



Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Special consideration is given to circumstances which involve children or young people under-18 or vulnerable adults (up to age 25). If a young person is disclosing to us about the criminal behaviour of others towards them, we must be careful how we handle this information in case there are criminal proceedings in the future. Allsorts Youth Project will give Child Protection and the protection of vulnerable adults a high priority and recognises that the needs and welfare of the young person is paramount. The following guidelines are based on those recommended by LSCB in www.proceduresonline.com/pansussex/scb

Responsibilities regarding safeguarding children and young people:

1. All staff and volunteers are responsible for reading the Allsorts Safeguarding Policy guidelines.
2. All staff and volunteers will undertake safeguarding children and young people training as part of their induction.
3. The Director (or named staff) will oversee the training programme for safeguarding children and young people. These will be updated every two years.
4. The Director will be responsible for applying for enhanced DBS checks for each new member of staff (paid and volunteer) and keeping and maintaining records.
5. Each new member of staff or volunteer will be responsible for bringing in appropriate paperwork, e.g. birth certificate, passport, in order for a DBS check to be completed.
6. No volunteer should be alone in a room with a young person who is under-18.

Abuse Guidelines

Four categories of recognition:

A) Physical Abuse:

- Physical Signs- Injuries to any part of the body, the regular occurrence of unexplained injuries, confused or conflicting explanations of how the injuries were sustained.
- Behavioural Signs- Furtive, secretive behaviour, uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour, compulsive eating or sudden loss of appetite, sudden loss of co-ordination.

B) Emotional Abuse:

- The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional damage is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though emotional abuse may occur alone.
- Signs of Emotional Abuse- Emotional indicators such as low self esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress and anxiety, Behavioural indicators such as attention seeking, withdrawn or insecure.

C) Sexual Abuse: There may be no recognisable signs of sexual abuse but the following indicators may be signs that a child is or has been sexually abused:



- Physical Signs- Awkwardness in walking or sitting down, tiredness, stomach pains, regression, aggression
- Behavioural Signs- Extreme variations in behaviour (e.g. anxiety, withdrawal or aggression), sexually provocative behaviour that is incompatible with the child's age and understanding, drawings which are sexually explicit (this can be indirect disclosure).

D) Neglect:

- Physical Signs- Abnormal growth including failure to thrive, underweight or obesity, ill or ill looking, unkempt dirty appearance, smelly, hunger, listlessness.
- Behavioural Signs- Attachment disorders, indiscriminate friendliness, poor social relationships, poor concentration, and low self esteem.

Although evidence of neglect is frequently accumulative it can be identified by the conditions a child/young person lives in and may require assistance from other agencies.

For a more comprehensive version of this, please consult *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, the latest version of which is held in the office.

Dealing with disclosures – volunteers and staff

Key actions for volunteers:

1. Avoid loaded questions, rather reflect back to the young person how they seem to be i.e. you're looking a bit sad today, is everything ok?
2. Ask if young person would like to talk to a member of paid staff in a private setting and notify a member of staff about the request. Even if the young person does not request a meeting and you have concerns, you must raise this without delay, with a member of staff.
3. If a young person discloses abuse, it is important that you make clear that what they are telling you cannot be kept in confidence because of its seriousness.
4. Allow the YP to speak freely without interrupting, acknowledge what they have told you (i.e. 'that sounds really scary') and allow them to add anything else that they want to say. Record the information in full as factually as you can as soon as you are able.
5. Listen to what the child or young person is saying without asking any questions (questions could be later interpreted as 'leading questions'); do not make statements about what has been said or fill in any gaps or make suggestions to the child; do not pressurise the child to say more than they want to.
6. Advise them that you will have to share this information with a member of staff and immediately try to contact one, if the young person is agreeable. If they are not agreeable to this, you must still confirm that the information will be shared and action may be taken.
7. It may be that the young person feels more comfortable, confident or safe making the disclosure with you present. If you wish, you may offer your support to the young person and attend the meeting with a member of staff with them.
8. If you are disturbed by what has occurred, don't hesitate to request your staff supervisor for support and a meeting to discuss this.

Key actions for paid staff

1. Offer immediate support to the child or young person; be open and reassuring.



2. Explain carefully to the child or young person that what they are disclosing falls into an exceptional circumstance category (this can be done very informally, for example, we can say 'there are rules on me here...', remind them of their induction and the leaflet we gave them mentioning our confidentiality policy) and explain that it may be necessary to breach confidentiality.
3. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to inform the child or young person that we may have to take direct action *without* their consent if they do not choose to take appropriate action for themselves.
4. Listen to what the child or young person is saying without asking any questions (questions could be later interpreted as 'leading questions'); do not make statements about what has been said or fill in any gaps or make suggestions to the child; do not pressurise the child to say more than they want to.
5. Make a record immediately of: what was said by whom, when it was said, where it was said and who was present. Sign and date the notes.
6. No attempt to interpret what was said should be made in the notes and they should represent a factual record only.
7. You may type the notes if that is normal procedure but keep the originals. Do not alter these notes afterwards or amend them in any way. Keep a copy of your notes for yourself and give one to the Project Director.
8. Record all subsequent events after the initial contact/disclosure.
9. Explain to the child or young person what will happen next.
10. **Seek immediate guidance from the Team Leader and/or Project Director**
11. In exceptional circumstances, if you are unable to contact the Team Leader or Project Director or the Chair, and you have immediate and serious concerns for the safety of a child or young person, you must yourself contact the appropriate authority (police or Children's Social Care Team) without delay, keeping a record of all steps taken.

What happens next:

- The Project Director will advise you. She will contact the person on the board of trustees responsible for safeguarding children and young adults and if necessary will seek advice from Social Care or the police or make a direct referral to a statutory authority.
- Any referrals made to social care services or other statutory authorities will be followed up in writing.
- You and the child or young person will be kept fully informed and consulted at all stages of the process and where possible, the consent and co-operation of the child or young person will be sought.

Criminal proceedings

Occasionally, the outcome of a disclosure may lead to criminal proceedings. Children and young people need to be informed about the kind of steps that might be taken by Social Care, the police and the courts as a consequence of their disclosure.



Flow Chart

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES FOR ALLSORTS YOUTH PROJECT

1. REASONABLE SUSPICION

Concerns build up over a period of time as a result of listening to child/young person, discussion with other professionals and observation.

ACTION

Record carefully, distinguishing between fact and opinion. Be aware of siblings/other young people in the situation. Keep Line Manager informed, and seek supervision.

2. DISCLOSURE

A young person informs you that they or a young person/child they know is being abused. Disclosure is usually verbal, but can be in writing.

ACTION

- Explain to young person that you are concerned for their welfare, and want to listen to what they have to say
- Do not question the young person about particular incidents, but make sure you clarify who the alleged victims of abuse are
- Do not lead the conversation or attempt to assist the young person to express themselves
- Make sure the young person understands that you cannot keep this information confidential, and that you will inform your line manager, who may report it to Social and Caring Services/Police. If the disclosure is in writing inform the young person that you will report the contents
- Avoid making lengthy notes when talking to the young person, but record the disclosure in full at the earliest opportunity.

3. REPORT

WHEN CONTACTING YOUR LINE MANAGER/ON CALL DIRECTOR, BE CLEAR WHAT THE IMMEDIATE RISKS TO THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON ARE

OFFICE HOURS

Contact the Director (Name) or trustee responsible for child protection (Name), or other senior member of staff.

OUT OF OFFICE HOURS

Contact: **Name and Telephone Number**



e.g.
**IS THE ABUSE HISTORICAL,
CURRENT OR BOTH?**

4. LINE MANAGER TO REPORT
IS THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSONS WELFARE AT IMMEDIATE RISK?

5.1 YES
Contact the Child Protection Team at relevant Social Care Services locality office immediately.
OUT OF HOURS SOCIAL CARE CONTACT

- Inform the Social Worker that a written report outlining the concerns is being prepared, and when this will be available.**

5.2 NO
Contact the Child Protection Team at the relevant Social Care Services locality office at the earliest opportunity.

If a member of staff is accused of abuse

6. SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION
Agree a time to meet with your Line Manager as soon as possible. If your Line Manager is unavailable, arrange to meet with the Director responsible for Child Protection.

Allsorts Youth Project will take steps to ensure that workers are not vulnerable to false allegation. These will include:

- A worker will never work with a child or young person unless another member of staff is in the building**



- Staff will not initiate hugs with clients
- If a child or young person has a reported history of making allegations against carers or staff boundaries will be tightly held and client work closely monitored through supervision

If an allegation of harm or gross misconduct is made, the worker involved will be suspended on full pay with immediate effect, while an investigation is undertaken.

A referral report will be sent to the relevant Social Care Area and Assessment Duty Team within 24 hours. Information will be shared on a need to know basis only. The worker will be notified of the charges against him/her in writing, and be invited to a meeting with the Project Director (or most senior worker available) within two working days of the allegation being made. The worker may bring a friend, colleague, union, legal rep or other person to this meeting for support.

The worker will be informed of any external agency attendance (e.g. social services). The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed of the allegation.

There may be a need to follow up this meeting with further meetings. These may involve the worker, the parent/carer/young person or other staff or agencies that are involved (e.g. those present at the time of the alleged offence).

Following the investigation, should it be decided that no abuse occurred, this will be communicated in writing within one working day to the worker and the parent/carer/ young person, and the worker returned to work with immediate effect. A copy of all correspondence will remain in the worker's file, and a copy of the original report and investigation outcome letter will be kept on the young person's file.