



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Statement

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Policy Reviewed August 2024

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Key Principles of the Policy

Although Child Protection legislation relates to children and young people up to the age of 16 years, Lyra's standards and expectations are the same for participants up to the age of 18 years. Throughout this policy, references to 'children' include both children and young people.

Lyra is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children working with the company. Lyra recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. All staff (including freelance employees and volunteers) will work together to encourage the development of an ethos embracing diversity and respecting the rights of children.

The key principles underpinning this policy are:

- **The interests and safety of the child are paramount**
- **All children must be treated fairly and with respect**
- **All children have the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation**
- **All children have the right to express their views on matters that affect them**

All work carried out by Lyra staff must comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and all staff should familiarise themselves with the articles relating to this document. The key areas are:

- **Every child shall have the right to work and play in a safe and inclusive environment**
- **Every child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice**
- **Every child shall have the right to rest and to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts**

*You can find the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child here:
www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf



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Contact Details for the Designated Child Protection Officers

In the event of a situation where you are concerned for the immediate health or safety of a child, call the Police on 999.

Lyra has two Designated Child Protection Officers.

Anna Plasberg-Hill (first point of call)

Office: **0131 659 4759**

Mobile: [REDACTED]

- Email: anna@lyra.co.uk

Jo Sharp (second point of call)

- Office: **0131 659 4759**

Mobile: [REDACTED]

- Email: natalia@lyra.co.uk

If Natalia or Anna are unavailable, please contact Jo Timmins (Artistic Director/CEO) on [REDACTED]

Social Care Direct can also be contacted on **0131 200 2324 / 0800 731 6969** if there is an urgent concern.

Lyra’s Board Member responsible for Child Protection is Kathryn Brack on [REDACTED]

Local Information – Safeguarding Contact Sheet

Agency	Contact Details
Social Care Direct	socialcaredirect@edinburgh.gov.uk 0131 200 2324 0800 731 6969 (OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY LINE)
Police	Craigmillar Police Station, 116 Duddingston Road West, Edinburgh, EH16 4UY 101 – non emergency 999 (EMERGENCY)



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Disclosure Checks and Child Protection Training

Lyra requires all core staff members and Board members to join the Disclosure Scotland Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme and undergo a PVG check. Freelance staff contracted to work on a regular basis with children must also undergo a PVG check.

Staff must provide Lyra with all necessary supporting documents on the date agreed.

Self-Disclosure forms are available at the point of recruitment.

Once PVG forms have been received and checked by Lyra, all staff contracted to work on a regular basis must complete the NSPCC Child Protection in Scotland course (online) within 4 weeks of their first day of work. Lyra will manage the cost and log-in details will be provided.

Non-regular staff members (i.e. a person who works less than 6 times non-consecutively per annum) are required to evidence that they are a member of the PVG scheme. They are not required to undergo PVG scheme record update through Lyra, but will never work alone with participants without a Lyra PVG checked member of staff present.



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Good Practice Code of Conduct

As key role models, all Lyra staff members are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour to safeguard the welfare of children. Lyra aims to create a positive culture through the following guidelines:

YOU SHOULD

- **Always put the care, welfare and safety needs of the child first.**
- **Help to develop an ethos promoting difference and diversity, where all people are treated equitably and with dignity and respect.**
- **Actively encourage children to be involved in making choices and decisions directly affecting them.**
- **Listen attentively to any ideas and views a child wants to share with you.**
- **Respect a child's culture, gender, and/or religious beliefs.**
- **Respect a child's right to privacy and personal space.**
- **Respond sensitively to a child who appears anxious about participating in certain activities.**
- **Be especially aware of the vulnerability of some groups of children (e.g. those with additional support needs, those from the global majority, those with limited English language skills etc.)**
- **Be aware of any unconscious bias that you might have towards individuals or groups of children (e.g. those from the global majority, those with disabilities or additional needs)**
- **Follow Lyra's trauma-informed approach* to ensure that all participants feel safe at all times. This includes being aware of the power you hold as an adult member of the staff team and being aware of body language or behaviour that could be intimidating for a young person, such as raising your voice, being in close proximity, holding eye contact or any other behaviour that could make a young person feel uncomfortable. Lyra can provide details of trauma-informed training on request.**
- **Maintain clear, professional boundaries at all times when collaborating with participants. This includes teenagers and Lyra's older participants over the age of 16.**
- **Always obtain verbal consent when using physical touch in the context of creative sessions at Lyra (for example during dance or when devising a scene). This includes ensuring that consent is given whenever there is physical touch between young people.**
- **Speak to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact p4) immediately if you suspect that a child is experiencing bullying or harassment.**
- **Listen carefully to any child who 'tells you' (sometimes through drawings and behaviour as well as words) that they are being harmed and report what you have heard immediately to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact p4).**
- **Lead by example and comply with the rules that govern the organisation you are in (e.g. school).**

* Trauma-informed Practice: A model that is grounded in and directed by a complete understanding of how trauma exposure affects service user's neurological, biological, psychological and social development (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/trauma-informed-practice-toolkit-scotland/pages/2/>)



YOU SHOULD NOT

- **Exaggerate or trivialise another member of staff's concerns about a child.**
- **Ignore an allegation or suspicion of abuse.**
- **Discuss personal issues about a child or their family with other people except your Line Manager or Designated Child Protection Officer (contact p4) when you are concerned about their wellbeing.**
- **Make derogatory remarks or gestures.**
- **Allow a child to be bullied or harmed by either a member of the organisation or by one of their peers.**
- **Allow children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.**

YOU SHOULD NEVER

- **Engage in sexually provocative games/interactions. This includes any behaviour that might be considered flirtatious or suggestive in any way.**
- **Touch, or allow others to engage in touching, a child in a sexually provocative manner.**
- **Make sexually suggestive comments to a child.**
- **Engage in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of a game or sports activity which has been discussed in advance and agreed on by the children.**
- **Form inappropriately close emotional or physical relationships with children.**
- **Harass or intimidate a child because of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, socio-economic class or disability.**
- **Invite a child to visit you alone or to stay with you at your home.**



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Media Code of Conduct

Please refer to Appendix 3 for the full code of conduct. The key principles are as follows:

- **Never use a personal device to photograph, film or store images of a child. A Lyra device will be provided for these purposes and images or video files will be stored on the shared drive.**
- **If you witness another staff member using a personal device to take, record or save images, report this as soon as possible to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact on p4).**
- **Never use a personal number, email address or social media account to contact a child. If a child contacts you on a personal number, email or social media account, do NOT respond or delete the message and report this immediately to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact on p4).**
- **If you have pre-existing personal contact with any participants or parents/carers, please discuss this immediately with the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact on p4).**
- **Images and video will only be shared online through Lyra accounts or via a freelancer's professional account once permission from Lyra staff has been granted.**
- **Refer to Appendix 3 for guidance on delivering content remotely using digital platforms and managing online disclosures/causes for concern.**

Car Policy

In the event of a child who is usually picked up by a parent/carer being stranded at Lyra due to an unforeseen circumstance, the following procedure must be followed:

- **Ask parent/carer if there is no other family member who can collect the child.**
- **Ask the parent/carer to book a taxi for the child to be collected.**
- **If the parent/carer cannot provide one of the above options and the child does not have permission to walk home alone, the Designated Child Protection Officer plus an additional staff member can consider escorting the child home by foot or by escorting the child in a taxi paid by Lyra.**
- **Do not offer to escort the child home by foot alone.**
- **If a staff member has business car insurance and this is logged by Lyra, they can drive the child home and another adult should be present in the car.**

As part of Lyra's commitment to removing barriers to access, arrangements may be made for a staff member to pick-up/drop off a participant by car to enable them to benefit from Lyra's programme. This staff member must have business car insurance and the arrangement must be made in writing with the parent/carer in advance. The staff member driving must be accompanied by another staff member in the car.



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Safeguarding and Visiting Companies

All visiting companies who are performing, working or hiring space at Lyra when children may be present will be issued with this policy. They will be required to sign Lyra's Child Protection and Safeguarding declaration before commencing any activity at Lyra.

In addition, where members of the visiting company are children or where the visiting company plan to work with children as part of an ancillary education package, they are required to have their own Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in place. Lyra reserves the right to ask for copies of all documentation relating to child protection on request and ensure that all permissions and arrangements for supervision are in place.

Health and Safety in the Theatre

Assessing and Managing Risk

Lyra carries out and regularly reviews risk assessments for all activity. These risk assessments are available for all staff members on request.

A thorough assessment to identify risks must be carried out prior to every workshop to ensure that all spaces used by children are safe and comfortable. In the case of in house activity, the delivery team (i.e. the core & freelance staff delivering the activity) must complete the checklist below prior to every workshop. In the case of external hires, the visiting company will be responsible for carrying out the checklist.

- **Is the room temperature suitable?**
- **Is the room light enough?**
- **Are the exits clearly identified and free from obstruction?**
- **Is the floor area free from obstruction?**
- **Are there any potential trip, slip or other hazards?**
- **Are the fire extinguishers clearly visible and unobstructed?**

Fire Evacuation

All Lyra staff and visiting companies/professionals must be fully aware of the fire evacuation procedures. Fire evacuation will be covered as part of Lyra's staff induction and visiting company induction procedures. Instructions of fire exit routes are displayed in each workshop space and the theatre.



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Managing Disclosures & Concerns of Abuse

General Definition of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol and drug abuse.

Dealing with Disclosures

You must report if a child makes a disclosure of abuse. This will often relate to the action or inaction by a parent or carer. Abuse can include: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation, Criminal Exploitation, Child Trafficking, Neglect, Faltering Growth (the new term for failing to thrive), Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.

Please note, it is not the role of Lyra staff to try and define or investigate the nature of abuse. If you have any concerns for a child, you should report the matter to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact on p4).

The following action should be taken if a child confides a Child Protection concern to you:

- **Listen attentively to what the child is saying.**
- **Do not promise confidentiality. The child must understand that you will have to pass on information and why it is important.**
- **Ask open, non-leading questions which help to clarify what the child is saying but not lead into an investigative situation. Intrusive questioning could contaminate a subsequent Child Protection investigation.**
- **Reassure the child that they have been courageous in speaking to you about this.**
- **Do not make judgements about what is disclosed or about the alleged abuser.**
- **Explain the next step; the child should know that they will be kept informed and supported as appropriate.**
- **Treat the allegation seriously and report it immediately.**
- **Write down exactly what was said using the pro-forma attached to this policy (*Appendix 2*) and then report it to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact on p4) immediately.**
- **If the Designated Child Protection Officer is not available at the time at which the concern has been raised, contact a member of the senior management team. If no member of the senior team is available, employees are duty bound to act on concerns which may mean contacting Social Care Direct or Police themselves. The disclosure must be reported within 24 hours. Keeping children safe is always our first priority. See Page 4 for contact numbers.**
- **Ask for support for yourself.**

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Recording Incidents and Dealing with Concerns of Abuse

Staff must be vigilant in recording any incidents relating to a child's behaviour, actions or comments which raise a cause for concern. Instances of abuse are often not disclosed directly by a child, so it is paramount that any concerning incidents are recorded as they may indicate that the child has suffered or is at risk of abuse.

Examples of incidents which raise concern are:

Example A. Child has attended past 2 Lyra sessions extremely tired and unkempt.

Example B. Child used sexualised language during a drama task working with a peer.

Example C. Child is having regular tantrums in sessions.

If an incident or series of incidents causes you to suspect that a child may be suffering or at risk of abuse, the following action should be taken:

- **Do not attempt to investigate the concern.**
- **If you have a concern, you must immediately report this to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact p4) who will contact the relevant authorities.**
- **As soon as possible after becoming aware of the concern, you should make notes about what has happened using the 'pro-forma for recording an incident' (Appendix 1).**
- **Pass on your written record to the Designated Child Protection Officer. Do not discuss the incident with anyone else.**
- **If the Designated Child Protection Officer is not available at the time at which the concern has been raised, contact a member of the senior management team. If no member of the senior team is available, employees are duty bound to act on concerns which may mean contacting Social Care Direct or Police themselves. Keeping children safe is always our first priority. See p4 for contact numbers.**
- **Ask for support for yourself.**



Dealing with Disclosures against a Staff Member

Good practise in both the recruitment and supervision of staff and volunteers is designed in such a way that the risk of abuse is reduced and staff can protect themselves from false allegations. However, the possibility of abuse cannot be eliminated and constant vigilance is necessary.

If a participant tells you that someone in the organisation has caused them harm, this should be treated in the same way as any other disclosure a child may make. The information should be reported immediately to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact on p4) and handled in the same manner.

Please note that in managing concerns/disclosures, it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. You must abide by these guidelines if you are concerned about the welfare of a participant.

If the Designated Child Protection Officer is not available or there is any complexity surrounding the disclosure, please contact a member of the Senior Management Team (**Jo Timmins, Artistic Director/CEO, 07809 229508**) or the Board Member responsible for Child Protection (**Kathryn Brack, 07553 087359**)

Disciplinary Action

Lyra takes its role in protecting the welfare of children very seriously. The company will consider it unacceptable and a cause for instant dismissal and referral to the Scottish Executive Disqualified from Working with Children List if any employee* or freelance staff member commits an act which is physically, emotionally or sexually abusive or disrespectful, or is neglectful of a child or puts their health and safety at risk.

*employee refers to the Scottish Executive guidelines on the Protection of Children Scotland Act 2003.

Storing of, and access to, confidential child protection data

Lyra abides by the various Data Protection Acts (including GDPR legislation). This act sets out provisions for the regulations of processing of information relating to individuals, including obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information. Children are entitled to the same duty of confidence as adults, provided they have the ability to understand the choices and their consequences relating to the proposed lines of action. Where consent had not been obtained, the law permits disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child where s/he is considered to be at risk.

All child protection information will be stored securely in a password protected folder on the server and will only be shared with authorised personnel and appropriate authorities. Lyra will store child protection disclosures and incident records for 100 years or for as long as the organisation is in operation.



Managing Disclosure Scotland Information

Lyra is committed to the development of best practice in relation to the recruitment of staff. In accordance with the Scottish Executive's Code of Practice for registered persons and other recipients of Disclosure information, Lyra will ensure the following practice:

- **Disclosure checks will be requested when necessary and would be relevant to a particular post and the information provided on a Disclosure certificate will only be used to assess an individual's appropriateness to this particular role.**
- **Lyra will ensure that an individual's consent is obtained before seeking and using Disclosure information.**
- **Disclosure information will only be shared with Lyra personnel who are authorised to see it in the course of their duties.**
- **Where additional disclosure information is provided to Lyra, this will only be discussed with the applicant should the Disclosure information have an impact on the outcome of the recruitment process.**
- **Once a clear Disclosure Check/Update has been received, the information is shredded and disposed of through confidential waste.**
- **No image or photocopy of the Disclosure information will be made. These details will be retained:**
 - **Name of subject**
 - **Date of Disclosure Check**
 - **Disclosure Check type**
 - **Position for which Disclosure Check was requested**
 - **Reference number of Disclosure Check**
 - **Recruitment decision taken**



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Statutory Referrals to Disclosure Scotland

Lyra is legally obliged to submit referrals on individuals to Disclosure Scotland if an individual in a regulated work role is responsible for: harming, or placing at risk of harm, a child or protected adult; inappropriate behaviour involving pornography or behaviour of a sexual nature involving a child or protected adult; giving inappropriate medical treatment to a child or protected adult.

For a referral to be made, the conduct does not need to have happened in the workplace but must be something the organisation becomes aware of that subsequently leads either to the dismissal of the staff member or equivalent. Full details are outlined in Lyra's full policy on Statutory Referrals to Disclosure Scotland.

Whistleblowing Policy

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity or any wrongdoing within their organisation. Raising a concern is known as "blowing the whistle" and is a vital process for identifying risks to people's safety. Sharing information or talking through a concern can be the first step to helping an organisation identify problems and improve their practices.

If you have any concerns about a child at Lyra you should follow Lyra's Child Protection procedures and contact the Designated Child Protection Officer to raise your concern. If the Designated Child Protection Officer is unavailable, or there is any complexity surrounding your concern, you should contact Jo Timmins, Artistic Director/CEO (07809 229508) and/or Kathryn Brack, Child Protection Lead of Lyra's Board (07553 087359).

There may be instances where you feel unable to report a Child Protection concern within Lyra's staff and Board structure. In this case, please contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk if you have any of the following concerns:

- your organisation doesn't have clear safeguarding procedures to follow
- you think your concern won't be dealt with properly or may be covered-up
- you've raised a concern but it hasn't been acted upon
- you're worried about being treated unfairly.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available from 8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 9am-6pm at the weekend and you can email help@NSPCC.org.uk at any time. It's free and you can choose to remain anonymous. **If you think the child is in immediate danger or risk of harm, please contact the Police immediately on 999.**



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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Lyra Pro-forma for recording an Incident

Names of child/children involved:	Name of staff member recording incident:
Brief outline of the concern:	
Outline of the actions taken at the time:	
Review on incident – recommendations or subsequent actions:	

Staff Member: _____ **Date:** _____

Senior Manager: _____ **Date:** _____

Reviewer: _____ **Date:** _____



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Appendix 2: Lyra Pro-forma for recording concerns/allegations of abuse

Name of child:		Date of Birth/Age:	
Address & Telephone Number:		Name of other siblings (if known):	
Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):		Additional Info (e.g. additional support needs, health conditions):	
Name of Reporting Adult:		Date/Time/Place Disclosure made/concerns identified:	
What is the nature of your concern? (e.g. Child disclosure, concerns identified etc.)			
If a child has alleged abuse, record as quickly as possible what was said. This should be as accurate as possible and in the child's own words.			
If another adult has expressed concern about the safety of a child, record their concerns and ask them to confirm that the details are correct.			
Have any possible signs or indicators of abuse been identified (Injury etc.)? By whom?			
If known, record the name(s) of the person(s) implicated in the abuse:		Record when the referral to social care direct, police or reporter was made and the name of the person who received your call, contact details and advice given:	
What advice was given about liaising with the child's parent(s)/carer(s)?			
Signature (member of staff)			
Print Name/Date			
Signature (Designated Child Protection Officer)			
Print Name/Date			



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Appendix 3: Media Code of Conduct

Communication via phone or email

- Company mobile phones are provided for staff to make contact with children. Staff will never use their personal device or landline to contact a child. All company mobile phones are to be PIN locked so that data is not accessible by others.
- Staff may at times be required to email children's personal email addresses. In such cases, staff should use clear language to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the recipient. Another staff member should always be copied into email correspondence for transparency. Staff members who have concerns regarding the content of an email that they send or receive from a child, should consult the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact on p4) for guidance.

Social Media

- Contact with children through social media forums should only take place through Lyra accounts.
- Lyra will not follow children's accounts and only invite Lyra participants to follow Lyra accounts.
- You must not add a child or accept a friend request from a child on any of your personal social media accounts. If a child has attempted to friend request you or sent you a message, ignore this and report this to the Designated Child Protection Officer (contact on p4) immediately.
- If a Lyra staff member receives content from a child through a Lyra account which they believe is inappropriate, they will not forward the content or delete it but immediately contact the Designated Child Protection Officer to report the content and the Designated Child Protection Officer will follow the safeguarding incident procedure of the company.
- If you have pre-existing social media contact with any participants or parents/carers, please discuss this immediately with the Designated Child Protection Officer.

Taking Photos and Recording Film

- All images of children must be taken or recorded using a company device only.
- Staff should not appear in any images taken on a young person's device, unless these are taken in an appropriate group context (e.g. a group photo on an excursion/during production periods)
- If you witness another staff member using a personal device to take or record images, please report this as soon as possible to the Designated Protection Officer (contact on p4).
- Image or video files must be stored on the shared drive.
- You must not download any images or videos of children to your personal computer or device.
- Freelance staff must request permission from Lyra before taking any photographs or video recordings of children. If it is agreed that this is necessary, a Lyra device will be provided and the files will be stored on the Lyra server.
- Freelancers who need remote access to creative content (including videos) will be given password protected links which enable them to watch videos online but not download.
- If freelance or core staff need to download files for photo or video editing, they must agree



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to delete these files once the edit has taken place and the edited film is uploaded to the server.

Sharing Content Online

- Lyra will always seek consent from the parent/carer and child before filming or photographing the child or sharing any media content online.
- No images of children in school uniform will be shared online.
- A child's surname will never be used in photo or video content.
- Only images of children in suitable clothing will be shared, to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Images and video will only be shared through Lyra accounts or via a freelancer's professional account. Freelancers must ask permission from Lyra staff before doing so.

Digital Platforms

- When communicating with children via digital platforms, staff will use official accounts and phones and ensure that the personal numbers of children and freelancers are not shared.
- Staff and freelancers employed by Lyra will be the only adults present in digital platform sessions.
- All parents/carers will be informed of the platforms to be used, the dates and times of sessions and the adults employed by Lyra who will be in these platforms.
- Staff will set clear rules of engagement for working on digital platforms. These rules will be in line with the rules of the company when working in person.
- Staff will also remind children that this is not a private space and whatever they share online will be seen by the group.
- Any child who breaks the above rules will be removed from the platform by staff and parents/carers will be informed.

Receiving a Disclosure or Concerning Message Remotely

We recognise that at times, children might disclose information to staff members via texts, calls or digitally. If a staff member receives a worrying message that indicates that the young person communicating with them may be at risk of harm during or outside of work hours, follow the procedures for reporting an incident or disclosure on page 10.

