

1.4 We will not tolerate inappropriate touching by adults and support workers. They should ensure that touching and physical contact is not exploitative or open to misunderstanding.

1.5 Adults and support workers will accept responsibility to exercise due care in all activities, so that young people are not exposed to risk from adult negligence or incompetence.

1.6 All workers and volunteers over 18 are required to complete a police disclosure form with the Disclosure and Barring Service to discover whether they hold criminal convictions which involve abuse of children. A nominated member of the management committee holds a Central Register of DBS and identity records.

1.7 At least two adults or an adult with a support worker on every activity should supervise any group of children or young people. In exceptional circumstances where a worker may be alone with a child for a short period, then other adults should be aware and support this action.

1.8 Confidential data that is collected on children, including addresses, medical condition, criminal convictions etc. should be treated in confidence and with respect and should be shared between adults and support workers only on a need to know basis.

1.9 Ladders requires that all adults and support workers involved with young people should create a safe and open environment where social relationships can be confidently discussed and in which all members of the organisation can grow.

1.10 New artists, volunteers and support workers must sign the child protection agreement.

2 We will also protect adults and support workers from misunderstandings and false accusation of abuse. We are committed to procedures and policies which will promote the good reputation of Ladders.

2.1 Staff or volunteers representing Ladders can help protect themselves from false accusations by not:

- Spending time alone with young people away from others;
- Contacting young people outside the activity or the project in which they meet them.

2.2 Staff and volunteers should never:

- Engage in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games;
- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any form;
- Allow young people or other staff and volunteers to use inappropriate language;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in fun;
- Show favouritism to any individuals;
- Rely on just their own or the organisation's good name to protect them.

2.3 Staff and volunteers should always:

- Treat everyone with respect;
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy;
- Plan activities so that at least one other member of staff or volunteer is present;

- Recognise that special caution is required when dealing with topics of a sensitive nature to young people.

3 Suspecting abuse or dealing with disclosure

3.1 If a person is suspicious that someone is being abused they should immediately tell the person in charge of running that particular event or the Ladders coordinator, recording any facts which support the suspicions.

3.2 If a young person discloses that they have been, or are being, abused by someone else, Ladders staff or volunteers must immediately explain to the person it is not possible to keep such information confidential and that information will need to be passed the duty Child Protection Officer (being drawn into confidentiality/secretcy can be dangerous and inappropriate.)

3.3 When a child is at risk of significant harm there is a legal duty to notify the relevant authorities.

3.4 If the person would like to make a full disclosure then it is important the member of staff or volunteer listens without interrupting, looking to alleviate any feelings of guilt or isolation and passing no judgement. A document recording the facts must be made as soon as possible.

Guidance to responding appropriately to a child making an allegation of abuse

- * Stay calm.
- * Listen carefully to what is said.
- * Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets.
- * Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- * Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- * Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- * Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- * Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
- * Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words, as soon as possible - note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- * It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated child protection person in the organisation.

3.5 All suspected abuse or neglect of any child must always be reported to the duty Child Protection Officer.

3.6 A member of staff may become concerned of a suspected abuse or neglect of any child, or receive such information from a parent of third party. In this event s/he must immediately (and within one hour) inform the duty Child Protection Officer and make a

written note of both the time and nature of the concern and also the time the duty Child Protection Officer was informed.

3.7 All information must be passed directly on to the duty Child Protection Officer on site who will respond as set out in section 4.

4 Responding to reports or disclosure of abuse or neglect.

4.1 In this event s/he must make an immediate decision (within one hour) as to whether it is appropriate to inform the parents of the situation. If the parents are informed then they should be asked to meet with the duty Child Protection Officer to agree on any further action.

4.2 If the Child Protection Officer considers it appropriate to make a referral to Waltham Forest Child Protection the parents shall be advised of that.

4.3 In circumstances where the report/disclosure suggests that the child may be subject to harm on return to home and/or in the case of disclosure of suspected sexual abuse or serious non-accidentally injury the Child Protection Officer will make a referral to Waltham Forest Child Protection without informing the parents.

4.4 The Child Protection Officer shall make a written, detailed report of each case together with the written note from the member of staff raising the matter, the text of any referral to Waltham Forest Child Protection, the contact details of professionals taking the referral and any additional appropriate comments from any statutory or voluntary authorities.

4.5 If the report or disclosure was made during an event held in a school the school's Child Protection Officer must be contacted and informed as soon as is practical.

4.6 The duty Child Protection Officer shall contact any colleague Ladders Child Protection Officer and inform them of the outcome of the incident.

4.7 The duty Child Protection Officer will inform the Chair of the Management Committee of the outcome of the incident.

5. Responding to an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer

5.1 In any circumstance of where a member of staff is suspected of abusing, neglecting or mistreating a child the Ladders coordinator shall immediately suspend that member of staff and inform the Child Protection Officer..

5.2 The suspension must be immediately reported to the Chair of the Management Committee who will appoint a member of the management team to investigate the allegation.

5.4 After the conclusion of any Child Protection procedures and the completion of an investigation report, the management committee will meet to decide if the suspension will be lifted or what other action should be taken.

6. Safeguarding training

6.1 All staff and volunteers representing Ladders at any event will have had this policy and the principles of safeguarding explained to them at their induction and will have agreed to abide by it fully, and sign to state they understand it.

6.2 Awareness of safeguarding issues will be part of the programme for young people taking part in the Ladders trainee project. Included in the training will be how they can approach child protection officers in ladders, their schools, as well as using helpline resources locally and nationally.

I have read Ladders Child Protection Policy. I understand and agree to support the policy and inform the coordinator if I have any concerns.

SignaturePlease print your name Date