

I have concerns that a child has been abused or is at risk of significant harm



I talk my concerns through with Hackney Playbus' Designated Safeguarding Lead: Claire Lindsay: **07973 183607**
If Claire Lindsay is unavailable, I talk to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Claire Kelly: **07930310396**
If I believe a child is at risk of immediate harm, I call 999
If no one on the Hackney Playbus management team is available, I call MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub): 020 8356 5500, **020 8356 2710 (Out of Hours)**
I record all the details of the concern and pass this information to the DSL as soon as possible.



DSL discusses concerns with the child's parents or carer, unless there is concern that this will place the child at greater risk - for example, as may be the case for instances of suspected physical or sexual abuse.



The DSL telephones the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) at Hackney Children's Social Care for advice and/or makes a referral.
Contact information: 020 8356 5500/MASH@hackney.gov.uk



The DSL attends professional meetings, case conferences and core groups as required, and continue to share information with appropriate professionals and to work to support the child and her/his family.



Hackney Playbus Safeguarding Policy

Purpose and Aims of the Policy

Hackney Playbus aims to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children. The safety of all children is central to our programme.

Hackney Playbus aims to work in partnership with parents or carers and other organisations to promote children's welfare, to protect them from abuse and neglect, and to seek the involvement of parents and carers in decision making where possible. Hackney Playbus minimises as far as reasonably possible the risk that children will suffer serious accidental injury; Hackney Playbus sessions are enjoyable, adventurous and rewarding for all involved; Hackney Playbus is compliant with legislation.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To raise awareness of Hackney Playbus staff, volunteers and parents and carers by explaining different types of abuse and possible signs and symptoms of abuse.
- To set down the procedures that need to be taken within the organisation if there are concerns.

- To explain how to deal with disclosures.
- To set down the procedures that need to be taken if there are allegations against a member of staff or a volunteer.
- To show how child welfare and safety issues are reflected in our practice.

Hackney Playbus believes that protecting children from harm is the most important area of our work. If any members of Hackney Playbus staff, and volunteers, or parents or carers who use Hackney Playbus services feel that a child is at risk of significant harm from sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect or are at risk from significant harm from any other reason, then they must follow these child protection procedures.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015](#)
- [Information sharing 2018](#)

Hackney Playbus recognises that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.

- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of their level of dependency or their communication needs.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Categories of Abuse

There are many different types of abuse. Children can be abused by an adult's direct actions (e.g. hitting a child) or because of an adult's inactions (e.g. not feeding or bathing a child) and by an adult's indirect actions (e.g. domestic violence, addiction, etc). Children can be abused by people of any sex or gender, as well as by other young people or children.

Children's Social Care will be notified if any professional suspects that a child is either suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. Significant harm may constitute a single traumatic event or a build-up of concerns or a series of incidents over time.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. 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 use of inadequate care givers); ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. May also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

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.
Emotional Abuse	Persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. May involve verbal abuse, conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another. Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they said or how they communicate. May feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. Over protection, limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing normal social interaction. Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. May involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying). Causing children 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.
Sexual Abuse	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. May involve physical contact including assault by penetration or non-penetration. 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 can be committed by people of any sex or gender, well as other children and young people.

How to Recognise Signs of Abuse

Possible signs and symptoms of abuse

Neglect

Constant hunger; poor personal hygiene; constant tiredness; poor state of clothing; emaciation; untreated medical problems; destructive tendencies; low self-esteem; neurotic behaviour; no social relationships; running away; compulsive stealing or scavenging; poor social relationships. Poverty and neglect are totally different: they are not equivalent states.

Physical Abuse

Unexplained injuries or burns, particular if there are recurrent improbable excuses to explain injuries. Refusal to discuss injuries; untreated injuries; admission of punishment which appears excessive; bald patches; withdrawal from physical contact; arms and legs kept covered in hot weather if not usually covered; fear of returning home; fear of medical help; self-destructive tendencies; aggression towards others; running away.

Emotional Abuse

Physical, mental and emotional development lags; admission of punishment which appears excessive; over reaction to mistakes; continual self-deprecation; sudden speech disorder; fear of new situations; inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations; neurotic behaviour (for example rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking); self-mutilation; fear of parents being contacted; extremes of passivity or aggression; drug/solvent abuse; running away; compulsive stealing; scavenging; social isolation; desperate attention-seeking behaviours – anybody's attention; depression, withdrawal, detachment – don't care attitude.

Sexual Abuse

Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance; displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age; tendency to cling or need reassurance; tendency to cry easily; regression to younger behaviour such as thumb sucking, acting like a baby; complaints of genital itching or pain; distrust of a familiar adult or anxiety about being left with a relative, babysitter or lodger; unexplained gifts of

money; Apparent secrecy; wetting day or night; sleep disturbance or nightmares; chronic illness, especially throat infections and venereal disease; anorexia or bulimia; unexplained pregnancy; fear of undressing e.g. for sport; phobias or panic attack.

Other forms of abuse which can put children at risk include:

Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

If a child sees, hears or experiences the effect of the abuse, they are also a victim of domestic abuse.

Forced Marriages

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel

like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) is a form of physical and/or sexual abuse. It is illegal in the UK, and is recognized by the United Nations as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It is often carried out on minors (between infancy and age 18).

FGM/C indicators

The girl may confide that she is to have a "special procedure" which will make her a woman or talk of a ceremony taking place for her or other siblings. There may be talk of vaccinations or absence from school, although the summer holidays is the period when girls are mostly at risk of FGM/C.

Signs that FGM/C may have occurred:

- Prolonged absence from attending Playbus services, if a regular Playbus user, with a noticeable change in behaviour on return
- Finding it difficult to sit still and appears to be experiencing discomfort or pain
- Spending a long time away in the toilet
- A sudden change in dress

Safeguarding on Hackney Playbus

The majority of children who attend Playbus sessions are aged between 0-3 years old, many of whom are pre-verbal. Safeguarding concerns are likely to arise therefore from observation rather than disclosure. If a member of staff is concerned that a child may have been subject to, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, action must be taken. In some cases it may be appropriate for the staff member to talk directly to the family to understand the situation better and to offer support. In other circumstances it may be

more appropriate for the DSL to talk to the parent or carer. In all circumstances the DSL must be made aware of the concern by the member of staff. If talking to the parent or carer is likely to place the child at great risk - for example, as may be the case for instances of suspected physical or sexual abuse, staff must inform the DSL immediately.

The DSL or deputy DSL is available for guidance before discussing a matter with a parent or carer where this is deemed the appropriate course of action.

How to Report a Concern

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Hackney Playbus is Claire Lindsay, Playbus Project Manager : 07973 183607/07875533448

In her absence the Deputy Safeguarding Lead is Claire Kelly, Director: 07930310396

The Trustee responsible for Safeguarding is Rachel Pullen: 07843678404

If a member of the Playbus team suspects that a child is being abused or is at risk of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect the concern should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Lead. They should report all factual evidence accurately and exactly, and all feelings and suspicions clearly, but separately from facts.

1. Record the child's name, date, time, place, context, what the child said (include any non-verbal communication) or what was observed. These notes or forms should be given to the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. Staff should not attempt to inspect injuries other than those that need attention; staff should not ask the child to undress to inspect injuries and never take photographs of injuries.
2. Once the Safeguarding Lead has been made aware of the concerns they will seek qualified advice from a social worker at Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in order to consider the next steps if necessary.

3. The Safeguarding Lead will record all concerns, discussions about the child, decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.
4. If there is no clear evidence, then an agreement about a safe and appropriate course of action will be taken.
5. If it is decided that the family should be referred on, then the Safeguarding Lead will report it to Hackney Children's Social Care duty team.
6. All the initial notes will be kept in the family file.
7. If the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead are unavailable and there is no other senior member of staff available to talk to, then the case should be reported directly to the Hackney Children's Social Care Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. The initial referrer should inform the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible - within one day of the referral. If the safeguarding concern is of an urgent nature, the case should be referred directly to the police by calling 999.
8. The parent or carer will be informed prior to a referral being made unless it is felt that this will put the child at risk of harm.
9. Where Children's Social Care have already received a referral and are carrying out an investigation as part of their assessment, Hackney Playbus will share information on request under the Children Act 1989.
10. Hackney Playbus staff should not under any circumstances attempt to carry out any investigation into allegations or suspicions of abuse. It is the responsibility of Hackney Children's Social Care to investigate any referrals under section 47 of the Children's Act 1989.

What Happens Next

1. If a referral is made, Hackney Children's Social Care should acknowledge the written referral within 24 hours of receiving it. If no contact has been made within 3 days, the Safeguarding Lead must contact CSC again. With each new request for support, the MASH will review the child's presenting level of need against the Continuum of Need. Where they agree that a safeguarding response may be required, multi agency safeguarding screening will be undertaken. An initial decision on the most appropriate next steps will usually be made within 2 hours but always within 24 hours. See [Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework](#).
2. If a referral is made by telephone, it must be confirmed in writing within 48 hours (otherwise contact the CSC again).
3. The Safeguarding Lead will inform the initial referrer of any further decisions within one day of receiving confirmation from Hackney Children's Social Care.

Dealing with Disclosures

Receive

1. Listen to the child. If you are shocked by what they tell you, try not to show it. Take what they say seriously. Children rarely lie about abuse and to be disbelieved adds to the traumatic nature of disclosing. Children may retract what they have said if they meet revulsion or disbelief.
2. Accept what the child says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking "Why didn't you tell me before?"

Reassure

1. Stay calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you. It's essential to be honest with the child, so don't make promises you may not be able to keep, like "I'll stay with you" or "Everything will be alright now."
2. Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer a child if at risk.
3. Try to alleviate any feelings of guilt that the child displays. For example, you could say: "You are not alone."
4. Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the child to tell you what happened. Empathise with the child – don't tell them what they should be feeling.

React

1. React to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter; but do not "interrogate" them for full details.
2. Do not ask "leading" questions such as "What did they do next?" or "Did they touch your private parts?" Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any other prosecution in court. Instead ask open questions like "Anything else to tell me?", "Yes?" "And...?"
3. Do not criticise the perpetrator: the child may love him/her and reconciliations may be possible.
4. Do not ask the child to repeat everything to another member of staff.
5. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

6. Record what has been said and give it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This should be collated with all other confidential information held on the child in a file labelled child protection concerns, kept in the Hackney Playbus office.

Record

1. Make some brief notes at the time on any paper (see below for reporting format). Give them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
2. Record the date, time, place, and sign your entry noting down any noticeable nonverbal behaviour and the words used by the child. If the child uses their family's own private sexual words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into "proper" words.
3. Complete body map to indicate the position of any possible bruising, marks or cuts. Staff must not request to see any marks that are not visible or take photographs of any injuries.
4. Be objective in your recording: include statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

It is not CP but I am still concerned

If a member of the Hackney Playbus team has concerns about a child, they should talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead about their concerns. Staff and volunteers should continue to monitor the child in question and record their observations, which will be kept confidentially in the Hackney Playbus office. Conversation with the DSL should be ongoing to ensure the child and their family is supported and that the child is kept from harm. Hackney Playbus will work with other organisations involved with the child to ensure the best outcome for the child.

Recruitment

The recruitment procedures are in line with City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership's ["Safer Recruitment"](#) practices. Interviews include questions which relate to child protection and particular attention is placed on ensuring full and relevant references. Everyone who works at Hackney Playbus has a current DBS check in place. DBS checks are renewed every two years and staff are encouraged to register with the DBS Update Service. The DSL checks the DBS Update Service at least once a year for members of staff who are registered to the service to ensure that staff are still suitable. DBS checks are required for most volunteer roles to ensure that the volunteer is suitable to work with children and/or have access to sensitive information. Volunteers work under the direct supervision of staff members at all times. Managers have attended safer recruitment training and refresh this training whenever the law in this context changes.

Training

It is the responsibility of Hackney Playbus to ensure that all staff, trustees and volunteers have sufficient, up-to-date and appropriate safeguarding training. The minimum training standards are as follows:

- All staff receive an individual safeguarding briefing from the Designated Safeguarding Lead as part of their induction
- All staff have external child protection training delivered by the City & Hackney Child Safeguarding Partnership at least every 2 years
- All staff receive a safeguarding briefing by the Designated Safeguarding Lead annually and receive updates from the DSL when there are changes or new information related to safeguarding practice

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead receives annual external training delivered by the City & Hackney Child Safeguarding Partnership specific to the role of DSL
- The Designated Trustee for Safeguarding receives training annually
- The Board of Trustees receive an annual safeguarding briefing
- Volunteers receive a safeguarding briefing in their induction and then annually

In addition, frontline delivery staff have the opportunity to attend safeguarding training on specific topics as offered by the City & Hackney Child Safeguarding Partnership.

Confidentiality

The Hackney Playbus has a confidentiality policy, which is in line with the Data protection Act (2018), The Access to Personal Files Act (1987) and the Children's Act (1989).

Allegations Against Staff

All staff have a legal responsibility to report concerns about professional conduct of colleagues whose behaviour might harm a child. Any allegation against a member of staff should be given consistent and fair consideration. *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*: 'Safeguarding children - the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm – is everyone's responsibility'.

An allegation is information or a concern which suggests that an adult working with children and young people has:

Behaved in a way that has harmed, 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 that indicates that he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children, for example inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention or inappropriate sharing of images

All allegations against staff members should be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. See *London Child Protection Procedures (2017)* for a thorough outline of allegations procedures.

Procedures

It is essential that if allegations of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and or neglect are made against a member of staff (by a child, by another member of staff or by another adult e.g., parent/visitor), that these allegations are dealt with seriously and in the correct manner. At all times a sense of proportion must be used, but allegations cannot be disregarded.

The following steps need to be followed:

1. The following information needs to be obtained about the allegation:
 - Who was the alleged victim/s and who was the alleged perpetrator?
 - When the incident occurred (date and time)?
 - Where i.e. the exact location e.g. garden, corridor?
 - Witnesses – were any adults/children present? The allegation should be noted exactly as reported, verbatim
2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): **LADO@hackney.gov.uk or 020 8356 8982/5500/4844**

3. Suspension will have to be considered. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should seek the advice of the LADO.
4. The power of suspension lies with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Board of Trustees, however, if the advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer advises suspension, this recommendation is normally accepted.
5. If suspension is to happen, a suspension meeting normally will be held, attended by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Director of Hackney Playbus, the Trustee member responsible for safeguarding, and the member of staff in question.
6. The terms of suspension will be made clear at the meeting and confirmed afterwards in writing. The terms of suspension will include:
 - member of staff to receive full contractual pay during the term of suspension
 - restrictions regarding entering Hackney Playbus settings
 - advice on booking sick leave/annual leave etc. during the suspension
 - restrictions regarding contacting colleagues and advice on who they can contact
 - warning not to contact any parents, carers or children who use Hackney Playbus services
7. The member of staff will also be advised that suspension is a neutral act and not an indication of presumed guilt. Suspension can be reviewed, and depending on circumstances can be lifted at any time. Any proposal to lift the suspension needs to be discussed with the LA; however, the final decision lies with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Board of Trustees.
8. In the event that the allegations are against the Designated Safeguarding Lead: the Board of Trustees will perform the role normally undertaken by the DSL when the allegation is against one of the staff, and will be advised by the Local Authority

Designated Officer on how to proceed. If an allegation is against the DSL, staff should contact the LADO directly.

9. Allegations against volunteers and agency or contract staff working at Hackney Playbus should be reported in the same manner as it would be for members of the Hackney Playbus staff team. After liaising with the LADO the DSL must contact the agency member's employer.

Whistleblowing Procedures

What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within the organisation rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

Employees are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong within the organisation. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the organisation.

Our Organisation's Commitments

Hackney Playbus is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, volunteers and others with whom we work, to come forward and voice concerns about any aspect of Hackney Playbus's work should they arise.

Who Does The Policy Apply To?

The policy applies to all employees and volunteers, and those contractors working for the organisation on Hackney Playbus projects. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the organisation.

Policy Aims:

- Provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- Assure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

What Type Of Concerns Are Covered?

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- disclosure related to miscarriages of justice
- health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use of public fund
- possible fraud and corruption
- sexual, physical or emotional abuse of service users or colleagues
- other unethical conduct

Safeguards

Hackney Playbus recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service. Hackney Playbus will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages you however to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that you:

- must disclose the information in good faith
- must believe it to be substantially true
- must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- must not seek any personal gain

How To Raise Your Concern

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate supervisor/manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach a more senior level of management, for example the Board of Trustees.

For independent advice please call:

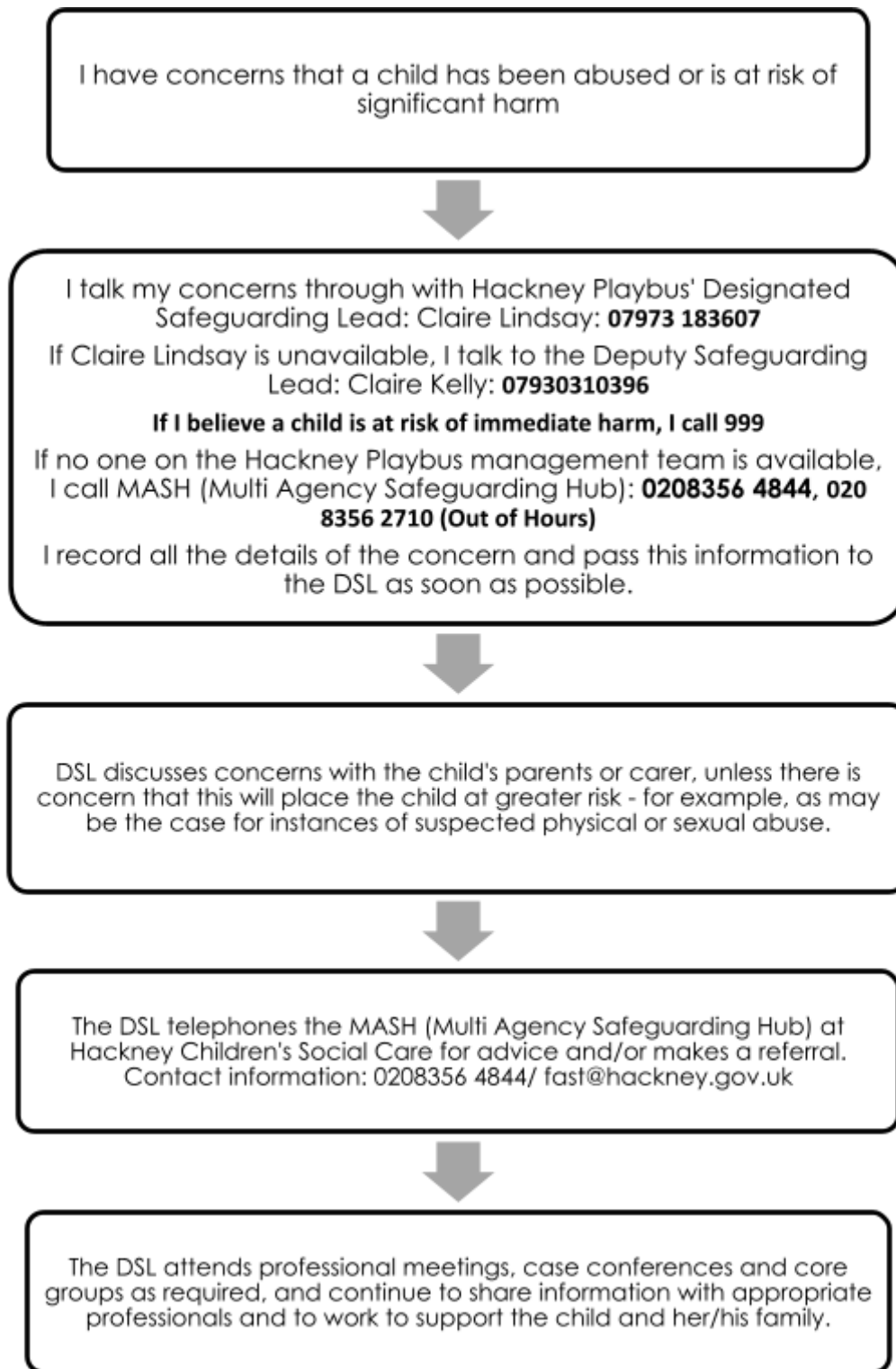
Public Concern At Work

Website: www.pcaw.co.uk

Helpline: 020 7404 6609

Email: whistle@pcaw.co.uk

Child Protection Procedures



Reporting safeguarding concerns

Child's name:

DOB:

Parent/Carer's name:

Date and time of incident:

Observation: What happened. What was heard/seen?

What actions were taken?

How was it followed up?

Print Name:

Signature of person recording concern

Print Name:

Signature of DSG Date