

Child and Young (Vulnerable) Person Safeguarding Policy & Procedures



LifeLine Church takes seriously its responsibility to nurture, protect and safeguard the welfare of the children, young and vulnerable persons entrusted to its care.

Intentions

- ◆ To create an ethos within LifeLine Church where children, and young (vulnerable) people are secure, feel able to talk, feel valued, and where the individuals' safety and welfare are paramount.
- ◆ To raise awareness of all employees and volunteers of safeguarding and child protection procedures and to ensure that protection systems are successfully communicated and reviewed annually.
- ◆ To create a systematic means of monitoring, communicating and recording information for any child or vulnerable person considered to be at risk, ensuring all employees are involved as appropriate.
- ◆ To ensure the information about referrals of children, young people and their families or a vulnerable person will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and discretion.
- ◆ To proactively promote the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable persons at all times.

LifeLine Church will ensure that OFSTED and local authority requirements are always adhered to in respect of references and police checks for staff/volunteers and volunteers. All staff/volunteers employed by LifeLine Church in a role that has primary duties that include working with children and young people are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Volunteers at LifeLine Church do not work unsupervised.

LifeLine Church has a named person who will co-ordinate any protection issues. This person is **Avril McIntyre**.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that employees and volunteers are aware of the London Child Protection Procedures for making referrals. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also ensure that staff/volunteers know and understand the procedures within this policy document for reporting and recording any concerns. This will be completed upon induction to the organisation and on a continuing basis in the form of continued Professional development (CPD).

Records of concerns remain confidential and are shared only with those who need to know. If you believe that allegations or suspicions are not being dealt with properly, you have a responsibility to report this to LifeLine Church' Chair of Trustees. If a referral is made to Social Services, reference will be made to the London Child Protection Board Procedures in deciding whether to seek the permission of the child's/young person's parents/carers before making the referral.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The safeguarding and promoting of the welfare of children¹ and young persons within the care of LifeLine Church and in particular protecting them from significant harm, depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. Individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, children's social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services.

For those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential to safeguard and promote welfare of the child and where necessary to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children.

Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse, neglect or exploit a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

The Signs of Physical Abuse

Bruises, black eyes and broken bones are obvious signs of physical abuse. Other signs might include:

- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly.
- Untreated or inadequately treated injuries
- Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen.

¹ The word "children" in this policy also includes vulnerable persons and children with disabilities and or learning difficulties

- Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks.
- Cigarette burns, human bites
- Scalds and burns.

Behavioural signs

If a child is being physically abused, their behaviour may change in one or more of the following ways:

- Become sad, withdrawn or depressed
- Have trouble sleeping
- Behave aggressively or be disruptive
- Show fear of certain adults
- Have a lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- Use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

The Signs of Emotional Abuse

If a child is experiencing emotional abuse the child may be experiencing:

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Suffering from health or sleeping problems
- Struggling at school
- Ashamed to bring friends home
- Violent or showing other behaviour problems
- Physically hurt or abused.

Sexual Abuse

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

The Signs of Sexual Abuse

Children who are being sexually abused may show a number of physical and emotional changes. But remember that these signs do not always mean that a child is being abused, there may be other explanations.

Physical Signs of Abuse

Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas

- Genital discharge or urinary tract infections
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- Sexually transmitted infections.

If a child is suffering from any of these symptoms, a doctor should be consulted immediately.

Behavioural Signs of Abuse

These might include a marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically.

- The child may refuse to attend school or start to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected.
- They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities.
- They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The Signs of Neglect

There are occasions when nearly all parents find it difficult to cope with the many demands of caring for children. But this does not mean that their children are being neglected. Neglect

involves ongoing, severe failure to meet a child's needs. Here are some signs of possible neglect:

- if the child seems underweight and is very small for their age
- if the child is consistently hungry or excessively seeking food
- if they are poorly clothed, with inadequate protection from the weather
- if they are often absent from school for no apparent reason
- if they are regularly left alone, or in charge of younger brothers or sisters.

Exploitation

Exploitation refers to situations where adults or older children take advantage of a child's vulnerability or dependence for their own benefit, whether it's financial gain, sexual gratification, forced labour, criminal exploitation (including county lines) or modern slavery.

Signs of exploitation include:

- **Abuse of Power:** Exploitation involves a power imbalance, where the perpetrator uses their position to control, manipulate, or coerce the child.
- **Harm to the Child:** Exploitation can cause significant harm to a child's physical, emotional, and mental health, as well as their overall well-being.
- **Lack of Genuine Consent:** Due to the power imbalance, a child's apparent consent to exploitation is often not genuine or freely given.
- **Impact on Development:** Exploitation can severely hinder a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Duty of Care Towards Online and Social Media Contact

We recognise the need to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from online abuse and misconduct. Equally, we value the need to protect staff and volunteers from the associated risks. Despite there being limited online contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults, (due to the nature of our organisation), we will take the following steps to ensure their safety.

We recognise our duty to maintain the safety and security of those in our care. We will do this by:

- Ensuring that any data of a personal or sensitive nature is stored securely and only accessible by appropriate and relevant persons.
- Images used for marketing and advertising purposes, that contain any children, young people or vulnerable adults, will not be used without parent or guardian consent.
- Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

- We will aim to provide appropriate support, guidance and care for anyone in association with us who receives online abuse or is victim to misconduct, including parents/guardians of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

We are committed to the safety and security of our beneficiaries, and we will continue to take any risks associated with online safety and social media seriously, particularly in regard to the children, young people and vulnerable adults that we work with.

Working in Partnership

- LifeLine Church follows the principles and guidance laid out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and also the London Child Protection Procedures (2025).
- Where appropriate, OFSTED (the registration authority) will be notified of any incident or accident and any changes in the childcare arrangements which could affect the well-being of children.
- Contact details of the Social Care Children & Families Assessment Team are available, so that LifeLine Church and Social Services can work together.
- If a referral is made to Social Care, reference will be made to the London Child Protection Procedures in deciding whether to seek the permission of the child's parents/carers before making the referral.

Parents/carers should be the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents/carers are informed at the same time as the report is made unless it is considered that this action would put the child at further risk of harm. This will be the case where the parent/carer is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officer will inform parents/carers.

Staff, parents/carers and volunteers

- ◆ Adequate and appropriate staff/volunteers' resources are provided to meet the needs of children and vulnerable people in the care of LifeLine Church.
- ◆ Applicants for posts with children, young people or vulnerable persons are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed.
- ◆ OFSTED and local authority requirements in respect of references and Police checks for staff/volunteers and volunteers are adhered to, to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person has unsupervised access to children or vulnerable persons.
- ◆ Volunteers do not work unsupervised.

- ◆ LifeLine Church follows the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal, for reasons of child protection concern.
- ◆ All visitor details are recorded.

Training

All adults at LifeLine Church who may come into contact with children, young people are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and also neglect. Employees must be aware of the London Child Protection Procedures for making referrals. LifeLine Church will ensure that employees know and understand the procedures for reporting and recording concerns. All staff/volunteers that have a role at LifeLine Church which is primarily involves contact with children will be required to attend child Protection and Safeguarding training.

This training, provided by a qualified trainer, will include Child Protection, Safer Recruitment and other topics relating to safeguarding children. All staff/volunteers involved with safeguarding training requirements will be subject to continuous professional development (the LifeLine Church minimum standard will be a requirement of refresher training every year).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will update their DSL training every 2 years.

Staff/volunteers training is not only crucial in protecting children and young people but also makes them aware of how they can protect themselves against allegations.

LifeLine Church believes that those at risk should be given a safe space in which to give feedback and share concerns. We actively seek to create a community who place a high value on listening to one another and deliver a supportive environment. We welcome verbal feedback, as well as giving our customers regular opportunities to feedback through surveys, alongside a 'how are we doing?' feedback boxes in key areas. It is important to us that our beneficiaries feel heard, and any child protection issues are reported to the relevant members of staff.

Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year. Any amendments and changes will be signed off by a member of Trustee Board, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Section 2

Child protection procedures

Disclosures

A child or young / vulnerable person may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you must follow the following procedure.

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. *'Everything will be alright now'*, *'You'll never have to see that person again'*.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'*.
- Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (e.g. *Did he touch your private parts?*), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff/volunteers.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to (see Reporting section).

Recording Disclosures:

- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation immediately or as soon as possible afterwards.
- It is essential the following details are recorded:
 - The date/time
 - The place/location
 - Your name and the name of the child or young person
 - Any non-verbal behaviour
 - A factual account of the disclosure
 - The exact words spoken by the child, and the adult present. (It is important the wording is not changed or corrected in any way, it must be as closely quoted as possible)

These records are to be signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. This information will be shared with Social Services if a referral is made.

Reporting Procedures:

Whatever the nature of your concerns, or if a member of staff/volunteers has been involved in a disclosure, this needs to be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL will discuss the issue, and a decision will be reached whether a referral to Children's Social Care Services for further advice. It is to be noted that the DSL can contact the appropriate member of the Children's Safeguarding Partnership for additional advice. If a decision to refer see Appendix 1 for links to the borough's referral procedure.

See Reporting System flow chart below.

What information will you need when making a referral?

Please use the LifeLine Church Safeguarding Report form. In this you will be asked to provide as much information as possible, such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, the call still needs to be made.

Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Phone: 020 8227 3811

To make a referral: <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/form/targeted-early-help-and-children>

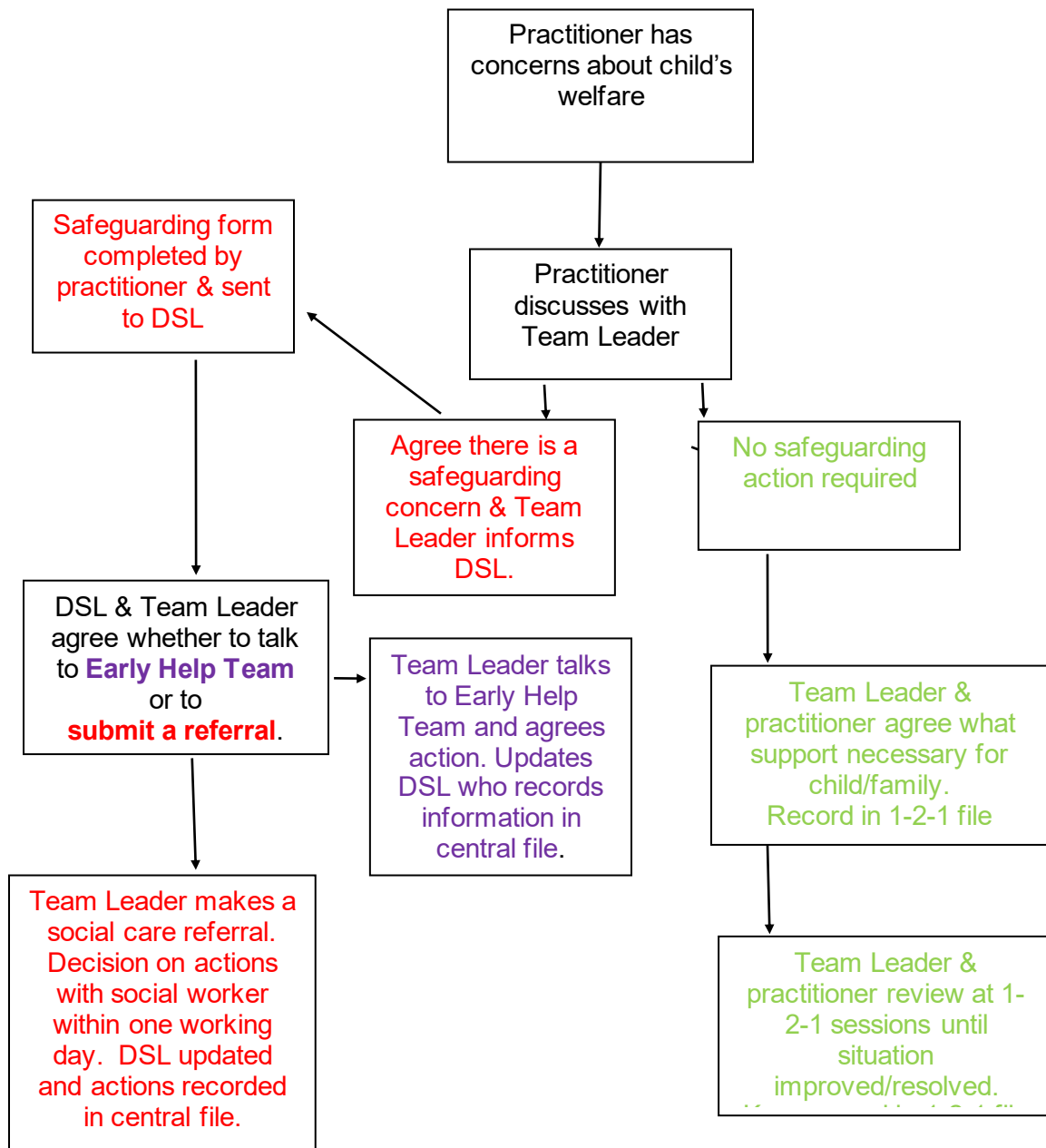
Redbridge Safeguarding Childrens' Partnership

Tel. 020 8708 3885 from 9.00am to 5.00pm or Tel. 020 8708 5897 (after 5.00pm and weekends)

To make a referral:

<https://ehm-portal.childrensservices.redbridge.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/marf#ssa>

Flow Chart: Reporting Procedure



Allegations involving a member of staff/volunteers / volunteer:

LifeLine Church is committed to having effective and safe recruitment and human resources procedures, including conducting all of the necessary CRB checks, and checking of the ISA barred list. All staff/volunteers and volunteers (including volunteering parents) are to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. It is an essential element of LifeLine Church policy that all such checks are completed before any member of staff/volunteers or volunteer has any form of access to children even if directly supervised.

If in the course of these checks for either a member of staff/volunteers or a volunteer, a result is returned that raises concerns or is not up to the standard required the matter will be referred to the HR Team Leader.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff/volunteers or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. LifeLine Church is required to have a Named Senior Officer who will receive all reports of allegations. Our Named Senior Officer is **Avril McIntyre**. She can be contacted on 0781 3315381.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

All allegations should be notified directly to the Named Senior Officer, who will then instigate communication of the allegation to the **Barking & Dagenham Local Authority Designated Officer** (LADO) Mike Cullern within one working day. Tel: 020 8227 3934

mike.cullern@lbbd.gov.uk

Redbridge Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO is Helen Curtis, 020 8708 5350.

Helen.curtis@redbridge.gov.uk

The agency Named Senior Officer (**Avril McIntyre**) should receive reports in relation to allegations against those within the organisation. The HR Team Leader will also be consulted. The employee against whom allegations have been made will be suspended from duties if an investigation is required. This is in the best interests of the child/individual and the employee.

The LADO will discuss the matter with the Named Senior Officer/Team Leader to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is

evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the Children's Social Care is required and/or whether suspension and investigation leading to subsequent disciplinary action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Children's Social Care and the Police, but common sense and judgment must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the LADO will immediately refer the matter to the Children's Social Care Services and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened straight away.

Where the safety of other children is in question as a result of the allegation, consideration should be given to invoking the Complex (Organised or Multiple) Abuse Procedure.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by Children's Social Care Services. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the LADO should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

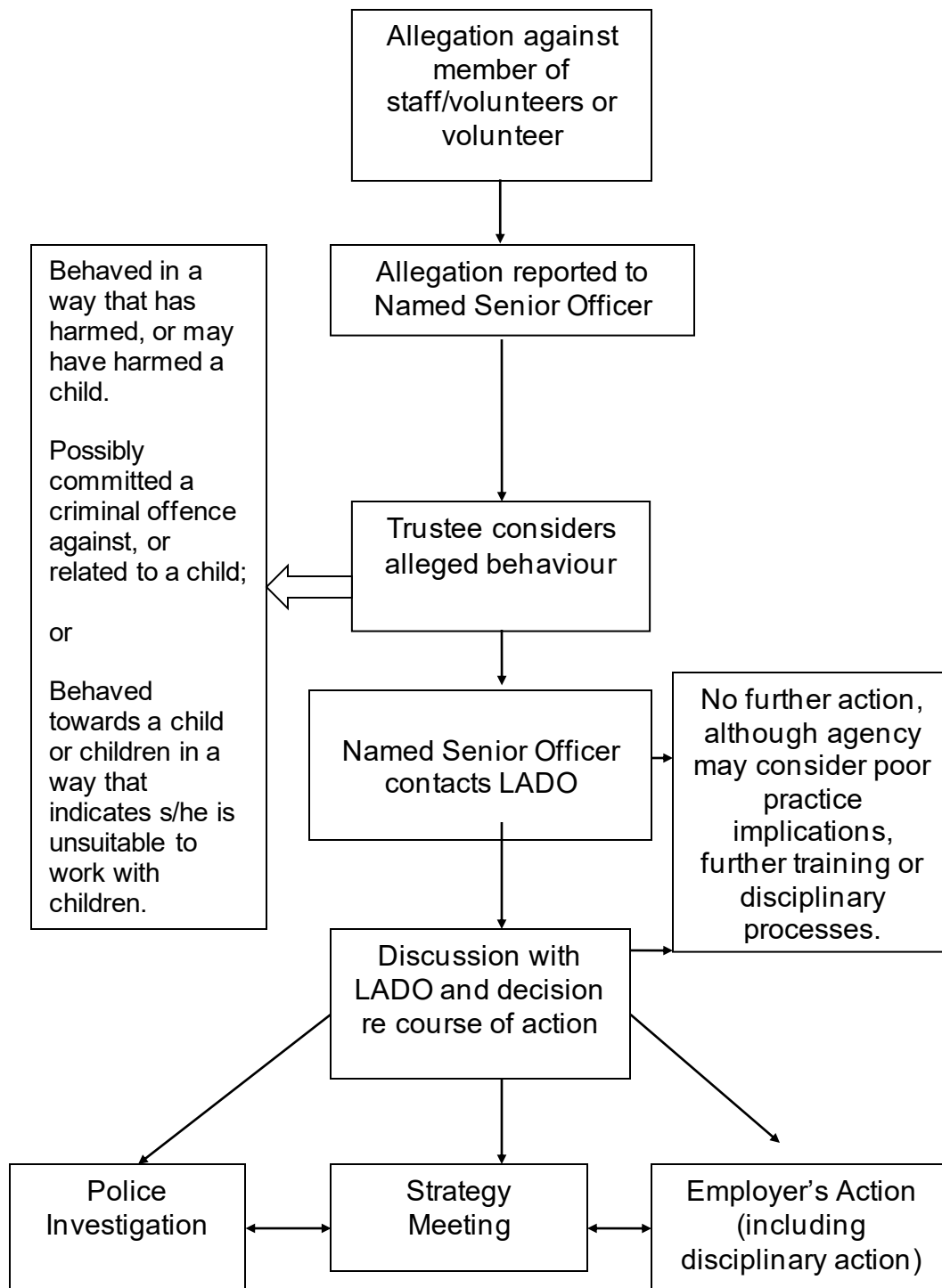
Where a referral is made directly to Children's Social Care Services, they will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Police and the Named Senior Officer.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

1. Police investigation of a possible criminal offence.
2. Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is need of protection or in need of services.
3. Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

In addition, such allegations may give rise to complaints of poor practice, which should be considered in line with the agencies' complaints or disciplinary procedures.

Managing Allegations against Staff/volunteers and Volunteers



Assessment by Children’s Services e.g. s47 Child Protection Enquiry

LADO tracks progress, monitors outcomes and reports to LSCB and DCSF

‘Whistle Blowing’

It is acknowledged that there may be times where the staff 'witness' an incident, action or event that may give them cause for concern. We are committed to creating an environment of safety for all and this includes making it easy for staff to raise concerns or questions about the actions or behaviour of another member of staff or volunteers.

All staff are required to share any concerns regarding any staff practices that compromise the safety of the child to their line Team Leader or if the concern relates to the line Team Leader, then to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any report will be taken seriously and referred to the Designated Safeguarding lead who will ensure an investigation is held. Any allegation regarding safeguarding which relates to a staff member will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Where external authorities are involved and need to conduct their own enquiries, our own investigation will run in parallel without jeopardy to any official enquiries.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and enquiries/assessments are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know for the purposes of protecting from any likelihood of harm or serious harm. All information passed between LifeLine Church and any other 3rd party for the purposes of Safeguarding and Child protection is subject to LifeLine Church' confidentiality and data protection policies and the necessary use of the exception to confidentiality to prevent harm (see LifeLine Church' Confidentiality policy).

Complaints

- ◆ All parents/carers are informed of how to complain about a member of staff/volunteers or volunteer's action within LifeLine Church, which may include allegations of abuse.
- ◆ The guidance contained in the London Child Protection Board Procedures and the local authority's Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures are followed when investigating any complaint against a member of staff/volunteers or volunteer.

Support to Families

- ◆ LifeLine Church believes in cultivating trusting and supportive relations among families, employees and volunteers.
- ◆ LifeLine Church continues to welcome the child/individual and the family whilst assessment/enquiries are being made in relation to need or abuse in the home situation.
- ◆ Child protection records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents/carers or those who have parental responsibility for the child. This information may be used in meetings or child protection conferences to form part of an assessment on the child and family. Similar records will be maintained if the situation involves a vulnerable person.

- ◆ Whilst the care and safety of the child/individual is paramount, LifeLine Church will do all in its power to support and work with the child's/individual's family.

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

Child – a young person under the age of 18 years or a vulnerable person under the age of 25.

Child Protection Enquiry - A Child Protection Enquiry (usually referred to as a Section 47 Enquiry) is required if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer - The Local Authority must appoint a Designated Officer (LADO) whose responsibility it is to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases which fall within this procedure, providing 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, consistently, and with a thorough and fair process.

Named Senior Officer or Child Designated Safeguarding Lead– agencies should appoint a Named Senior Officer to have overall responsibility for ensuring that their agency operates procedures for dealing with allegations against those who work with children in accordance with the guidance set out in Appendix 5 of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006), resolving inter agency issues and liaising with the LBBD Local Safeguarding Children Board / LADO on the subject.

Significant Harm – The Children Act 1989 introduced Significant Harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Significant Harm is any Physical, Sexual, or Emotional Abuse, Neglect, accident or injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect progress and enjoyment of life.

Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) so that it may include, "for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another".

Suspicions or allegations that a child is suffering or likely to suffer Significant Harm may result in a Core Assessment incorporating a Section 47 Enquiry.

NB. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes a single violent episode may constitute significant harm but more often it is an accumulation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, damage or change the child's development.