

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns and Procedures

2026

Purpose

This document provides guidance on how safeguarding concerns should be identified, reported and managed to help protect children and young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation, self-harm and other forms of harm. It supports the organisation's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors and others acting on behalf of the organisation.

Guiding Principles

When responding to safeguarding concerns:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.
 - Concerns should always be taken seriously.
 - Action should be taken promptly.
 - Children and young people should be listened to and treated with respect.
 - Concerns should be recorded accurately and shared appropriately.
 - Safeguarding responsibilities apply to all staff and volunteers.
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Responding to Specific Safeguarding Concerns

Self-Harm

Self-harm may indicate emotional distress, mental health difficulties, or an increased risk of harm.

Where there are concerns that a child or young person may be self-harming:

- Ensure any immediate medical needs are addressed.
- Consider whether emergency intervention is required.
- Seek safeguarding advice and support.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where ongoing risk or significant harm is identified.
- Record all concerns, discussions and actions taken.

Radicalisation and Extremism

Radicalisation is a safeguarding issue and should be managed in the same way as other concerns relating to a child's welfare.

Where concerns arise that a child or young person may be vulnerable to, or at risk of, radicalisation:

- Treat the matter as a safeguarding concern.
- Seek advice from safeguarding professionals.
- Follow local safeguarding and Prevent pathways where appropriate.
- Record actions and outcomes.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal and is recognised as a form of child abuse.

Where concerns arise that a child or young person has been subjected to, or is at risk of, FGM:

- Consider whether immediate protection is required.
- Follow safeguarding procedures promptly.
- Seek specialist advice where appropriate.
- Report concerns to statutory agencies in line with legal requirements.
- Maintain clear and accurate records.

Domestic Abuse

Children exposed to domestic abuse may experience significant emotional, psychological and physical harm.

Where concerns arise regarding domestic abuse:

- Consider the impact on all children within the household.
- Assess potential risks to the child.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Seek appropriate advice and support.
- Make referrals to statutory services where necessary.

Immediate Safeguarding Concerns

When Emergency Action Is Required

If a child or young person appears to be at immediate risk of harm:

1. Take action to ensure the immediate safety of the child.
 2. Seek emergency medical assistance if required.
 3. Contact emergency services where necessary.
 4. Inform a designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding professional without delay.
 5. Contact children's social care or other appropriate statutory agencies.
 6. Record all actions, decisions and communications.
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If Contact Is Lost With a Child or Family

Where there are concerns because a child or family cannot be contacted, or there is persistent non-engagement:

- Attempt appropriate contact.
 - Liaise with other professionals who may be involved.
 - Share concerns through appropriate safeguarding channels.
 - Consider whether children's social care should be informed.
 - Record concerns and actions taken.
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Managing Safeguarding Concerns

When Emergency Action Is Not Required

If a concern does not require immediate emergency intervention:

- Discuss the concern with a designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding professional.
- Consider whether additional information or advice is required.
- Discuss concerns with the child and/or family where appropriate and safe to do so.
- Obtain consent for referrals where possible.
- If a child is believed to be at risk of significant harm, a referral should be made regardless of whether consent has been obtained.

- Record discussions, decisions and actions clearly.
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Making a Safeguarding Referral

A referral should be made when concerns indicate that a child:

- Has suffered harm;
- Is suffering harm; or
- Is at risk of significant harm.

Referrals should:

- Be made promptly.
- Contain clear, factual information.
- Include relevant observations, disclosures and concerns.
- Be followed up where required.

All safeguarding referrals should be recorded.

Following a Referral

Following a referral, the organisation should:

- Seek confirmation that the referral has been received.
 - Cooperate fully with statutory agencies.
 - Attend safeguarding meetings where requested.
 - Contribute relevant information to assessments and plans.
 - Continue providing appropriate support to children and families.
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Professional Challenge

Staff and volunteers should feel confident in raising concerns where they believe risks to a child have not been appropriately assessed or addressed.

Professional challenge may be appropriate where:

- There is disagreement about risk.

- Concerns are not being addressed.
- Decisions appear unsafe.
- Safeguarding actions are delayed or insufficient.

Constructive challenge should always focus on promoting the safety and welfare of the child.

Families Who Decline Services

Where families decline support, disengage from services, or fail to follow agreed plans:

- Consider the impact on the child's welfare.
 - Review any safeguarding risks.
 - Seek advice from safeguarding professionals.
 - Consider referral to children's social care if concerns escalate.
 - Document decisions and rationale clearly.
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Receiving a Disclosure From a Child

If a child or young person discloses abuse, neglect or harm:

Do

- Listen carefully.
- Remain calm.
- Allow the child to speak freely.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing.
- Explain that information may need to be shared to keep them safe.
- Record what the child says as accurately as possible.

Do Not

- Ask leading questions.
- Investigate the concern yourself.
- Make promises of confidentiality.
- Express shock or disbelief.

The concern must be reported immediately through safeguarding procedures.

Concerns Raised by Parents or Carers

Concerns raised by parents or carers regarding the welfare of a child should always be taken seriously.

Where safeguarding concerns are identified:

- Safeguarding procedures take precedence.
 - The child's safety and welfare remain the primary consideration.
 - Appropriate referrals and actions should be taken where required.
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Child-on-Child Abuse

The organisation recognises that children and young people can harm other children and young people.

Where child-on-child abuse is alleged or witnessed:

- Ensure all children involved are safe.
 - Consider the support needs of the alleged victim.
 - Consider whether the alleged perpetrator may also require safeguarding support.
 - Follow safeguarding procedures.
 - Make referrals to statutory agencies where appropriate.
 - Record all concerns and actions taken.
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Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers or Others Acting on Behalf of the Organisation

All allegations involving adults working with children must be treated seriously.

Where an allegation is made:

- Immediate action should be taken to safeguard children.
- The concern should be reported through safeguarding management processes.
- Relevant safeguarding authorities should be informed where required.

- Investigations should be conducted in accordance with statutory guidance and organisational procedures.
 - Appropriate support should be provided to all parties involved.
 - Confidentiality should be maintained wherever possible.
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Record Keeping

Accurate record keeping is a critical part of safeguarding practice.

Records should:

- Be factual, clear and objective.
- Distinguish between fact, observation and professional opinion.
- Include relevant dates, times and individuals involved.
- Clearly record decisions and actions taken.
- Include any safeguarding referrals made.
- Be stored securely and managed in accordance with data protection requirements.

Recording Concerns

Examples of information that may need to be recorded include:

- Physical injuries or marks observed.
 - Changes in behaviour.
 - Disclosures made by a child.
 - Concerns regarding neglect.
 - Interactions between children and adults that cause concern.
 - Discussions with safeguarding professionals or partner agencies.
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Attendance at Safeguarding Meetings

Where requested, the organisation will contribute to safeguarding processes by attending and supporting:

- Strategy discussions.

- Child protection conferences.
- Core groups.
- Child in Need meetings.
- Family support meetings.
- Other statutory safeguarding meetings.

Representatives should provide relevant information and contribute to safeguarding planning and decision-making.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Personal information should be treated confidentially and managed in accordance with legal and professional requirements.

However, confidentiality must not prevent information being shared where:

- A child is at risk of harm.
- There is a legal requirement to disclose information.
- Sharing is necessary to safeguard a child or young person.

Information sharing should always be proportionate, relevant and appropriately recorded.

Concerns About Children Not Receiving Services

Safeguarding responsibilities extend to any child or young person encountered through organisational activities.

If concerns arise about a child who is not directly receiving services:

- Advice should be sought from safeguarding professionals.
 - Appropriate safeguarding action should be taken.
 - Referrals should be made where necessary.
 - Concerns and actions should be recorded.
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Safeguarding Supervision

The organisation is committed to providing safeguarding supervision for staff whose roles involve working with children, young people and families.

Safeguarding supervision helps practitioners:

- Reflect on complex situations.
 - Explore risk and protective factors.
 - Improve decision-making.
 - Develop professional confidence.
 - Manage the emotional impact of safeguarding work.
 - Promote safe and effective practice.
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Principles of Safeguarding Supervision

Safeguarding supervision should:

- Be child-centred.
 - Support reflection and professional curiosity.
 - Provide a safe environment for discussion.
 - Encourage learning and development.
 - Promote constructive challenge.
 - Focus on improving outcomes for children and young people.
 - Consider both risk and resilience factors.
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Further Information

The organisation maintains designated safeguarding leads, safeguarding reporting arrangements and supporting procedures to ensure concerns are managed appropriately and consistently.

All staff, volunteers and others acting on behalf of the organisation are expected to familiarise themselves with this guidance and act promptly whenever a safeguarding concern arises.