

Spark2Life
Children and Vulnerable Adults
Safeguarding Policy
July 2025

To be next reviewed in July 2026

Charity Details

Name of the Charity: Spark2Life
Office Address: Spark2Life
The Outset Centre
2A Grange Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 8AH

Directors: Christine Giscombe
Fitzroy Andrew
Emmanuel Gotora
Marjorie Price

Daytime contact: Nicole Beales, Administrative Assistant
Telephone: 020 4531 6208
Email: admin@spark2life.co.uk
Web: www.spark2life.co.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jamela Ricketts – 07415 755 525
Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Nikaela Morrison – 07971 760 134
Nominated Internal Contact: Marjorie Price – 07958 586 589
DBS Recruiter : Thirtyone:eight
Greenbox Storage,
College Road,
Swanley,
BR8 7LT
0303 003 1111

- Waltham Forest Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Office telephone number: 020 8496 2310
(Monday to Thursday, 9am-5.15pm and Friday, 9am-5pm)
- The out of hours phone number (after 5:15 pm): 020 8496 3000
Ask for the Emergency Social Worker

Introduction

Spark2Life believes in the intrinsic value of every person and as such, that everyone should be treated fairly and without discrimination or favour. We recognise that when working with children and young people the welfare of the child(ren) is paramount; we have the responsibility to protect and safeguard their welfare whilst entrusted to our care.

Spark2Life is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- The safe recruitment, supervision and training for all staff working with Spark2Life.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those affected by abuse.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities and other organisations.

Trust policy

The Spark2Life Directors recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for all. They also acknowledge that children and young people in particular can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The Directors have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document (hereafter “the policy”). They also recognise the need to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary Children and Vulnerable Adults agencies. The Directors undertake to file a copy of the policy and practice guidelines with the local Children’s Social Services, and any amendments subsequently published. The Directors agree not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

The Directors are committed to on-going Children and Vulnerable Adults training for all volunteers, mentors and caseworkers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.

The Directors also undertake to follow the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

Activities covered by this policy

This policy will cover all departments within Spark2Life that work with children, young people or vulnerable adults whether located on or off the premises of Spark2Life. (Additional policies for residential and day activities can be found in the Appendix.)

Statutory and legal framework

The Children Act 1989 and 2004 provide the overall framework for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The child’s welfare is to be the paramount consideration in all decision-making.

The Government’s guidance on safeguarding children in England is called Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (often shortened to Working Together). Working Together acknowledges the need for all providers of children’s services, including those in the voluntary sector, to work in collaboration and to agreed local standards.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 sets out what schools and colleges in England must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18.

We recommend that Spark2Life staff and volunteers are also aware of their Local Safeguarding Children Partnership/Safeguarding Boards policies and procedures.

The Safeguarding Adults legislation creates specific responsibilities on Local Authorities, Health, and the Police to provide additional protection from abuse and neglect to Adults at Risk.

When a Local Authority has reason to believe there is an adult at risk, they have a responsibility to find out more about the situation and decide what actions need to be taken to support the adult. The actions that need to be taken might be by the Local Authority (usually adult's social care) and/or by other agencies, for example the Police and health services. The Local Authority role includes having multi-agency procedures which coordinate the actions taken by different organisations.

England: Care Act 2014 - An adult at risk is an individual aged 18 years and over who: a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and; b) is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and; c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

This includes adults with learning difficulties, adults with physical disabilities who depend on others to care for them, or adults with certain mental illnesses who lack the capacity to look after themselves. It is recognised that people in this group are vulnerable to abuse and neglect from carers, family members, and institutions as well as from strangers.

What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred

1. If you work with children or vulnerable adults:

Under no circumstance should a Trust worker carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse.

- a. Your concerns must be reported as soon as possible to the Spark2Life Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – (see page 2) who is nominated by the Directors to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- b. In the absence of the DSL, or if the suspicions in any way involve the DSL then the report should be made to the Spark2Life Deputy DSL– (see page 2)
- c. If the suspicions implicate both the DSL and the Deputy DSL, then the report should be made in the first instance to the LBWF Social Services and take their advice. (See page 2 for contact details.)
- d. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with Spark2Life procedures and kept in a secure place.
- e. Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the DSL, the absence of the DSL or Deputy DSL should not delay a referral to the Children's or Adults Social Services Department.

- f. It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the Children and Vulnerable Adults agencies, although the Directors hope that staff use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the DSL/Deputy DSL has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DSL(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Directors demonstrate the commitment of Spark2Life to effective safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults.
- g. Where staff are working off site at the invitation of another agency for example a school or PRU, it will be necessary to follow the agency's child protection process as well as our own; the school's child safeguarding procedures take precedence over our own.

1.1 Recognising Abuse Physical:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing significant 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.

Emotional:

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 include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. 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 (including cyber 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. May feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

Sexual:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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 because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ▪ ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

1.2 Signs of abuse

1.2a Signs of possible physical abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or rough games
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Bruises, bites, burns and fractures, for example, which do not have an accidental explanation
- The child gives inconsistent accounts for the cause of injuries
- Frozen watchfulness

1.2b Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- The child has an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour for their age, or regularly engages in sexual play inappropriate for their age
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- The child is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares which sometimes have overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia.
- Child sexual exploitation – a form of sexual abuse where a child is sexually exploited for money, power or status.

1.2c Signs of possible emotional abuse

- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden underachievement or lack of concentration
- Seeking adult attention and not mixing well with other children
- Sleep or speech disorders

- Negative statements about self
- Highly aggressive or cruel to others
- Extreme shyness or passivity
- Running away, stealing and lying

1.2d Signs of possible neglect

- Dirty skin, body smells, unwashed, uncombed hair and untreated lice
- Clothing that is dirty, too big or small, or inappropriate for weather conditions
- Frequently left unsupervised or alone
- Frequent diarrhoea
- Frequent tiredness
- Untreated illnesses, infected cuts or physical complaints which the carer does not respond to
- Frequently hungry

Also remember that you may not always be working directly with the child but become concerned because of difficulties experienced by the adults e.g.

- Domestic violence incidents
- Mental health issues
- Substance and alcohol abuse Incidents

Other concerns may be:

- Children living away from home or gone missing
- Peer abuse including bullying
- Race and racism
- Radicalisation
- Gang membership
- Violent extremism
- Sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Concealed pregnancy
- Child trafficking
- eSafety
- Criminal Exploitation
- County Lines
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Grooming
- Forced Marriage
- Self Harm
- Suicide/ Suicide Ideation
- So-called 'Honour'-Based Abuse
- Young Carers
- Contextual safeguarding
- Organisational Abuse
- Self-Neglect

2. Reporting Procedure

2.1 If you are the DSL:

- a. The role of the DSL/Deputy DSL is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Children's or Adult's Social Services Department. It is Children's Social Services task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- b. The Directors will support the DSL/Deputy DSL in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- c. The DSL may also be required by conditions of the Spark2Life Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company.

2.1.1 When the allegation is about physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse

The DSL/Deputy DSL will:

- a. Contact Children's Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home. Contact Adult Social Services if concerned about an adult.
- b. Will not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so having contacted Social Services.
- c. Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- d. For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child or adult at risk of injury.
- e. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Social Services direct for advice.
- f. Seek and follow the advice given by Social Services.

2.1.2 When the allegation is about sexual abuse

The DSL/Deputy DSL will:

- a. Unless for any reason they are unsure, contact the relevant Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Safeguarding Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.

2.1.3 When the allegation of abuse is against a person who works with children or vulnerable adults

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above the DSL in accordance with Local Safeguarding Boards procedures will need to liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) regarding the suspension of the worker and making a referral to the Safeguarding Adviser Network.

3. Child Protection Whistleblowing Policy

This guidance is written for all employees and volunteers working at Spark2Life.

How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner it is possible for action to be taken.
- Try to pinpoint what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach someone you trust and who you believe will respond.
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response—don't let matters rest.
- Put your concerns in writing on a confidential Disclosure/Concerns Form'.
- Discuss your concerns with the DSL.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.
- The DSL will undertake an investigation into your concerns and offer you support.

Under “whistleblowing” anyone in our organisation may refer to **Marjorie Price – Spark2Life Director** (her number can be found on page 2) should you have any concerns about the way an allegation was handled by the DSL or if you have an allegation against the DSL.

You can also call **NSPCC’s Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0808 800 5000** if you have a concern and wish to remain anonymous.

You can also refer directly to either Children’s Social Care services or the Police if you are concerned that a child is at risk of harm and this policy is not being adhered to.

Don't think what if I am wrong—think what if I am right.

Reasons why people whistleblowing:

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

What stops people from whistleblowing?

- Starting a chain of events, which spirals.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the DSL, and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concern out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person

continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

People to contact – see page 12

The appointment of workers (see also: Diversity & Inclusion Policy; Safer Recruitment Policy)

In appointing workers, Spark2Life will be responsible for:

1. Interviewing a potential worker, to establish whether they are suitable for the job that they have applied for. This will include the acquisition of professional and character references.
2. Ensuring that successful candidates complete a Self-Declaration form which informs Spark2Life whether they have ever been convicted, charged or cautioned in relation to any offence and informed of the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
3. Providing the applicant with copies of the Spark2Life Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and other appropriate current information and discuss it with them to ensure that they fully understand it in relation to practice issues.
4. Reviewing the applicant's DBS certificate and online updates, if they are part of the updating service alongside two forms of identity (i.e. Passport or Drivers Licence for photo ID and bill with their address). It's important to check that the DBS certificate applies to the same type of work (i.e. for working with children or with Vulnerable adults at the checks carried out differ). or direct work can begin without receipt of two satisfactory references.
5. An enhanced DBS check is carried out for all Spark2Life staff who work directly with children and young people, and will be updated on a three yearly basis or on a 'live' basis for those registered with the DBS update service. Overseas checks will also be undertaken for any person who has lived abroad in the last 7 years, which will include police checks / letters of good conduct.
6. We will not recruit anyone who has been barred from working with vulnerable groups to undertake regulated activity i.e. work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children
7. If an applicant does not have a DBS check then the appointed Spark2Life worker will process the applicant's DBS documentation in line with the current Local Safeguarding Board guidelines. It should be noted that all DBS Applications should include the title of the work that they will be doing.
8. Applicants will be signed up to the DBS update service at the time of receiving their DBS certificate.
9. Direct work cannot begin without receipt of two satisfactory references and a satisfactory DBS certificate.
10. Providing a full current list of all workers on an annual basis in time for publication at the Annual General Meeting.

11. Safeguarding Induction Training is delivered to all staff and volunteers who work directly with children and vulnerable adults.
12. It is a requirement of Spark2Life that viewing panels are in place in doors of rooms where Spark2Life programmes and services are delivered, so that the Spark2Life staff or other staff members can see through the viewing panels.

Support to those affected by abuse

The Directors are committed to working with statutory agencies as appropriate to support those who have been affected by abuse. If you as an adult are a survivor of abuse but would still like support you can call **NAPAC (The National Association for People Abused in Childhood)** on **0808 801 0331**

Working with offenders

When someone attending a Spark2Life activity is known to have abused children, the Directors will arrange for the supervision for the individual concerned and in its commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set the boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

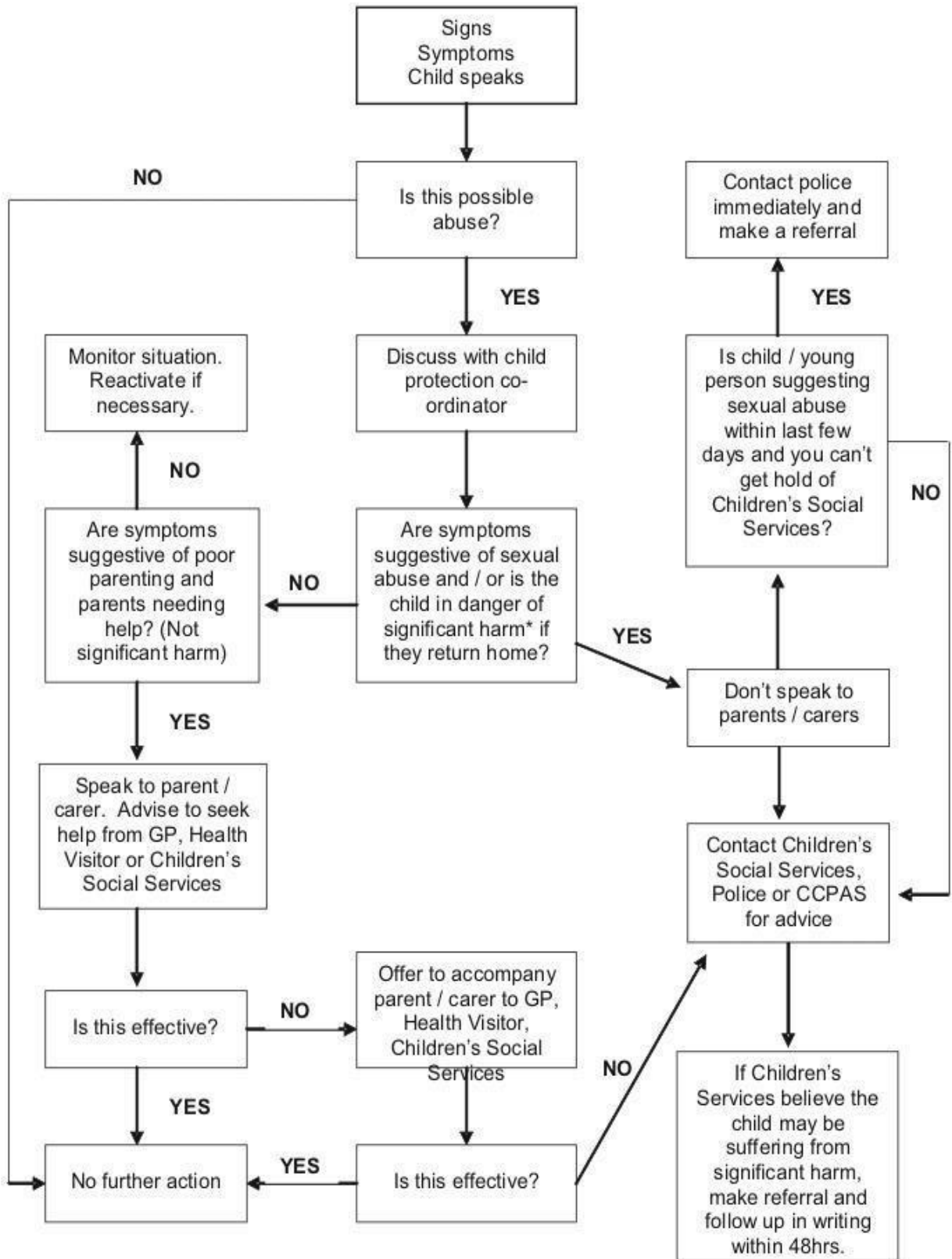
This policy is subject to review, monitoring and revision every 12 months (or sooner if work activity or legislation changes.)

Signed: *Jamela Ricketts*

Date: 3rd July 2025

Flow Chart for Action

(Children & Young People)



Borough Contact Numbers	Social Care Duty Team/First Response Team	Out of Hours Children's Social Care	LADO Phone Contact	LADO email address	Adult Social Care	Out of Hours Adult Social Care
Waltham Forest	020 8496 3000		020 8496 3646	lado@walthamforest.gov.uk	020 8496 3000 safeadults@walthamforest.gov.uk	
Barking & Dagenham	020 8227 3811	0208 215 3000	0208 227 3934 or 07875 993 857	lado@lbbd.gov.uk	020 8227 2915	020 8227 2915
Redbridge	020 8708 3885	020 8227 2915	020 8708 5350	lado@redbridge.gov.uk	020 8708 7333	020 8553 5825
Havering	01708 433 222	01708 433 999	01708 431 653	lado@havering.gov.uk	020 8708 7333	01708 433 999
Hackney	020 8356 5500	020 8356 2710	020 8356 4569	LADO@hackney.gov.uk	020 8356 2300	
Lewisham	020 8314 6660	020 8314 6000	020 8314 7280	lewishamLADO@lewisham.gov.uk	020 8314 7777	020 8314 7777 gateway@lewisham.gov.uk
Greenwich	020 8921 3172	020 8854 8888	020 8921 3930	Childrens-Lado@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 2304	020 8854 8888
Enfield	020 8379 5555	020 8379 1000	0208 379 2850	safeguardingservice@enfield.gov.uk	020 8379 1000	020 8379 1000
Kent	03000 41 11 11	03000 41 91 91	01634 331 065	lesasenquiries@kent.gov.uk	03000 41 61 61	03000 41 91 91
Lambeth	020 7926 3100	020 7926 5555	020 7926 4679 07720 828 700	lado@lambeth.gov.uk	020 7926 555	
Croydon	020 8255 2888	020 8726 6400	020 8726 6000 ext.24817 07716 092 630	lado@croydon.gov.uk	020 8726 6500	

CONFIDENTIAL

DISCLOSURE/CONCERNS FORM

Name of staff completing the form: _____

Date: _____

Name of young person: _____

Concern

FORM 9

CONFIDENTIAL

RESPONDING TO ABUSE –
WORKER'S ACTION SHEET

Name of Child/Young Person: _____

Address _____

Date of Birth ___/___/___

Name of Person Reporting Event _____

Date ___/___/___ Time _____

Sequence of Events/Actual Words Used/Observations
(Use body chart overleaf where appropriate, but do not undress the child!)

Action Taken

Name of Person Contacted: _____

Date ___/___/___ Time _____

Notes:

BODY CHART

