SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

A general reporting and escalation process for children, young people, families, staff, volunteers and members of the public.

1

IS SOMEONE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER?

YES: Call 999 (police or ambulance). Take reasonable steps to keep the person safe. Inform the relevant safeguarding lead when safe to do so.

2

RAISE THE CONCERN PROMPTLY

Report to the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), deputy or appropriate safeguarding contact. Describe what happened, who was involved, when and where, and any immediate risks.

3

RECORD AND ASSESS

Listen calmly and take the concern seriously. Record facts and the person's own words where possible. Do not promise secrecy, conduct your own investigation or repeatedly question the person. The safeguarding lead assesses risk and takes protective action.

4

REFER OR ESCALATE WHEN NEEDED

For suspected significant harm to a child, contact local authority children's social care. For an allegation about an adult working with children, seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Contact police where a crime or urgent risk is suspected. Do not delay an external referral for internal review.

5

FOLLOW UP SAFELY

Document actions, decisions, referrals and follow-up securely. Share information on a need-to-know basis. Provide an appropriate update to the person reporting, subject to confidentiality.

If the concern involves the safeguarding lead, or has not been addressed: report to another senior safeguarding contact or directly to the relevant statutory service.

COMPLAINTS & ESCALATION ROUTE

What to do if you are unhappy with how a safeguarding concern has been handled.

A

SUBMIT A SAFEGUARDING COMPLAINT

Use the organisation's published complaints or safeguarding contact route. State the concern, what response you received, why you remain worried and what action you are seeking. Do not include unnecessary sensitive details in an unsecured message.

B

REQUEST AN IMPARTIAL REVIEW

A senior person who is not implicated should acknowledge and review the complaint, assess any continuing risk, record the outcome and explain the next steps. An internal review must not delay a safeguarding referral.

C

ESCALATE EXTERNALLY IF NECESSARY

Contact local authority children's social care or police directly if a child remains at risk. For allegations about adults working with children, contact the local authority LADO. Staff and volunteers can also use appropriate external whistleblowing routes.

IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

- Listen to and support the person raising a concern; avoid making promises about outcomes.
- Keep factual, dated records and store them securely.
- Share information only when necessary to protect someone or meet legal duties.
- Anyone may contact statutory safeguarding services directly; organisational permission is not required.

USEFUL CONTACTS (ENGLAND)

Emergency: **999** Police non-emergency: **101**
NSPCC safeguarding advice: **0808 800 5000**
NSPCC whistleblowing advice: **0800 028 0285**

Status: APPROVED | General information sheet
This information sheet is general guidance and does not replace an organisation's safeguarding policy, local procedures or statutory referral requirements.