers, advisors and staff**

Centre volunteers, advisors and staff should endeavour to:

- Use appropriate language with children and challenge any inappropriate language used by a child or other adults at the drop-in.
- Avoid spending any time alone with children. In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible and ensure at least two people are present other than the child.
- Avoid any inappropriate physical contact with children. If a child requires physical assistance, for example, where a child has limited mobility, staff and volunteers should ask the child's parent to assist the child.
- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned.

#### **Procedure for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse**

The following procedure refers to abuse or suspicion of abuse of a child that staff and volunteers become aware of during their work at the Waltham Forest Migrant Support Centre:

1. Any member of staff or volunteer who becomes aware that a child is, or is at risk of, being abused should raise the matter immediately with the Project Coordinator or Child Protection Officer. If this is not possible or appropriate, the matter should be raised with a member of the Board of Trustees (there will usually be a trustee at the Centre).
2. If a child is believed to be at immediate risk, the police should be called on 999.
3. If a child is not believed to be at immediate risk, a record should be made by the Project Coordinator/Child Protection Officer. Details must include, as far as practical:

- Name of child or young person
  - Age
  - Home Address (if known)
  - Date of Birth (if known)
  - Name/s and Address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
  - Telephone numbers if available
  - Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details
  - What has prompted the concerns?
  - Include dates and times of any specific incidents
  - Has the child or young person been spoken to?
  - If so, what was said?
  - Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser?
  - If so, record details
  - Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? e.g. school, designated officer, social services etc
  - Has anyone else been consulted?
  - If so, record details
4. The Project Coordinator or Child Protection Officer will assess the seriousness of the situation, and take responsibility for passing on concerns to the appropriate child protection body
5. If the Project Coordinator/Child Protection Officer is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the volunteer/advisor/member of staff with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organization themselves and take responsibility for recording the concerns and any action taken.

**Waltham Forest Migrant Support Centre's Designated Child Protection Officer: Inbar Tamari**

**Contact numbers (Walthamstow):**

Waltham Forest Multi Agency <a href="#">Safeguarding</a> Hub (MASH) team	Tel: 020 8496 2310 (Monday to Thursday 9am-5.15pm, Friday 9am-5pm), 020 8496 3000 (out of hours)
Emergency Duty Social Work Team	
NSPCC Help line	Tel: 0800 800 500 – 24 hours, Freephone

- If it is suspected that abuse is being perpetrated by a visitor to the Centre, it should be decided on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to discuss the concerns regarding abuse, and any follow-up action taken, with the alleged perpetrator. Primary consideration should always be made to the safety of the child. Concerns that someone may be a perpetrator of child abuse should not in itself serve as a barrier to them continuing to visit Centre.

**Confidentiality**

The Migrant Centre respects everyone's right to confidentiality, however the welfare of children has to take priority and we have a duty to disclose abuse to the appropriate agency if deemed necessary. The Centre's Confidentiality Policy may be overridden in these circumstances and reference should be made to the policy.

In breaking confidentiality in a situation of suspected child abuse, effort should be made where appropriate to inform the child that you will need to pass the information on. Reassure them that you will try to offer them support, and as far as possible explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.

In breaking confidentiality in a situation of suspected child abuse, effort should be made where appropriate to inform the child's parent/carer of the situation.

### **Support to Staff and Volunteers**

All instances of suspected child abuse should be reported to the Board of Trustees, who should also be informed of any action taken and the results of this action.

The Project Coordinator/Centre Trustee should make themselves available to the member of staff or volunteer reporting the incident to talk it through, and offer additional support.

Staff and volunteers may also be subject to allegations of abusing vulnerable people. While support will be offered, the Centre will ensure that Social Services or the police are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. Suspension and/or the disciplinary procedure may be implemented.

### **DBS Checks**

The Project Coordinator and any other staff who may be employed in the future will undergo DBS checks. The Centre does not require volunteers to undergo a DBS check in relation to their contact with children, as volunteers do not undertake work with children and all children at the drop-in should always be under the supervision of their parent/carer.

The Project Coordinator will also ensure that the opportunities for any abuse to take place are minimised. The Waltham Forest Migrant Support Centre will operate within a controlled premises and all activities will be under the supervision of the Project Coordinator.

### **Making the Child Protection Policy known**

- All volunteers and advisors will be given a copy of this policy when they start working for the Centre.
- This policy applies to all volunteers of the Centre and all contracted advisors.
- All new volunteers will be given training in its application and we will take steps to ensure that existing volunteers understand its application.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Development, monitoring and implementation of the above policy will be the responsibility of the Project Coordinator, together with the Board of Trustees. The policy will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees.

## VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The Waltham Forest Migrant Support Centre aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment. Some of those using the service may include adults considered to be vulnerable. The definition of a vulnerable adult as expressed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 2002 is “a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type:

1. a substantial learning or physical disability;
2. a physical or mental illness or mental disorder, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs;
3. or a significant reduction in physical or mental capacity.”

There is a risk that vulnerable adults might be abused financially, physically, sexually or emotionally and we are committed to preventing that happening. All **staff**, volunteers and visiting workers from other agencies will be instructed to look out for any signs that any such abuse might be taking place and must report any suspicions or allegations to the Project Coordinator.

### What to do

The following procedure refers to abuse or suspicion of abuse of a vulnerable adult that staff and volunteers become aware of during their work at the Centre:

- Any member of staff or volunteer who becomes aware that a vulnerable adult is, or is at risk of, being abused should raise the matter immediately with the Project Coordinator. You should decide whether you feel the person is a vulnerable adult and whether they are at risk of abuse/experiencing abuse. If you feel it is a case of abuse towards a vulnerable adult, you should decide whether you feel it is desirable to inform an outside agency, normally Social Services.
- If appropriate, discuss the concerns with the vulnerable adult believed to be at risk and obtain their consent before sharing information or contacting any outside agencies. Information should only be shared *without* an adult with capacity's consent in the limited set of circumstances outlined in the Centre Confidentiality Policy.
- Direct calls to the police should be reserved for incidents of assault and violence where an element of urgency applies. If you require immediate response and assistance from the police, that is if you cannot stop the incident that is currently happening, or you think that it will re-occur shortly, you should make an emergency 999 call.
- If it is suspected that abuse is being perpetrated by a visitor to the Centre, it should be decided on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate to discuss the concerns regarding abuse, and any follow-up action taken, with the alleged perpetrator. Primary consideration should always be made to the safety of the alleged victim.

### Contact numbers (Waltham Forest):

Safeguarding Adults Referral and Advice Line (office hours) If you have urgent concerns that you or someone you know, is being abused or neglected, you can contact the safeguarding adults team at Waltham Forest Direct on **020 8496 3000**.

Safeguarding Adults Referral and Advice Line (out of hours)

Community Safety Unit (24 hours)

## **Recording**

Any suspected incidents of abuse should be recorded in writing as soon as possible after the incident and kept on record by the Chair of Trustees, along with any follow-up action taken.

## **Support to Staff and Volunteers**

The Project Coordinator/Chair of Trustees should make themselves available to the member of staff or volunteer reporting the incident to talk it through, and offer additional support.

Staff and volunteers may also be subject to allegations of abusing vulnerable people. While support will be offered, the Centre will ensure that Social Services or the police are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. Suspension and/or the disciplinary procedure may be implemented. Any allegations made against the Project Coordinator will be brought directly to the Chair of Trustees.

All allegations of abuse must be reported back to the Waltham Forest Migrant Centre Board of Trustees.

## **Confidentiality**

The Centre respects everyone's right to confidentiality, however we believe that the welfare of vulnerable people has to take priority and we have a duty to disclose abuse to the appropriate agency if deemed necessary. The Centre's Confidentiality Policy may be overridden in these circumstances and reference should be made to the policy.

## **DBS Checks**

The Project Coordinator and any other staff who may be employed in the future will undergo DBS checks. The Centre does not require volunteers to undergo a DBS check as volunteers do not have sustained 'regular' contact with 'vulnerable visitors' and the support provided by volunteers to visitors does not amount to Care services.

The Project Coordinator will also ensure that the opportunities for any abuse to take place are minimised. The Waltham Forest Migrant Support Centre will operate within a controlled premises and all activities will be under the supervision of the Project.

Coordinator. Volunteers and advisors will as far as possible avoid one-to-one contact with visitors. If any volunteers wish to continue contact with any of the visitors off the premises or outside of the opening times the Centre, they should consult with the Project Coordinator, take appropriate precautions and be aware that such contact takes place at their own risk.

## **Monitoring and Review**

Development, monitoring and implementation of the above policy will be the responsibility of the Project Coordinator, together with the Board of Trustees. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Reviewed March 2023