



Changing Lives - Challenging Attitudes  
Working to end domestic abuse

## Child Protection Policy

### **Designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) & Contact Details:**

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## **Key Principles**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the approach to Child Protection by Women's Aid East and Midlothian (WAEML).

The guidelines set out within this policy have been devised in line with The (Children) Scotland Act 1995 and The regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and must be adhered to at all times.

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation. It also states that children have the right to express their views on any issues or decisions affecting them.

WAEML regards the wellbeing of children and young people of the greatest importance, it takes precedence over any other consideration and is an inherent part of the roles and responsibilities of all workers. It is essential that the child or young person's needs are considered and placed first, over and above the needs of the adults involved.

This policy is only one part of the approach to Child Protection and is used by WAEML staff in conjunction with the more detailed procedures set out specifically in the Inter-agency Child Protection Procedure (Edinburgh and Lothians) as well as the local East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Office arrangements for Child Protection and Wellbeing.

### **1 Aims of the Policy**

WAEML is committed to protecting all children and young people from abuse. This policy is specifically aimed to protect children and young people who directly access the service as well as those who come to our attention (i.e. through supporting the child's mother).

WAEML will not tolerate any kind of abusive behaviour regardless of the age, status or position of the perpetrator and the age of the child or young person experiencing the abuse. Abusive behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- Physical or sexual violence.
- Sexual, racial or any other harassment.
- Bullying.
- Threatening, intimidating or aggressive behaviour or language.
- Emotional and psychological abuse (which may include humiliation and degradation of a child or young person).
- Verbal insults, smacking and other forms of corporal punishment.
- Damage or theft of property or any other behaviour which could reasonably be expected to cause fear or distress.
- Neglect of children or young people.

## **2 Duty of Care**

Anyone working within WAEML is responsible to share concerns with the designated Child Protection Officer.

Support will be offered to staff through their line manager during and following any child protection process.

## **3 Roles & Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of anyone working within WAEML to share concerns where abuse is suspected, evidenced or witnessed.

The designated child protection officer must be kept informed of any child protection concerns so that she can determine that WAEML has fully met its duty to keep children and young people safe.

Where workers identify child protection issues, the relevant statutory agencies will be informed the same or next day. Wherever possible this will be done in consultation with the mother/carer and the child or young person.

WAEML staff are responsible to inform and explain the Child Protection Policy to women, children and young people using the service. The policy must be outlined to the service user as close to the start of their support as possible. This explanation should be provided in accessible language to ensure the content and implications of the policy are understood by the user receiving support.

All children and young people using the services of WAEML have the right to be listened to and respected. It is important to be honest with the child or young person and to let them know of the earliest opportunity during any disclosure of abuse that others will have to be informed.

### **Good Practice: Do's & Don'ts**

#### **WAEML staff will:**

- Listen, support and respect;
- Re-assure the child or adult that they have done the right thing by making the disclosure
- Report any concerns immediately
- Record information gathered as soon as possible
- Be mindful of changes in a child's behaviour, both physical and emotional presentation and any increased vulnerabilities

#### **WAEML staff will not:**

- Make false promises
- Promise confidentiality
- Interview the child or ask any leading questions
- Assume that someone else will share the concern
- Take any further action unless instructed to do so.

#### **4 Information Sharing: Consent**

Women, children and young people should be given a copy of the organisation's information sharing policy and consent form. This document must be signed to confirm the user has read and/or understood it. WAEML has a duty to refer suspicions about the well-being of children and young people to the appropriate statutory agencies (including Police Scotland, Social Work (duty unless there is an allocated Social Worker) and Reports to the Children's Panel).

Concerns about a child or young person must be shared with the workers line manager and the nominated Child Protection Officer within WAEML who will determine that all actions necessary have been taken in line with this policy.

If a worker has a concern about the safety of a child or young person, this concern will be referred on to the appropriate statutory agency regardless of consent. It is however WAEML's preferred approach to make the family aware of the concerns and how they are being dealt with, unless this could put the welfare of the child in jeopardy (e.g. in the case of suspected child abuse).

WAEML staff will fully cooperate with enquiries to provide relevant information about any particular incidents or child welfare / protection concerns.

#### **5 Note taking and Record Keeping**

WAEML's data protection policy outlines the arrangements in place for the secure storage of all information recorded and held by the organisation, including child protection information/records.

Information regarding child protection concerns must be noted on OASIS and highlighted on the risk tab information. The following information must be documented:

- Details of the suspected abuse and source of the information, it is important the details should differentiate between fact and what is opinion
- Details of disclosures should be documented using the own words of the person making that disclosure
- The worker should document the presentation and emotional state of the person making the disclosure
- Name and date of birth of child/young person(s) concerned
- Name of the child's mother
- Details of the perpetrator
- Anyone else involved including the father, anyone else who may be at risk
- GP/Health Visitor
- Details of the young person's school
- Detail the action taken by WAEML

- Responses to concerns by any of the statutory agencies, including what the worker has been told, who they have spoken to, actions agreed and reasons for these.

## **6 Internet Safety: Social Media / New Technologies / Photography / Video Recording**

WAEML staff will not photograph or film children and young people without the express and written permission of the child's carer.

Written guidance for Safe Internet use is available and will be shared with any child or young people using technology within WAEML's premises.

Written guidance for staff is contained within the staff handbook regarding the safe boundaries WAEML expects of staff in relation to the use of social media.

## **7 Safe Recruitment: Selection/Induction**

WAEML is committed to providing a service delivery environment which is free from abuse therefore we will:

- Undertake PVG checks on all workers, Board of Directors, unpaid workers and Students at the recruitment stage through Disclosure Scotland. PVG checks will be kept up to date and refreshed a minimum of every three years.
- Two references will be sought and verified for anyone working within WAEML prior to appointment, one reference will include the most recent employer.
- Staff will not have direct access to service users or their records until PVG or references have been received and verified.
- All staff will receive an induction and support for child protection that follows national and organisational guidance, policy and legislation.
- Child Protection training is mandatory training for all staff.

## **8 Allegations against WAEML staff**

WAEML will respond to any complaint or enquiry as quickly and responsively as possible and will be investigated utilising WAEML's complaints policy.

Complaints in respect of child protection are immediately progressed to Stage 2 complaints and are dealt with immediately.

If required, WAEML will take reasonable and necessary action against workers, volunteers, management committee members or service users who use their positions, or any influence, power or authority they may have to abuse children or young people using the services of WAEML.

## **9 Whistle Blowing and Support**

Where staff have reasonable suspicion that a form of abuse is taking place they have right to use WAEML's Whistle Blowing policy.

## 10 Staff training and development

WAEML will provide training, support and supervision to workers along with clear policies and procedures to which they must work.

We offer staff training in Child Protection through the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Office (EMPPPO). The EMPPPO training calendar is regularly distributed (minimum quarterly) to staff who are supported to attend all training relevant to their role.

It is a mandatory requirement that staff complete the following training as part of their initial induction (within first six months of employment with WAEML).

ALL STAFF: Child Protection Training – Awareness and Response Level One

ALL SUPPORT WORKER & MANAGEMENT STAFF - Interagency Child Protection & Risk Assessment & Response – Level 2

WAEML requires staff to update their child protection training every two years, staff are required to log their training completed on our OASIS staff database and this is reviewed during annual performance appraisal. Where staff are due to complete refresher training this will be scheduled as part of their personal development plan.

## 11 Links to Key Legislation/Guidance/Procedures

- National Guidance for Child Protection (2014)  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052>
- Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures – Edinburgh and the Lothian's  
[http://emppc.org.uk/file/Child Protection/Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures Edinburgh the Lothians Oct 2015.pdf](http://emppc.org.uk/file/Child%20Protection/Inter-agency%20Child%20Protection%20Procedures%20Edinburgh%20the%20Lothians%20Oct%202015.pdf)
- Getting it Right for Every Child Guidance  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/YoungPeople/gettingitright>
- National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland (2012) <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0039/00391307.pdf>
- Local Information Sharing Policies (Edinburgh and the Lothian's)  
[http://emppc.org.uk/file/Child Protection/Edinburgh and Lothian - A practitioner guide to information sharing confidentiality consent Edin Lot hians 27-10-14.pdf](http://emppc.org.uk/file/Child%20Protection/Edinburgh%20and%20Lothian%20-%20A%20practitioner%20guide%20to%20information%20sharing%20confidentiality%20consent%20Edin%20Lothians%2027-10-14.pdf)
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents>

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc>

## 12 Version Control

Version	Date	What was amended	Prepared/amended by	Approved by	Date issued/reissued
1	18.05.2004	Version One	Collective	Board Of Directors	2004
2	06.06.18	Review and reformat	Julie Watson, CEO	Board of Directors	06.06.2018
3	07.04.21	Re-format and update of key personnel	Julie Watson, CEO	Board of Directors	21.04.21