

Safeguarding referral procedure (Appendix 4)

All those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. Anyone working with children and families should:

- Be familiar with and follow policy and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and adults at risk.
- Know who to contact to express concerns about a child's or adult's welfare
- Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation and therefore practitioners should not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse
- Attend training that raises awareness of safeguarding issues and equips them with the skills and knowledge needed. If anyone has a concern about any child's or vulnerable adult's welfare they should follow these procedures:

NB: If you have immediate concerns that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of significant harm contact Children's Services or Adult Services or the Police. If you think a criminal offence has been committed contact the police and inform the designated Safeguarding Officer.

NSPCC can be contacted for advice on: 0808 800 5000

Scenario 1 - if you are approached by a child, young person or adult at risk, with a disclosure that s/he is being, or has been harmed or abused, or you are informed of such a disclosure by a staff member, or member of the public,

Do:

- Stay calm.
- Provide a listening ear and an open mind.
- Be reassuring, particularly that the individual is doing the right thing by telling you.
- Record the information you are provided with and report as quickly as possible to your line manager or Safeguarding Officer who will decide what further action will need to be taken.

This information is likely to be passed to the Safeguarding Officer and/or an external agency and should include a record of the time, date and persons present. Line manager to liaise with local Children's or Adult Social Care Services for the appropriate area. If line manager is not available contact the Safeguarding Officer or Children's or Adult Services for the appropriate area.

Don't:

- Promise to keep the information secret. Make it clear that you have a duty to refer the matter on.
- Stop the individual who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make the individual tell anyone else. S/he may have to be formally interviewed later and it is important to minimise the number of times information is repeated.
- Make any suggestions to the individual about how the incident may have happened.

- Question the individual, except to clarify what they are saying.
- Discuss the information with anyone other than your line manager, a Safeguarding Officer or an appropriate external agency.

Scenario 2 - if you are concerned that a child, young person or adult at risk is, or may be subject to, abuse or harm:

- Make a written, dated note of observations.
- Inform your line manager or Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
- Your line manager or Safeguarding Officer will assess the concerns to determine whether an external referral to Children's Services, Adult Services or the police needs to take place.
- Where a referral is to be made externally, the appointed officer will report the matter to the appropriate Children's Services or Adult Services, and/or to the police. The external agency will conduct their own investigation with regard to their policies and guidelines. Anonymity may not be maintained on reporting.

Scenario 3 - if you are concerned that the behaviour of a member of staff or other person is threatening, or potentially threatening, the well-being of a child, young person or adult at risk, then you should take the following steps;

If you are concerned that a member of staff is harming or abusing a child or adult at risk, you must report your concerns immediately to the RSPCA Safeguarding Officer or their Line Manager. Where it is appropriate to do so, relevant Human Resources policies may be initiated and/or a referral made to an external agency. Managers considering taking action against a member of staff should refer to the Home's HR provider Acton Jennings.

Acton Jennings will, where there is clear actual or circumstantial evidence to support the allegation, make an immediate child or adult protection referral; and will liaise with the Local Authority 'Designated Officer' (DO).

If you suspect any other person is harming or abusing a child or adult at risk, you should contact your line manager or Safeguarding Officer. However, you can contact Children's Services, Adult Services or the police.

In all situations, you may be asked to provide an outline of your concerns in writing. If the matter is referred to Children's Service, Adult Services or the police, you may be asked to provide a formal statement of your concerns for subsequent external investigations.

If you have urgent concerns about the safety of a child or adult at risk and are unable to contact your line manager or Safeguarding Officer, do not hesitate to contact Children's Services, Adult Services

or the police. These external agencies will be in a position to determine an appropriate course of action.

The police or social services may inform the person against whom an allegation has been made of the allegation. The individual may be suspended from duty while the allegation is being investigated. An individual against whom an allegation has been made may be advised to only discuss the substance of the allegation with his/her union or legal representative, immediate family or as directed by the investigating officer, on the basis that these parties agree to keep the matter confidential. This should maintain the integrity of the investigation.

Following a thorough investigation, disciplinary action may be taken as appropriate in line with the Home's Disciplinary Policy and Procedural Guidelines.