



In Focus Safeguarding Children Procedures

Purpose

This document provides clear instructions about the action you should take if you are concerned about a child's wellbeing.

All practitioners working for In Focus have the responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect whether paid, a volunteer or trustee.

This document also provides a summary of useful information about responding to concerns.

In England you are legally defined as a child until you are 18, and if you are leaving care you are entitled to support until you are at least 21 (24 if you are in higher education).

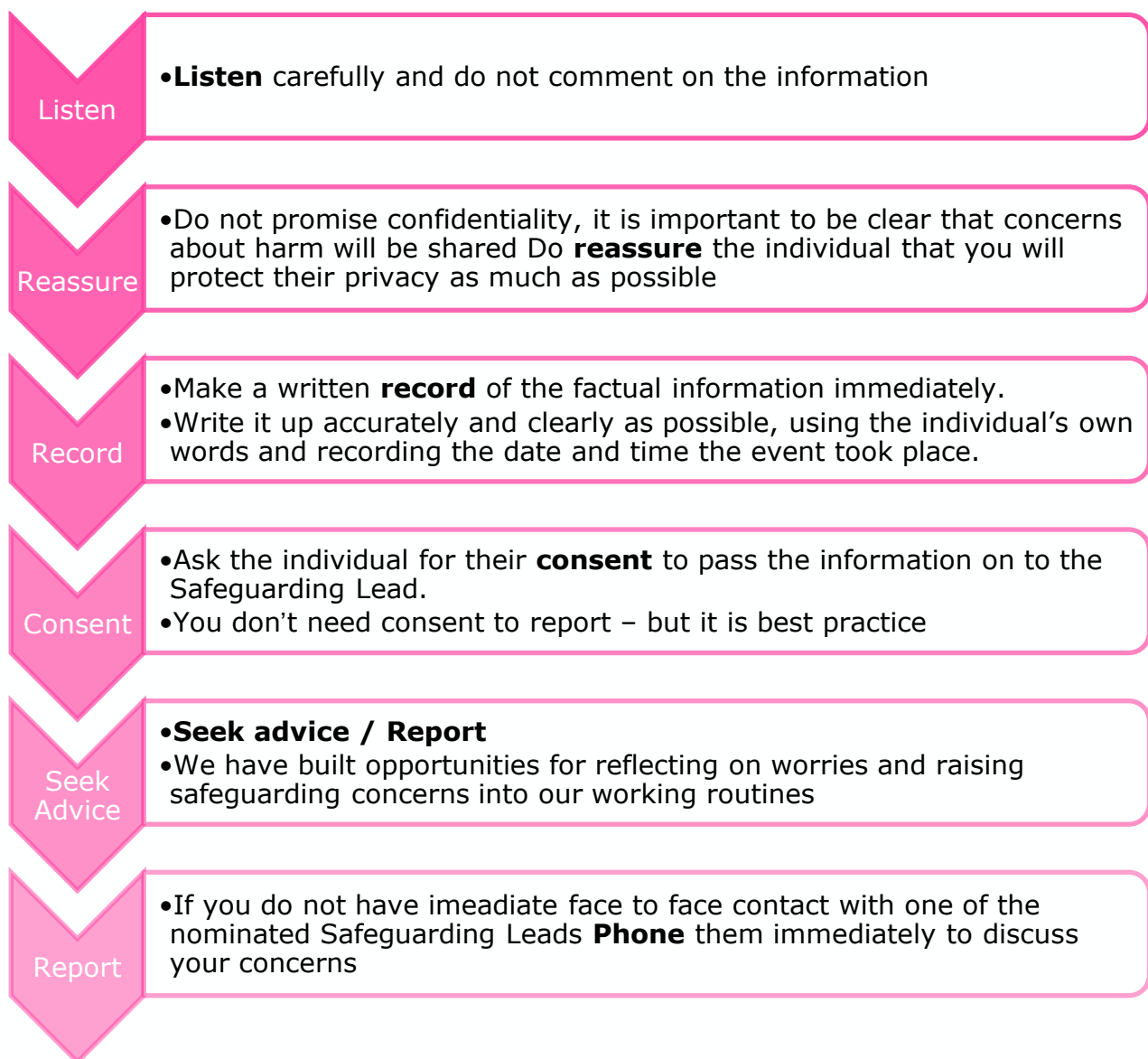
Please note the importance of a transitional safeguarding approach which is holistic in nature and remain equally aware of our safeguarding procedures relating to both adults and children.

If you are concerned that someone is being harmed or is very unsafe right now you should dial 999



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You may need to raise a concern because you have observed something or because of a disclosure made to you.



Faye Phillips 07581 099297	Kristianne Drake 07356266869
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If you cannot reach the Safeguarding Lead or if you are not sure if it is a child protection concern you can call the NSPCC on **0808 800 5000** (available 24 hours / 7 days a week) or your local safeguarding boards using the links in the guidance below.

If the nominated safeguarding lead asks for a copy of the written notes you have recorded and email the record as soon as possible and **always within 24 hours**. As far as possible maintain the confidentiality of the individual(s) involved e.g. use initials instead of names and try to avoid identifying factors such as location unless absolutely necessary. When you have confirmation that the report has been received, delete the record from your email sent and deleted items. The Safeguarding Lead will store it securely.

For all other safeguarding concerns or worries please talk to your
Nominated Safeguarding Leads

- As far as possible maintain the confidentiality of the individual(s) involved e.g., use initials instead of names and try to avoid identifying factors such as location unless absolutely necessary. When you have confirmation that the report has been received, delete the record from your email sent **and** deleted items. The Safeguarding Lead will store it securely in Breathe.
- We have built opportunities for reflecting on worries and raising safeguarding concerns into our working routines as standing items in our management, team and Trustee Board meetings. If you do not have immediate face to face contact with one of the nominated Safeguarding Leads phone them immediately to discuss your concerns. If you cannot reach the Safeguarding Lead or if you are not sure if it is a child protection concern you can call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 (available 24 hours / 7 days a week) or your local safeguarding board [Welcome | Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton \(hipsprocedures.org.uk\)](https://www.hipsprocedures.org.uk)

What is Abuse?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. It can happen over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect.



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Child abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional or sexual. It can also take place in a variety of settings (both online and offline), for example, in the family environment or the local community. It includes child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. For the first time, children and young people are deemed to be victims of domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, where they see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse. The [NSPCC](#) provides more information about the types of abuse that children face.

Recognising Signs and Indicators

You are in a unique position to be able to observe signs of abuse, neglect, or changes in behaviour which may indicate a person may be being abused, neglected or exploited. You should make sure that you are alert to the potential signs of abuse and neglect. You may also be in a situation where someone tells you (makes a disclosure) and it is important that you listen carefully and are curious about behaviour and don't necessarily take what you are told at face value.

The [NSPCC](#) say that some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour – but your Safeguarding Lead will help you to assess the situation.

Responding



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You should make sure you know where to turn to if you need to ask for help. It is not your responsibility to investigate child abuse, but you should talk to your nominated Safeguarding Lead and be confident that they will refer to social care or to the police if necessary.

If you see it – say it. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is an integral part of everyday practice. We want to promote this sense of shared ownership and have built opportunities for reflecting on worries and raising safeguarding concerns into our working routines – they are discussed explicitly as a standing item in supervision and support conversations – in alternate management and general team meetings, in 1:1s with line manager and in the wash up / debrief process at the end of each session delivered.

Information Sharing_–

Confidentiality and information sharing - In Focus Education & Development expects all staff, volunteers, trustees to maintain confidentiality at all times. In line with Data Protection law, In Focus Education & Development does not share information if not required.

You should not let other considerations, like the fear of damaging working relationships, get in the way of protecting from abuse and neglect. Honesty is one of the most important foundations of any working relationship therefore clearly build in from the start of any 1 :1 or group work that concerns about harm will be shared. Equally, if referral to social care is necessary, be clear that this is the beginning of a process of inquiry, not an accusation. Further advice is available [here](#).

Do keep colleagues up to date with any new information and never assume it has been shared by another worker, friend or family member.

Do remain open to changing your views about the likelihood of significant harm.

Handling Disclosures

- **Remain calm and in control** – don't panic.
- **Find a safe space** – take the individual to one side so they cannot be overheard but so that you are both visible to other staff or adult practitioners.
- **Listen carefully to what is being said** – you need to remember as much as you can.



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- **Don't give your own view or opinions** – actively listen but do not comment even if what they are saying is shocking or difficult to hear, try not to show this.
- **Only ask questions if you don't understand what is being said** – perhaps they said something very quietly, perhaps you didn't understand a word they used.
- **Don't promise to keep a secret** – often an individual begins by saying "please don't tell anyone". You cannot keep this secret. You do not need consent to share the information, but it is best practice. Reassure them that concerns will only be shared to support their safety.
- **Reassure them that they have done the right thing** – you could say something like "you did the right thing to tell me this."
- **Make notes straight after your meeting with the child or young person** - use their words. Write it up accurately and clearly as possible recording the date and time.
- **Report it** - as soon as possible (always within 24 hours) to the Nominated Safeguarding Lead. It is not your job to notify the police or social care unless it is urgent and the Safeguarding Lead cannot be contacted.
- **Request support** – safeguarding disclosures are difficult.

Support your own wellbeing:

Informing your line manager that you have been involved in a disclosure and discussing any support you might benefit from	Letting family / friends know that you need to talk about your own emotions and asking for support in processing these	If you continue to be affected or the situation is ongoing you can ask your GP to be referred to a counsellor	Considering contacting a relevant charity / voluntary organisation that can provide counselling / guidance
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Local Safeguarding Partnership Procedures

If the Safeguarding Lead feels that it is appropriate to make a safeguarding referral they will refer to the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (HIPS) [safeguarding children procedures manual](#) which provides information on thresholds and making a referral to children's social care and early help.



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Concerns about a professional - If you have concerns about someone who works with a child contact the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) via the MASH/CRS numbers given on the home page of the procedures above.

Our beliefs about the importance of child protection

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children regardless of race, gender, religious belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from harm.
- some children are more vulnerable to harm as a result of their circumstances, prior experiences, communication needs or level of dependency.
- working with children, young people, their parents and/or guardians, carers or other agencies is essential to protecting their wellbeing.

Legislative Context

The Children Act 1989 provides the legislative framework for child protection in England and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) is the key statutory guidance for anyone working with children. We will ensure that we are clear as an organisation and as individuals within it, about our role to keep children safe, to share information and identify concerns in accordance with the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (HIPS) safeguarding children procedures manual <https://hipsprocedures.org.uk>

Further Reading

After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition Safeguarding [After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition - Safeguarding guidance for providers](#)

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused is [DfE advice](#) for anyone who comes into contact with children and families while working. It describes the signs of abuse and neglect and the action to take if a child appears to be, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected.

[Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)

See also

- In Focus Safeguarding Policy
- In Focus – Safeguarding Overview presentation for Trustees
- In Focus Safeguarding Action Plan 2026 – ongoing developmental activities for In Focus
- In Focus Safer Recruitment Policy



- In Focus Whistleblowing & Anti Bullying Policy

Contact details

In Focus Education & Development is a registered charity 1207105

In Focus Education & Development is based at:

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Deputy child protection lead

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Trustee lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Lorna Digweed

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We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on:

Date: 15/07/2026

With thanks to

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/voluntary-community-groups>