



Child Protection Policy – Vulnerable children
Family Violence Intervention Policy

Purpose and Scope:

Waterford Birth Centre recognises that health care providers are well placed to engage in early identification, support and referral of victims of family violence. This policy provides Waterford Birth Centre with a framework to identify and manage actual and/or suspected child abuse and neglect.

Family violence is a term that encompasses all forms of violence or abuse of any type perpetrated by one family member against another family member. It includes child abuse and neglect, partner violence and elder abuse and neglect.

The children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989; Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and Ministry of Health's Family Violence Intervention Guidelines guide this policy.

This policy outlines the steps and actions by management and employees, and includes students and people working under contract for our service.

Waterford Birth Centre acknowledges that staff of Waterford Birth Centre may be affected by abuse in their own homes and families and encourage staff to access EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) services.

Waterford Birth Centre supports the role of statutory agencies (the Police and the Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children) in the investigation of suspected abuse and /or neglect, and shall report such cases to these agencies.

This policy acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in providing: protection for women and children. A consultative/holistic team approach shall embrace the principles of partnership, participation and protection.

Policy:

- All staff midwives will be encouraged to attend NZCOM Family Violence Education workshop as part of their professional development.
- **Known** cases of violence are not suitable to birth or stay postnatally at Waterford, due to security and WBC commitment to staff safety.
- Families with known Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children involvement will be eligible if there is no violence.
- Midwives will routinely assess all admitted women for partner abuse as soon as it is practicable and appropriate within 24 hours of the first point of woman contact and where there is ongoing contact then, usually no later than the third contact or visit.
- Staff will use a 6-step assessment and response plan. (appendix A)

- All actual and / or suspected family violence must be documented in the woman's clinical record. As women often hold their own notes it is often reasonable to document on a separate sheet of paper.
- Staff will report all Suspected, Disclosed cases of Child Abuse and / or Neglect, even when the child/tamariki may not be their primary client. Any person reporting suspected child abuse in good faith is protected from any criminal or civil proceedings. (Section 16 Children, Young Persons and the Families Act 1989).
- Waterford Birth Centre staff will work in collaboration with appropriate agencies to best meet the needs of women and children who are victims of violence.
- Because of the high risk of co-occurrence of partner abuse and child abuse, WBC staff will work with agencies involved to accommodate private interview/assessment areas.
- Management will undertake and complete Worker Safety Checks as required by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and repeat these within 3 years of the previous one.

Confidentiality

Waterford Birth Centre staff will only involve other agencies or divulge information with the expressed consent of the person concerned unless it is demonstrated to be necessary to protect the welfare of the victims of family violence, or that of children.

Definitions:

Family violence: is violence or abuse of any type, perpetrated by one family member against another family member. It includes child abuse, partner abuse and elder abuse.

Partner abuse: (also called intimate partner violence) is physical or sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, or threat of physical or sexual violence that occurs between intimate partners.

• Intimate partners include: current spouses (including de facto spouses), current non-marital partners (including dating partners, heterosexual or same-sex), former marital partners and former non-marital partners.

Child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.

Witnessing abuse

- Staff who witness abuse must call the police.
- Staff will then report the event as soon as possible to the Clinical Manager, Managers and complete an incident form.
- The witnessed abuse might involve woman, child, staff or visitor to WBC.
- Where staff have reported, a concern regarding abuse, debriefing and/or Employment Assistance Programme (EAP) is offered.

Success indicators

- All staff will be encouraged to attend Family violence workshop for Midwives.
- Documentation shows that routine identification, assessment and management and referral where appropriate has been carried out shall be evident in clinical notes.
- Staff are Safety Checked as per Vulnerable Children Act 2014 and within every 3 years of employment.
- Staff are aware of how to access EAP services.