



# Therapeutic Play – Creating Connections Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## **This policy applies to Laura Wright at Therapeutic Play – Creating Connections**

### **The purpose of this policy and any associated documents is:**

To provide guidance on procedures adopted to protect children and young people who receive Laura Wright's Play Therapy services. These procedures would be activated in the event that we have been informed or suspect an individual or group may be experiencing or has experienced abuse or harm, or may be at risk of harm or exploitation in the future.

Laura Wright at Therapeutic Play-Creating Connections believes that no one should ever experience any form of abuse and this policy states the commitment to promote the welfare of all children, young people and associated adults who receive the services of Therapeutic Play-Creating Connections.

### **Introduction**

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

Our client's welfare is our paramount concern. **Therapeutic Play-Creating Connections** will safeguard and promote the welfare of all clients and work together with other agencies to ensure that we have adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.

We recognise the importance of providing an environment that will help children and young people feel safe and respected.

We recognise the importance of enabling children and young people to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to.

We also recognise that all adults have a full and active part to play in protecting children from harm. In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.

### **The Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people this includes:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012



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- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- Information sharing: Advice to practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
- Working together to safeguarding children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2015.

### **We recognise that:**

- That the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989 and the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation has a right to feel safe.
- Some children are in danger of cultural beliefs being placed upon them such as FGM
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous adverse experiences.
- Their level of dependency, Communication needs or other issues may present additional vulnerability.

We recognise that children and young people can be at risk in a range of contexts (community, home, school, referred to as contextual safeguarding) and from children and not just from adults. We understand that all children and young people involved in child-on-child abuse need protection and support.

### **We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a designated safeguarding officer (Laura Wright) for children and young people.
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and the code of Conduct.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, one-to-one discussions.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide safe physical environment for the children, young people, and adults by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law regulatory guidance.



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## **Record Keeping**

We will ensure that records are maintained appropriately for children and young people with safeguarding concerns and that confidential files are created and maintained.

## **Safer Recruitment**

- Play Therapist holds an enhanced safeguarding DBS check which will be 3 yearly renewed.
- Play therapists follow PTUK ethical principles.

## **Training and Development**

**Therapeutic Play- Creating Connections** understands the impact of trauma;

We recognise ...

- signs of abuse and mental health problems

know how to ...

- respond to any concerns
- support local multi-agency procedures (e.g. providing information)
- 

Understands ...

- the importance of online safety
- the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- the difference between a safeguarding or wellbeing concern and a child/young person in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Laura Wright) will undergo child protection training and refresh at least two years – this including The Prevent Duty

## **Confidentiality, Consent and Information Sharing**

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose information about a client only if in the best interests of the child/young person.
- We understand that we cannot promise a child/young person to keep secrets which might compromise their safety or well-being.
- We understand we have professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children and young people, the police and Children's Social Work Services.
- We recognise that professional challenge has an important role to play in ensuring effective safeguarding.



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## **Contact details**

### **Designated Safeguarding Officer:**

Laura Wright

117 Marlborough Gardens

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07920426565

Email: [Laura.wright@therapeuticplay.co.uk](mailto:Laura.wright@therapeuticplay.co.uk)

## **Policy Review**

This policy and the procedures will be reviewed annually. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle.

Policy last reviewed: April 2023

Next review due: April 2024



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## Appendix A - Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

### **Definitions**

**Abuse**, including neglect, is a form of maltreatment. A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger.

**Children** are any people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday; a 17-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger.

**Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

### **Categories of Abuse**

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve:

- making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate
- only there to meet another's needs
- inappropriate age or developmental expectations
- overprotection and limitation of exploration, learning and social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, e.g. domestic abuse
- making the child feel worthless and unloved - high criticism and low warmth
- serious bullying (including cyber bullying)
- exploitation or corruption.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.



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Once a child is born, it may involve a parent 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 care givers
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- ensure regular school attendance

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

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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. Physical abuse is not solely perpetrated by adults. Children/young people can also commit acts of physical abuse.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetration of any part of the body, or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, including on the internet, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**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; and
- emotional

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

**Early Help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.



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**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There are a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children’s social care. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place.

**Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

**Safeguarding children** is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children (July 2018) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s health and development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 states ‘where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child’s health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

**Preventing Radicalisation.** The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which received Royal Assent on 12 February 2015, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children’s services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (“the Prevent duty”). This came into force on 1 July 2015.

**Child sexual exploitation** is also sexual abuse; it involves children and young people receiving something, for example accommodation, drugs, gifts or affection, as a result of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It could take the form of grooming of children, e.g. to take part in sexual activities or to post sexual images of themselves on the internet. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children/young people.