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|  | **Guidelines on the Storage and Retention of Records** |

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| **Recording Concerns** |

If a member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or young person, or concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff or volunteer it is vitally important to record all relevant details, regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with either the police or children’s social care.

The Baby Equipment Loan Service & Toy Library’s incident form should be used to record details of:

* Date and time of any incident or disclosure
* Details of all those who were involved in or witnessed the incident or disclosure
* What was said or done and by whom
* Any action taken by BELS & TL to investigate the matter
* Any further action taken
* Where relevant, the reasons why a decision was taken not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency
* Details of the person reporting the concern
* Details of the person to whom the concern was reported, along with the date and time the report was made

This form should be signed.

**Record Retention**

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires that information should be:

* Adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purposes for which they are held.
* Accurate and where necessary kept up to date.
* Not kept for longer than is necessary for its purpose.

BELS & TL must assess how long it needs to keep such information for, the purpose for which it is holding it and when it will be destroyed. The Data Protection Act states that “Personal information should not be held for longer than six years after the subject’s last contact with the authority”. Exceptions for the six year period will occur when records:

* Need to be retained because the information in them is relevant to legal action that has been started.
* Are required to be kept by law.
* Are archived for historical purposes (e.g. Where the organisation was party to legal proceedings).

**Concerns about adult behaviour**

It is important that BELS & TL keeps a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, along with details of how the allegations were followed up and resolved, and of any action taken and decisions reached. These records are kept in a person’s confidential personnel file and a copy given to the individual. This information will be retained on file, including for people who leave the organisation, for 10 years. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference. It will also provide clarification in cases where a future DBS disclosure reveals information from the police that an allegation was made but did not result in a prosecution or a conviction. It will also prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as something happens, allegations resurface after a period of time.

**Guidance on Retention Periods**

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| **Type of Record** | **Retention** |
| Child welfare concern reported by BELS & TL to children’s social care and / or the police. | Referral should be acknowledged in writing by children’s social care. BELS & TL keeps this record on file for six years after the last contact with the service user unless other exemptions apply. |
| Child welfare concern that BELS & TL decide does not necessitate a referral to children’s social care and / or the police. | Record to be destroyed three years after the child ceases to use BELS & TL’s services. |
| Concerns about people who work with children and young people. | Retain for10 years after the person’s involvement with BELS & TL ceases. Records should be retained for a longer period if:   * There were concerns that the adult behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child. * The adult possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child. * The adult behaved towards a child in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children. |
| DBS certificate obtained as part of vetting process. | The actual disclosure form must be destroyed after six months, but BELS & TL will retain a record of the date of the check, the reference number and the outcome for a period of 40 years in line with retention of Employer’s Liability Certificate of Insurance. |

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| **Other Documents in this Series** |

This document is one of a series of nine that detail BELS & TL’s strategy for protecting children and young people. The other documents are:

SG1- Safeguarding Children and Young People

SG2 - Code of Conduct for Adults working with Children and Young People

SG3 - Code of Conduct for Young People

SG4 - Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

SG5 - Procedure for Protecting Children and Young People at possible Risk of Abuse

SG6 - Dealing with Allegations made against an Employee or Volunteer

SG7 - Dealing with Allegations made against another Child

SG8 - Guidelines for sharing Confidential Information

In addition to the above this policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

* Acceptable Access to and Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

e-safety Policy

* Communications Policy
* Complaints Procedure
* Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
* Equality and Diversity Policy
* GDPR Privacy Policy
* Grievance Policy and Procedure
* Health & Safety at Work Policy
* Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure
* Staff Induction Checklist
* Volunteer Policy and Procedure
* Whistleblowing Policy

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