

Safeguarding Policy

Important Contacts:

Adopted: June 2022

Last Updated: June 2024

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Sarah Long

Contact: 07828 048625 or 07305 257285

Email: contact@londonequinetherapy.com

Police

Emergency – 999

Non-emergency – 101

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

Safeguarding Statement

London Equine Therapy (L.E.T) and all staff fully recognise the responsibility and duty placed upon them to safeguard and promote the welfare of all guests and is committed to a safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

As part of our safeguarding policy L.E.T will:

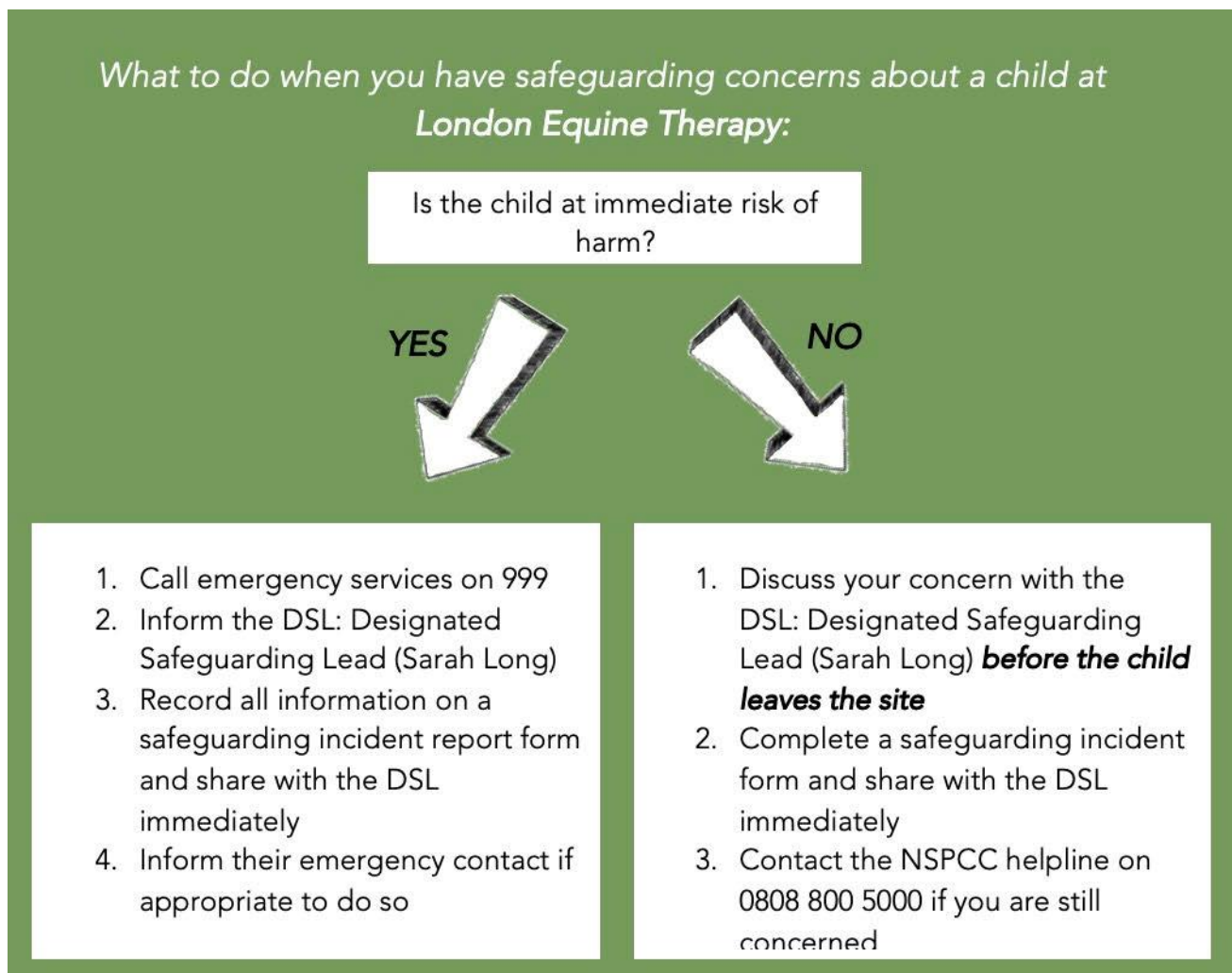
- Provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where our guests feel welcome and respected,
- Ensure that the welfare and safety of our guests is paramount and there is a climate of trust where disclosures are taken seriously and acted upon quickly,
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding guests, and that there are clear procedures, known to everyone, for reporting concerns and to ensure consistent good practice,
- Ensure that all staff have been checked (including DBS checking) as to their suitability to work with children and young people,
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored,
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with other agencies involved in safeguarding children and young people,
- Work in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies, to promote welfare,
- Treat all children and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, equally.

Safeguarding Policy

L.E.T acknowledges that some children and young people, including disabled children and young people, those from ethnic minority communities or who identify as LGBTQ+, for example gay or transgender, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of London Equine Therapy including senior managers, paid staff, and volunteers. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

L.E.T Safeguarding Visual Procedure Summary:



Safeguarding Policy



LONDON
EQUINE THERAPY

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from [nspcc.org.uk/learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning).

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The NSPCC defines Safeguarding and Child Protection as “the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment • Preventing harm to children’s health or development,
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care,
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child” (NSPCC, 2018).

Safeguarding Definitions

Safeguarding and Child Protection relates to the protection of children from significant harm, preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up with safe and effective care, and optimising their life chances so that they can enter adulthood successfully.

“All those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work, including practitioners who do not have a specific role in relation to child protection, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children” (HM Govt 2003)

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.

Adult at Risk:

- An adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),

Safeguarding Policy



LONDON
EQUINE THERAPY

- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Child and Adult Abuse: Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives.

There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect.

Physical abuse - happens when a child is deliberately hurt, causing injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and broken bones. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or suffocating.

Neglect - is persistently failing to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs usually resulting in serious damage to their health and development.

Sexual abuse - is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse. Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and/or non-contact abuse. Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child.

Emotional Abuse - is persistent and, over time, it severely damages a child's emotional health and development and can take the form of constantly putting a child down, shouting at a child and calling them names and persistently ignoring a child.

It is also important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child Criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse

Children with additional vulnerabilities

Some children may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, including:

- Children from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities,
- LGBTQ+ children and young people,
- Deaf or disabled children and young people,
- Children with special needs and disabilities (SEND).

Safeguarding Policy



LONDON
EQUINE THERAPY

Safeguarding children who come from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities

L.E.T recognise that many children and young people who come from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities experience racism, bias, stereotyping or cultural misunderstanding as they grow up.

In order to help and support these children and young people we commit to:

- Understanding the challenges they face,
- Building trusting relationships,
- Taking appropriate action to help keep children safe,
- Mitigating conscious and unconscious bias when working directly with children and families from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities,
- Ensuring that when carrying out assessments, we use the same process for all children regardless of ethnicity or background,
- Making all decisions based on evidence,
- Acknowledging that child-rearing practices may be different between and within communities,
- Talking to and listening to parents and carers to understand what's happening in their family and empower them to make decisions that will help keep their child safe,
- Practicing 'cultural competence and awareness', being open to learning and developing a deeper understanding of the beliefs, attitudes and cultures of people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities,
- Building a non-judgemental knowledge of the community's dynamics,
- Taking an intersectional approach, by considering all the factors that might influence the safety and wellbeing of people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities,

Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children, young people and adults

LGBTQ+ children and young people face the same risks as all children and young people, but they are at greater risk of some types of abuse. For example, they might experience homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or hate crime. They might also be more vulnerable to or at greater risk of sexual abuse, online abuse or sexual exploitation (Barnardo's and Fox, 2016; McGeeney et al, 2017; Xu and Zheng, 2014).

L.E.T commit to putting good practices in place to allow LGBTQ+ children, young people and adults, to feel safe and supported. We aim to:

- treat everyone with respect and fully implement equal opportunities – tackle homophobia and transphobia in the same way as racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination,
- challenge gender stereotypes and celebrate difference,

Safeguarding Policy



LONDON
EQUINE THERAPY

- make sure your anti-bullying policies consider LGBTQ+ issues and that everyone is made aware of these,
- let young people know that, just like with any other issues, they can talk to us and that their privacy will be respected,
- promote that our practices and sessions are open and inclusive to all,
- do not automatically assume that everyone is heterosexual or identifies with their assigned birth gender,
- increase our staff's awareness of the needs and vulnerabilities that LGBTQ+ young people have,
- make LGBTQ+ identity visible in our organisation by encouraging participants to be themselves,
- create a supportive environment, where individuals feel able to speak openly and be themselves,

Safeguarding d/Deaf and disabled children, young people and adults

When using the word 'disabled' in this context, we are referring to a range of very different conditions and identities, some of whom may not identify as disabled. This includes:

- are d/Deaf,
- are on the autistic spectrum,
- have a condition such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD),
- have a learning disability,
- have a physical disability such as cerebral palsy,
- have visual impairment,
- have a long-term illness.

Children and young people who have disabilities are at an increased risk of being abused compared with their non-disabled peers (Jones et al, 2012) and are also less likely to receive the protection and support they need when they have been abused (Taylor et al, 2014).

L.E.T recognise the needs of all children, young people and adults with a disability and commit to:

- engaging in anti- discriminatory practice whereby all individuals are treated as equals regardless of their disability,
- recognising the increased vulnerability of disabled children to abuse and neglect and the barriers they may face,
- including additional safeguards to protect disabled children,
- considering the need of d/Deaf or disabled children in making it easier for them to report abuse to a trusted adult,
- practicing safeguarding issues that are specific to a child's disability such as intimate care and safe touch.

Safeguarding Policy

Intimate care

Children with certain disabilities or medical issues may need help and support with intimate personal care including going to the toilet and washing.

L.E.T recognise the additional needs of individuals with disabilities and aim to create a safe and comfortable environment where all guests feel able to use the toilet whenever they need to.

We aim to:

- ensure toilets are safe and provide guests with privacy,
- ensure toilets are clean and appropriately stocked with necessary items such as toilet paper, soap and hand towels,
- give guests frequent access to water-based drinks and allow them to use the toilets throughout the day,
- prompt children to use the toilets as necessary (for example you might want to remind them to use the toilet during breaks),
- put bins in all cubicles (for all genders), which can be used for sanitary items, catheters, stoma bags and continence products,
- consider how to make toilets more accessible to individuals with sensory processing difficulties,
- make sure children know who they can talk to if they have a continence issue (whether this is one-off or part of a pattern),
- never knowingly leave a child in soiled clothing - have a selection of clean underwear and clothing available in case children need it.

It's not always easy to talk about continence problems. By building a trusting relationship with the children and young people we work with, we can encourage them to talk to us if they are worried about anything.

Continence issues may of concern if:

- they are a direct result of abuse and/or neglect,
- they are a result of stress which is caused by abuse and/or neglect,
- they are a result of, or are contributing to, mental health concerns,
- parents or carers are not responding appropriately to the child's continence needs.

L.E.T commit to taking action and responding appropriately and proportionately, if we have any concerns about a child or young person's welfare.

Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

We are using the term special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to refer to children who have disabilities or additional needs. Other terms may be used, including:

- additional needs,
- additional support for learning,
- additional learning needs.

L.E.T are aware of the additional need's children and young people with SEND may have which mean they are more vulnerable to abuse and/or less able to speak out if something isn't right.

We commit to:

- empowering SEND children by providing them with communication support and opportunities to express themselves to others,
- building strong, trusting relationships with SEND children and giving them opportunities to share,
- consulting them on their views and wishes about their life and care in order to meet their needs,
- providing accessible education on topics such as keeping safe, sex and relationships and online safety,
- providing information in accessible formats,
- giving them opportunities to express themselves creatively through activities like art and play,
- giving them access to advocacy services,
- training all staff in how to work with SEND children.

Recognising and responding to abuse

It can be very hard for children and young people to speak out about abuse. Often, they fear there may be negative consequences if they tell anyone what's happening to them. Some may delay telling someone about abuse for a long time, while others never tell anyone, even if they want to.

At L.E.T, we are committed to ensuring that all guests feel able to speak out and be taken seriously. It is not the responsibility of anyone working for L.E.T to make a judgement on whether or not child abuse has taken place; however, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns that are raised.

Safeguarding Policy

Children may disclose directly or indirectly and sometimes they may start sharing details of abuse before they are ready to put their thoughts and feelings in order.

Not all disclosures will lead to a formal report of abuse, or a case being made, or a case being taken to court, but all disclosures will be taken seriously.

When found in a position where a child makes a disclosure of harm or abuse, it is important that we take appropriate action and respond in the right manner. In order to help the child or individual feel that they are being listened to and taken seriously we take a three-stage approach:

- **show care, help them open up:** Give full attention to the child or young person and keep body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today' help.
- **take time, slow down:** Respect pauses and don't interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.
- **show understanding, reflect back:** show a clear interest in what the child is sharing. Reflect back what they've said to check understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.

L.E.T recognise that if a child shares that they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing and to make sure they know that abuse is never their fault. We also understand that talking to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure, could make things worse for the child and so instead will follow our safeguarding policy procedure and fill in a safeguarding incident form, print, sign and date before sending to the DSL.

Resources

NSPCC video on how to respond to a child's disclosure of abuse – [watch here](#).

Reporting concerns

The [key guidance for child protection is Working together to safeguard children](#) (Department for Education, 2018). This states:

- everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe,
- everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in sharing information and identifying concerns.

Safeguarding Policy

In addition, section 11 of the [Children Act 2004](#) places a statutory duty on certain agencies to co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes:

- local authorities
- NHS services and trusts
- police
- probation services and young offenders institutions.

If a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, L.E.T will share information with appropriate agencies or professionals without the child's or their parent's consent - please see **visual policy procedure** for more information on the appropriate contacts and actions to take.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them. Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have ended their programme with L.E.T.

Any verbal information or referrals must be followed promptly by a written report. Written reports should be marked with the date and time, persons involved and notes on the event and action taken. Written reports can take the form of an email. Any original rough notes made during the conversation must be kept and attached or handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in case they are needed by a court.

The following may be helpful as guidelines generally but especially where a disclosure has been made about alleged abuse:

Written recording during the conversation

It may be possible to write down phrases and words whilst the individual is talking which can be used to trigger recall when a full report is made. This should only be done if the individual is in agreement and if it feels comfortable.

Written recording immediately after the conversation

It is very important to try to record exactly what the individual said and using their vocabulary even if the meaning is unclear.

Recording your own responses

Safeguarding Policy



LONDON
EQUINE THERAPY

Your responses should be recorded and it should be clear that a non-leading approach has been used.

Recording the context of the disclosure

The context in which an individual chooses to talk about an incident of abuse can provide valuable information to the investigating team e.g. the individual had just finished reading a particular book or had been involved in a discussion at school.....

Recording the emotional context of the disclosure

The emotional context can provide valuable clues to the investigating team. An individual may make serious statements in a joking way or may present as tearful and distressed. Describe any non-verbal behaviour.

Recording repetition

If the individual repeats statements these should be recorded. Consistency in the individual's repeated statements adds to the strength of the evidence.

Draw a Diagram

If there is any obvious bruising or injury draw a diagram to indicate its position.

In the event of a referral being made, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the Social Services department of the relevant Local Authority and submit the report in accordance with their procedures. All reported concerns, whether eventually considered to be Safeguarding Child Protection issue or not, must have written records and proper standards of confidentiality must be observed.

Records, confidentiality and information sharing

L.E.T expects all employees, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm or **contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.**

When recording a disclosure, it is important that the information is clear, concise and a true representation of the concerns. In some incidents, it may be necessary to share information with Children's Social Care or the police, hence the necessity for making detailed records at the time of the disclosure. Information should be factual, and an accurate record should be kept of:

Safeguarding Policy



LONDON
EQUINE THERAPY

- the date and time of the incident/disclosure,
- the date and time of the report,
- the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details,
- the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details,
- the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses,
- the name, age and any other relevant information about the child who is the subject of the concern (including information about their parents or carers and any siblings),
- what was said or done and by whom,
- any action taken to look into the matter,
- any further action taken (such as a referral being made).

Where possible all staff should include the relevant dates, times, situation, people present and factual information, including the dates, times and designation of the report writer. The record must then be signed with the name and designation clearly printed beneath.

Informing parents/carers

Wherever possible, personnel concerned about the welfare of a child should work in partnership with parents/carers. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents/carers to help clarify any initial concerns (e.g. if a child's behaviour has changed, it is important to check whether there is a reasonable explanation such as family upset or bereavement).

However, there are circumstances in which a young person might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent/carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

Storage of child protection records

All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018 does not change the way child protection records should be stored and retained.

L.E.T, recognise that they must:

Safeguarding Policy



LONDON
EQUINE THERAPY

- know the reason why we're keeping records about children and/or adults (for example, because they relate to child protection concerns),
- assess how long we need to keep the records for,
- have a plan for how and when the records will be destroyed.

To keep personal information secure, L.E.T will:

- compile and label files carefully,
- keep files containing sensitive or confidential data secure and allow access on a 'need to know' basis
- keep a log so we can see who has accessed the confidential files, when, and the titles of the files they have used.

L.E.T recognise that all records need to be kept confidential and stored securely. Electronic files should be password protected and stored on computers with protection against hackers and viruses.

- Information about child protection concerns and referrals should be kept in a separate child protection file for each child, rather than in one 'concern log'. The child protection file should be started as soon as you become aware of any concerns.
- It's good practice to keep child protection files separate from a child's general records. You should mark the general record to indicate that there is a separate child protection file.
- If required to share records (within organisation or externally), make sure they are kept confidential. Use passwords and encryption when sharing electronic files.
- If staff and volunteers use their personal computers to make and store records, there needs to be a clear agreement to ensure the records are being stored securely.
- If the person responsible for managing child protection records leaves the organisation, there needs to be somebody appointed to take over their role and arrange a proper handover.

Retention periods

In England, Scotland and Wales, the file should be kept until the child is 25 (this is seven years after they reach the school leaving age) (Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2019).

Destruction of child protection records

When the retention period finished, confidential records should be incinerated or shredded in the presence of a member of staff from L.E.T or entrusted to a firm specialising in the

Safeguarding Policy



destruction of confidential material. At the same time any electronic versions of the record must be purged.

If not shredded immediately, all confidential records must be held in a secured plastic bag, labelled as confidential and locked in a cupboard or other secure place; or placed in a confidential waste bin.

Reviewing child protection records retention and storage policy

L.E.T will regularly review child protection records retention and storage policies to make sure it is effective and continues to comply with current legislation and guidance. This will be carried out as part of a wider review of safeguarding policies and procedures.

Training and awareness:

L.E.T will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its Employees, Volunteers and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it.

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children,
- Recognise a child potentially in need of safeguarding and take action,
- Understand how to report a safeguarding Alert,
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children,
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Safe recruitment & selection:

L.E.T is committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices, that reduce the risk of harm to children from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

L.E.T has policies and procedures that cover the recruitment of all Trustees, employees and volunteers.

Support for staff

Safeguarding Policy



LONDON
EQUINE THERAPY

L.E.T recognises that dealing with a disclosure from a child or individual is likely to be a stressful experience. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or to seek further support if necessary.

Social Media:

All employees and volunteers should be aware of L.E.T social media policy and procedures and the code of conduct for behaviour towards the children we support.

Use of Mobile Phones and other Digital Technology:

All employees, trustees and volunteers should be aware of L.E.T's policy and procedures regarding the use of mobile phones and any digital technology and understand that it is unlawful to photograph children and young people without the explicit consent of the person with parental responsibilities.

Whistleblowing:

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. It is important that people within L.E.T have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistle blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrong- doing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk