



The
Wildlife
Trusts

Safeguarding Procedure:

- Adults at Risk
- Children and Young People

Shropshire Wildlife Trust



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Authored by:	Designated Safeguarding Leads This procedure should be read in conjunction with the following associated documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SWT Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy• SWT Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy• SWT GDPR Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a clear process for staff and volunteers (including trustees) working on behalf of Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) to follow when they have concerns regarding the abuse or neglect of a child, young person or adult at risk.

SWT is committed to the highest standards of charity governance for safeguarding; this procedure and associated guidance are the foundation of a universal approach that puts safeguarding at the heart of SWT's engagement with children and adults at risk.

SWT endeavours to embed a positive and inclusive culture towards safeguarding where vigilance and awareness of the issues surrounding the protection and safety of children, young people and adults at risk are paramount and concerns can be raised in good faith without fear of reprisal.

This procedure will be reviewed bi-annually, and following any serious incident, and in due regard to emerging legislation / evolving best practice.

The safeguarding team will be active members of The Wildlife Trust's Safeguarding Community of Practice to share expertise and support the development of excellence within the movement.

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1.0 How we will protect children, young people and adults at risk through recruitment, selection, and induction

All job vacancies and volunteer roles are advertised with a reference to the Trust's safeguarding commitment.

We will ensure that all potential paid staff and volunteers:

- Complete an application form or letter of application with a CV. This should include address and details of relevant skills and experience
- Undergo an interview (formal or informal) ideally this should be face to face and with at least two interviewers (SWT staff will keep appropriate records of interviews to evidence that the applicant is suitable for the role).

In addition, all potential staff will be asked to provide at least two references which are followed up, along with evidence of their right to work in the UK, before employment commences.

Those paid staff and volunteers who apply for (or request to move into) roles that involve regularly working with children and young people or adults at risk will also need to:

- declare in their written application all criminal convictions and state the reasons why they want to work with children and young people or adults at risk
- have a member of staff trained in safer recruitment present at their interview
- provide two references, one of which is from an employer or organisation that has knowledge of the applicant's work or volunteering with children, young people or adults at risk. If the applicant has not worked with children, young people or adults at risk before, then they should confirm this and provide an alternative referee
- pass a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at the appropriate level. This will necessitate providing at least two pieces of identification which confirm both identity and address.

Employment (paid or unpaid) will not commence until all the checks are completed satisfactorily.

Furthermore, Shropshire Wildlife Trust complies with all other safeguarding regulations:

- we understand that a person who is barred from working with children, young people and/or adults at risk is breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with them
- we understand that an organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with children and/or adults at risk will also be breaking the law
- we understand that if our organisation dismisses a member of staff or volunteer because they have harmed a child and/or adult at risk, or would have done so if they had not left, we must complete a DBS referral form.

Once in post, SWT will ensure that:

- All staff, volunteers and trustees receive safeguarding awareness training as part of their induction as well as receiving a copy of The Trust's Safeguarding Policies and Procedure

to understand how to recognise and refer concerns of abuse or neglect and to know the signs when something is wrong

- Staff and volunteers in roles working with children, young people or adults at risk will receive additional training and refresher training specific to their role
- Staff and volunteers will not undertake any regulated activity with children, young people or adults at risk until they have completed safeguarding training
- All appropriate staff, volunteers and trustees will be made aware of issues of particular vulnerability arising from an individual's background or abilities e.g. those facing barriers in communication or who are dependent on others for personal care
- All staff will be suitably qualified and/or experienced to supervise and deliver the activities they undertake.

Training provided for SWT staff and volunteers

Role	Level	Source	Renewal
Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children, Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adults, Safeguarding Trustee lead, Chief Executive Officer	Level 3	Available via local Safeguarding Children's Boards/Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards or NSPCC	3 years
Staff and volunteers providing activities for children, young people or adults at risk which meet the eligibility criteria for an enhanced or enhanced with barred list DBS check	Level 1 / Safeguarding Awareness training	Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) / Joint Training (Shropshire and Telford Council)	3 years
All trustees, staff and volunteers	Basic awareness – Essential Level 1 – recommended	Included in Safeguarding induction for all new staff and volunteers Level 1 from RSWT (contact Safeguarding lead for more information)	Staff / trustees - annually through staff and trustee meetings Volunteers – 3 years via video link

2.0 Safeguarding Concerns

How to respond to a safeguarding concern / disclosure

- Stay calm and be aware of your body language and how it may be perceived
- Listen carefully and make sure they understand you are taking what they're telling you seriously
- Give them reassurance that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Let them know you will try to help, and you understand how difficult this must be for them
- Try to make notes and capture words or sentences in the person's own words
- Stick to recording facts such as what has been said, heard, seen, date and time
- Make a record (saved privately) and share with the Safeguarding Lead within 24hrs.

Additionally for adults -

- Ensure you ask them what they would like to happen next and explain what you would like to do next
- Explain that you will have to share the information with SWT's safeguarding lead
- Ask for their consent to share the information outside of SWT
- Make an arrangement as to how you or SWT's safeguarding lead can contact them safely
- Help them to contact other organisations for advice and support (e.g. Police, Domestic Abuse helpline, Victim Support – use the Hub of Hope website).

What you must not do:

- Dismiss or ignore the concern
- Show shock or surprise – remain neutral
- Ask leading questions or be tempted to look further into this issue yourself (unless you are a trained safeguarding lead)
- Make assumptions or speculate or come to your own conclusions
- Promise to keep a secret as you may need to share this information to help keep them safe
- Discuss the issue outside of work or with colleagues who do not need to know the information
- Make any comments about other individuals involved
- Approach parents or carers without speaking to the safeguarding lead
- Confront the person thought to be causing harm
- Take sole responsibility.

2.1 What to do when you have concerns about a child

Common signs of child abuse:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/spotting-signs-child-abuse/>

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 we can help you to assess the situation.

You may also notice some concerning behaviour from adults who you know have children in their care, which makes you concerned for the child/children's safety and wellbeing.

Emergency Concern – child or young person:

If you are concerned there is **immediate risk of harm** to a child or young person, **do not delay in contacting the emergency services and a safeguarding lead**. Do not leave the person and ensure you remain in a place of safety until an appropriate member of the emergency services or social care arrive.

Non-Emergency Concern - child or young person:

If the situation **is not an emergency**, contact the safeguarding lead as soon as possible and within 24hrs. You should expect to hear back from a member of the team within 2 working days. If you don't hear back within this time, you must take further action by contacting the First Point of Contact using the safeguarding flowchart in this document. You must then inform the Safeguarding Lead of your action.

Safeguarding Leads for children and young people:

Vicky Reynolds – victoriar@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk 07572 379534

Ellie Larkham – elliel@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk 07432 455104

If you cannot contact a safeguarding lead:

If you think a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of being harmed, you must contact the First Point of Contact (FPOC) at Children's Services and tell them your concerns. It

might be you that's being harmed. Don't delay, please contact them straight away - they're there to help you.

For Shropshire Local Authority please report your concerns to FPOC on 0345 678 9021.

For Telford and Wrekin Local Authority please report your concerns to Family Connect on 01952 385385 from 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday or 01952 676500 out of hours.

When contacting your Local Authority Safeguarding Team (or when a SWT safeguarding lead contacts them on your behalf) the following information will be required:

- Who you are
- Details of the child including date of birth and address if available
- What they have told you, or you have observed
- Any additional information that might be relevant
- If you have consent or not, for this referral.

Don't forget to ask them what will happen next or if you need to make a referral to any additional agencies such as the Police.

Consent for safeguarding referrals for children and young people:

Consent means the person gives permission to make a safeguarding referral. It is not always appropriate or feasible to obtain consent, so please use the following guidance:

If SWT is working with children through a school, speak to the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer and Trust Safeguarding Lead for Children and Young People as a first point of contact regarding any concerns. If staff or volunteers remain concerned or are not satisfied by the approach taken by the school, a referral to the Local Children's Safeguarding Team should be made through the Safeguarding Lead for the Trust.

If SWT is working as an independent facilitator, the Safeguarding Lead for children and young people should be consulted before attempting to obtain consent. In the interests of trust and transparency and wherever possible, (and this doesn't place the child at additional risk) they will speak to a family member or carer about the concerns and that SWT would like to make a referral to get them some help or support and also to ensure they give their consent for this.

If speaking to family members or carers about the issue may place the individual at additional risk, or the issue involves family or carers, SWT can and should still share information with the relevant professionals without consent.

Consent can be overridden if staff can demonstrate they are acting in the person's interests to protect them from harm, abuse or neglect; this is called a best interest's decision or referral.

Appendix 4 provides guidance for DSL's in how to respond to concerns.

2.2 What to do when you have concerns about an adult at risk

In England, The Care Act (2014) defines the following categories of abuse and harm;

Physical	Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint, and misuse of medication. It can also include inappropriate sanctions.
Sexual	Includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented, or was pressured into consenting.
Emotional/Psychological/ Mental	Includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
Neglect and acts of Omission	Includes ignoring medical or physical care needs and failing to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services. It also includes the withdrawing of the necessities of life, including medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.
Financial or material abuse	Includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, and coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions.
Discriminatory	Abuse that centres on a difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to race, gender, disability, or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act.
Organisational / Institutional	Includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting, such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home.
Self-neglect	Broadly defined as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health, or surroundings.
Domestic Abuse (including coercive control)	Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse perpetrated by anyone within a person's family. It also includes so-called "honour" based violence.
Modern slavery	This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude.

The Ann Craft Trust identifies four additional types of harm that are relevant to safeguarding adults;

Cyber Bullying	Occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online, or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages. It can also involve using online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating, or isolating another person.
Forced Marriage	This is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 make it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

Mate Crime	A “mate crime” is when “vulnerable people are befriending by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them” (Safety Network Project, ARC). It may not be an illegal act, but it still has a negative effect on the individual. A mate crime is carried out by someone the adult knows, and it often happens in private.
Radicalisation	The aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media.

Recognising the signs of abuse and neglect:

Abuse and neglect of adults at risk can happen anywhere – it could be someone in their own home or a public place, whilst attending a day centre, in a college or whilst joining a work party or activity organised by SWT. In our everyday engagement with adults at risk, it's important to know the signs of abuse and neglect so if staff or volunteers witness an incident or are told/notice something about an adults' circumstances that causes a concern, we can refer to the people who can help keep them safe.

The person causing the harm may be a stranger, but it's more likely to be someone known to the adult such as a health or care professional, family member, neighbour, or member of staff. The abuser is usually someone in a position of trust or power to the individual.

An adult may confide in a staff member, volunteer or another participant that they are experiencing abuse. Similarly, others may suspect that this is the case.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. Here are some pointers to be aware of:

- Unexplained injuries or bruises
- The adult has belongings or money going missing
- The person might start missing sessions and you notice a change in their mood or loss of confidence
- They may have lost weight or have an unkempt appearance
- You might notice a distinct change in their behaviour towards other people in their life
- Self-harm
- A fear of a particular group of people or individual
- Somebody else, for example a parent or carer, always speaks for the adult and doesn't allow them to make their own choices.

They may also tell you they are being abused or neglected – this is a disclosure.

For more detail on all categories of abuse or neglect, and the indicators please see

<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/types-of-harm/>

Emergency Concern – adult at risk:

If you are concerned there is **immediate risk of harm** to an adult at risk, **do not delay in contacting the emergency services and a safeguarding lead**. Do not leave the person and ensure you remain in a place of safety until an appropriate member of the emergency services or social care arrive.

Non-Emergency Concern - adult at risk:

If the situation is **not an emergency**, contact the safeguarding lead and complete a safeguarding concern form as soon as possible and within 24hrs. You should expect to hear back from a member of the team within 2 working days. If you don't hear back within this time, you must take further action by contacting the First Point of Contact (FPOC). You must then inform the Safeguarding Lead of your action.

Safeguarding leads for adults at risk:

Diane Murr - dianeem@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk 07572 119631

Stephanie Mulrooney - stephaniem@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk 07539 041655

If you cannot contact a safeguarding lead:

If you think an adult at risk is being harmed or at risk of being harmed, you must contact the FPOC and tell them your concerns. It might be you that's being harmed. Don't delay, please contact them straight away - they're there to help you.

For any referrals you should follow best practice on Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) by ensuring the adult at risk is involved at every stage.

Note – if the adult concerned has mental capacity (the ability to make a decision at the time that decision is needed) then consent should be sought to share a concern. However if they say no, this can be overridden if the adult is at risk of harm, or there is a risk to the wider public.

If the adult concerned does not have capacity, then you can raise a concern without their consent as a 'best interest decision'.

You may have to undertake a capacity assessment to determine if they have capacity. This is a simple conversation with them to establish if:

1. They understand the question being asked.
2. They can retain the information long enough to make the decision.
3. They are able to weigh up the pros and cons of the decision.
4. They can communicate an answer back to you.

If the person is unable to do any of these things then they lack capacity to make a decision. If the concern is low level and can be resolved with family support, then it is acceptable to do this rather than contacting Social Services through the FPOC.

For Shropshire Local Authority please report your concerns to FPOC on 0345 678 9044

(Mon to Thurs 8.45am -5pm and Friday 8.45am -4pm) or out of hours on 0345 678 9040.

For Telford and Wrekin Local Authority please report your concerns to Family Connect on 01952 385385 from 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday or 01952 676500 out of hours.

When contacting your Local Authority Safeguarding Team (or when a SWT safeguarding lead contacts them on your behalf) the following information will be required:

- Who you are
- Details of the adult at risk including date of birth and address if available
- What they have told you, or you have observed
- Any additional information that might be relevant
- If you have consent or not, for this referral.

Don't forget to ask them what will happen next or if you need to make a referral to any additional agencies such as the Police.

Mental Capacity: Background

We make many decisions every day, often without realising. UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they can't. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise.

We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted. The Law says that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate our decision.

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health.

Most adults have the ability to make their own decisions given the right support, however, some adults with care and support needs have the experience of other people making decisions about them and for them.

Some people can only make simple decisions like which colour T-shirt to wear or can only make decisions if a lot of time is spent supporting them to understand the options. If someone has a disability that means they need support to understand or make a decision this must be provided. A small number of people cannot make any decisions. Being unable to make a decision is called "lacking mental capacity". A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe/possible wait until they are able to be involved in decision making or to make the decision themselves.

For example:

- A person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure
- Someone who is anxious may not be able to make a decision at that point
- A person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Mental Capacity is important for safeguarding for several reasons.

Not being allowed to make decisions one is capable of making is abuse. For example, a disabled adult may want to take part in an activity but their parent who is their carer won't allow them to and will not provide the support they would need. Conversely the adult may not seem to be benefiting from an activity other people are insisting they do.

Another situation is where an adult is being abused and they are scared of the consequences of going against the views of the person abusing them. It is recognised in law as coercion and a person can be seen not to have mental capacity because they cannot make 'free and informed decisions'.

Mental Capacity must also be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an 'adult at risk' has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened, however, in some situations the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

Legislation exists that describes when and how we can make decisions for people who are unable to make decisions for themselves. The principles are the same.

- We can only make decisions for other people if they cannot do that for themselves at the time the decision is needed
- If the decision can wait, wait – e.g. to get help to help the person make their decision or until they can make it themselves
- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we must make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account what we know about their preferences and wishes
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe will restrict them then we must think of the way to do that which restricts their freedom and rights as little as possible.

If a person who has a lot of difficulty making their own decisions is thought to be being abused or neglected you will need to refer the situation to the Local Authority, and this should result in health or social care professionals making an assessment of mental capacity and/or getting the person the support they need to make decisions.

There may be times when SWT needs to make decisions on behalf of an individual in an emergency. Decisions taken in order to safeguard an adult who cannot make the decision for themselves could include sharing information about safeguarding concerns with people that can help protect them or stopping them being in contact with the person causing harm.

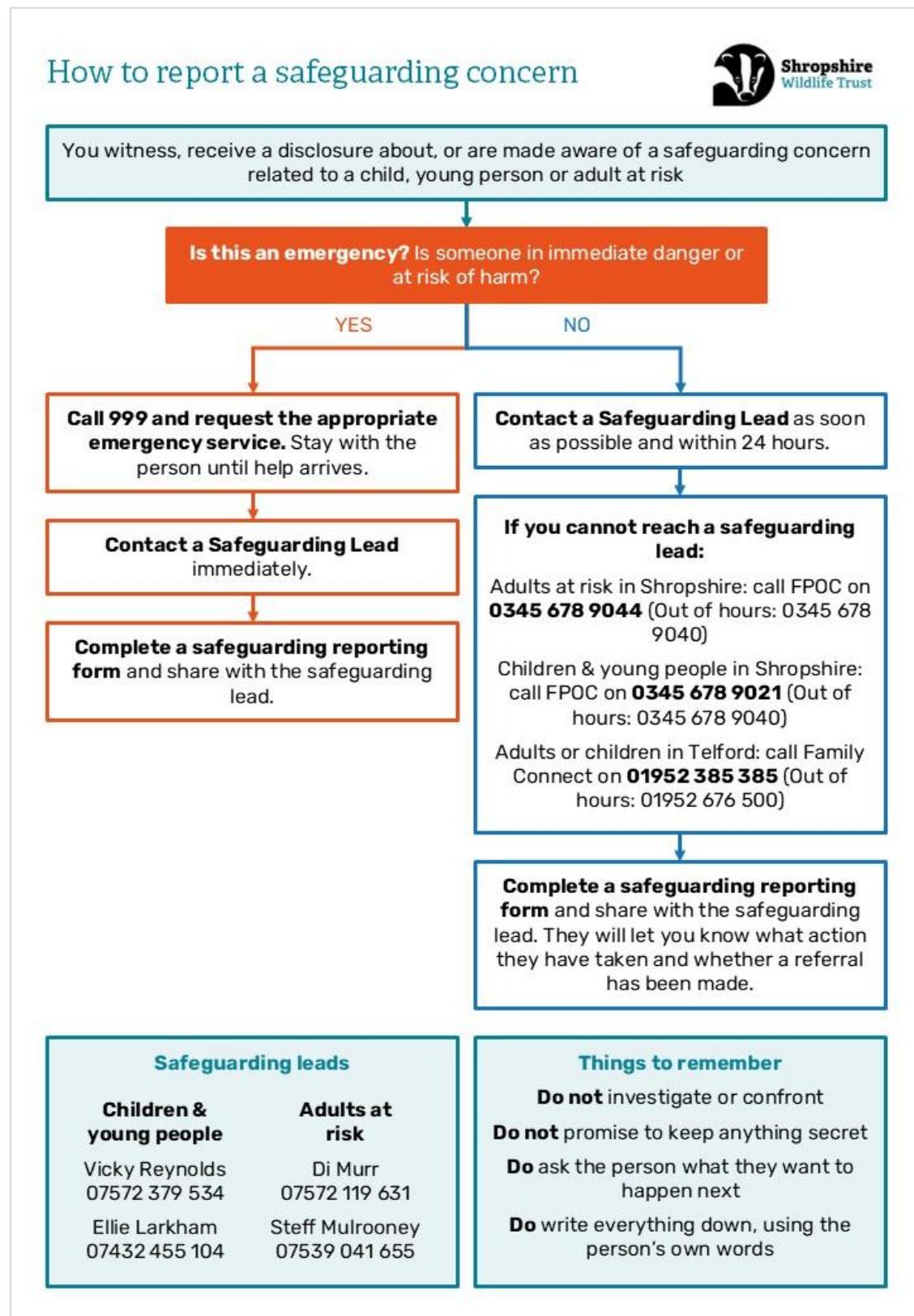
2.3 Support provided after sharing a concern or disclosure

Safeguarding leads will support staff, volunteers and trustees sharing a concern or disclosure in the following ways:

- Initial debrief to inform of the process that will take place, including that they may not receive any further information about the concern
- Reminder of employee wellbeing services
- Referral to HR / direct line manager any concern for welfare or advise of accommodations that may be beneficial (seeking consent where appropriate)
- Meeting two weeks later to check in and close off, de-brief / signpost further
- Arrangement of a one month check in at the discretion of the safeguarding lead should further support be deemed necessary.

Documentation of the above and any outcomes will be stored with the safeguarding concern form.

2.3 Safeguarding flowchart



3.0 Allegations against staff, volunteers, trustees or safeguarding leads

SWT is responsible for responding to allegations or concerns made regarding staff, volunteers or trustees working for them in a position of trust with children, young people or adults at risk.

Examples of concerns could include allegations that relate to a person who works with children or adults with care and support needs who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child or adult at risk
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or adult at risk
- Behaved towards a child or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
- Behaved in a way which raises concerns as to their suitability to work with children.

Concerns could also arise from the person's home or personal life, as well as within their work. Where concerns relate to personal/private life, if SWT is the employing organisation, they would maintain the responsibility for oversight of a case. This may include situations such as:

- A person has behaved (or is alleged to have behaved) towards another adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm. For example, this may include situations where a person is being investigated by the police for domestic abuse to a partner and undertakes voluntary work with adults with care and support needs
- A person has behaved (or is alleged to have behaved) towards children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm. For example, this may include situations where a person is alleged to have abused a child and is a student undertaking professional training to work with adults with care and support needs
- A person is the subject of a formal safeguarding enquiry into allegations of abuse or neglect which have occurred in one setting. However, there are also concerns that the person is employed, volunteers or is a student in another setting where there are children or adults with care and support needs who may also be at risk of harm.

This area is taken extremely seriously, and all allegations will be investigated by the relevant Safeguarding Lead and the HR Manager. Unless it puts the adult at risk or a child in danger, the person should be informed of an allegation against them. SWT must ensure they provide support to minimise stress associated with the process, for example; support to understand the procedures being followed, regular updates on developments as well as the opportunity to respond to allegations/concerns and support to raise questions or concerns about the allegation.

For allegations involving children, the Safeguarding lead must also contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for an initial discussion to determine if the LADO threshold has been met. If the threshold has been met, the LADO will lead the investigation and advise SWT on the course of action required. If the threshold has not been met, the LADO may offer advice, but it will be the responsibility of a SWT internal investigation to ascertain if the allegation is substantiated or not and any further course of action e.g. disciplinary actions required.

For allegations involving adults where there is a concern the individual may also pose a risk to children, SWT should also inform the relevant LADO.

Where the allegation involves the safeguarding lead the HR manager will investigate with the Head of People and Wildlife.

Shropshire Local Authority LADO can be contacted on 0345 678 9021.

Telford and Wrekin Authority LADO can be contacted on 01952 385385 from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday or 01952 676500 out of hours.

If the person against whom an allegation has been made is employed or volunteers in another local authority area, SWT must inform the relevant local authority area.

If a concern relating to the conduct of a volunteer in their capacity of working with children or adults at risk has been substantiated, this must be added to the Wildlife Trusts shared Safeguarding Portal in line with our shared Safeguarding Framework agreement. This does not dissolve us from our responsibility of notifying agencies such as the Local Authority, Police or DBS.

4.0 Reporting of serious incidents

Trustees are responsible for the reporting of serious incidents to the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- harm to SWT beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or others who come into contact with SWT
- loss of SWT money or assets
- damage to SWT property
- harm to SWT's work or reputation.

The regulatory bodies will be seeking assurances that the charity has taken steps to limit the immediate impact of the incident and, where possible, learnt from practice to prevent it from happening again. In all circumstances RSWT will be notified of any member of staff, trustee or volunteer reporting a serious incident to a charity regulator.

SWT's policies and procedure are reviewed bi-annually but also after any incident to ensure that opportunities for learning are explored and to provide assurance that arrangements are both effective and robust.

5.0 Storage of safeguarding referrals/case notes and personal information

Safeguarding records will be kept confidential and stored securely. They will be kept electronically and only available to those who need to know or are members of the safeguarding team.

Information about specific cases and individuals will be kept in separate files for each individual, rather than in one concern log and saved in a different place to general records.

If it is necessary to share information about a safeguarding concern, we will ensure documentation is kept confidential by addressing documents to a specific recipient or using passwords and encryption when sharing electronic files. If it is necessary to email colleagues or professionals about a specific case, we will anonymise details by using initials instead of full names.

Should a safeguarding lead leave, we will ensure a successor is appointed and a thorough handover is undertaken that includes details about where records are kept and the system used.

6.0 Ensuring our activities and events are managed safely

There may be occasions when SWT and our branches and local groups host events that require additional steps to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe.

If the help and assistance of additional staff or volunteers is required, SWT will ensure they have undergone the recruitment, selection and induction process as outlined in this document to ensure they are suitable to work with children, young people or adults at risk.

All staff and volunteers delivering activities will have received appropriate safeguarding training, be familiar with SWT's Safeguarding Policies and Procedure and know how to recognise / share a concern.

Staffing and volunteer ratios will differ depending on the age of the children or adults at risk and numbers involved, environment, competence level of staff, and nature of the activity.

Staffing ratios for working with adults at risk will depend entirely on the nature of the activity, whether the adult is attending on their own or with a carer or support worker and the level of support each adult needs. When working with adults at risk we will talk to the adult (if that's not possible then their parent, carer or support worker) about the activity/group they are joining and ask what support they may need to allow them to participate safely.

For activities with children and young people we aim to have a minimum of two adults present and will follow NSPCC's guidance on supervision ratios. Parents who attend activities with their children will not be used to supervise other children unless they have been recruited into the role, undergone the necessary checks and had the relevant child protection training. Any staff or volunteers who have only had the vetting checks required to work with children while supervised will not be left alone with a child.

For each activity there will be a detailed event planning process that considers the following:

- Who is responsible for safeguarding at the event
- Approximate / expected numbers of children, young people, adults at risk
- Ages of the people involved (if known) plus corresponding number of staff / volunteers needed
- Whether parents / carers are present at all times and remain responsible or if consent forms are required
- Details of consent/emergency contact details/dietary requirements/allergies/care and support needs as appropriate
- Photography and filming
- What actions to take if a child, young person or adult at risk is lost
- Specific activities being undertaken, and equipment/tools being used
- Checks/maintenance on any equipment used
- The physical environment of the activity/event
- Other people using the venue/site/reserve
- Whether additional insurance is required
- First aid equipment, points and training as well as a process for recording incidents
- Online safety (if applicable for contacting participants before and afterwards).

Learning gained during the delivery of activities will be incorporated into future planning and best practice shared with, and by, our branches and local groups during Branch and Group Forums.

7.0 Young People (aged 16-18)

In England, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Child Protection procedures apply to 16 and 17 year olds as well as younger children. Even if a child has reached 16 years of age and is: living independently; a parent themselves; in further education; a member of the armed forces; in hospital; or in custody in the secure estate, they are still legally children and should be given the same protection and entitlements as any other child (Department for Education, 2023). Young people who are 16 and 17 years old have significant potential to fall through the gaps between child and adult services.

Some key issues to remember when safeguarding young people of this age:

- A child of this age may be difficult to engage but it is important even if they are not being cooperative to follow the Child Protection procedures
- Just because a child of this age appears to know what they are doing and appears able to consent it doesn't mean that action should not be taken if it is in their best interests
- No child can ever consent to their own abuse.

As previously stated, mental capacity legislation in all UK nations applies from 16 years old. But this does not replace Child Protection Procedures. People working with this age group have to balance the rights of young people with their duty to protect them from abuse and neglect. It is best practice to try to obtain consent to pass on information from a young person, ask them

what they would like to happen next and respect their wishes where possible, but not if this prevents us from keeping them safe.

8.0 Young Volunteers (under 18)

Whilst we recognise the importance of inspiring the next generation of conservationists, and the skills and wellbeing benefits this can provide, our capacity to involve volunteers under the age of 18 is limited. Any opportunities offered will be subject to our ability to meet insurance, health and safety and safeguarding requirements, and to ensure that experiences are fair, meaningful and appropriately supported.

Therefore, any enquiries involving under 18's must be dealt with by the Education Team and be approved by the safeguarding leads for under18's.

8.1 Youth Forum

SWT Youth Forum is open to anyone aged between 16 and 30 who lives, works or studies in Shropshire or Telford and Wrekin. All youth forum members must apply through the Education Team and the safeguarding leads for under18s will ensure that all our safeguarding obligations are met for any members under 18.

8.2 School or College Organised Work Experience

School or college organised work experience is defined as a placement with an employer in which a young person carries out a range of tasks in much the same way as an employee, with the emphasis on learning from the experience. This could be a one-day placement, a block placement over several days or a placement that extends over several weeks – for example one day a week for a term.

Any school or college organised work experience for under 18s must be organised through the Education Team and approved by the safeguarding leads for under18s. This will be done on a case-by-case basis and only if the safeguarding leads are satisfied that our safeguarding obligations can be met.

8.3 Duke of Edinburgh's Award (14-24 years)

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is available to 14-24 year olds and volunteering is a core part of the award. Young people completing DofE may be over or under 18 and the time commitment needed varies by level. DofE volunteering for under 18's must be organised through the Education Team and approved by the safeguarding leads for under18s. This will be done on a case-by-case basis and only if the safeguarding leads are satisfied that the time commitment and our safeguarding obligations can be met. Requests from over 18s should go to the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

8.4 Other work placements / work experience requests

Children and young people interested in nature and the environment may contact us directly (not through another organisation like a school) to ask for work experience, a placement or volunteer work. Any requests from under 18s must be passed on to the Education Team and approved by the safeguarding leads for under18s. They will be considered on a case-by-case

basis and only if the safeguarding leads for under18s are satisfied that health and safety and our safeguarding obligations can be met. Requests from over18s (for example University Placements) should go to the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

8.5 Family Volunteering

SWT does not currently have the capacity to offer true family volunteering. Adult volunteers with SWT may occasionally ask to bring along their own child to volunteer alongside them. Any requests of this nature must be passed to the safeguarding leads for under18s and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This will only be considered if the parent is always present and directly supervising their child during any volunteering and the safeguarding leads for under18s are satisfied that health and safety and safeguarding obligations can be met. The child must not start volunteering until this has been approved and an agreement has been signed with their parent / guardian.

9.0 Online safety

Online safety is the process of limiting the risks to children, young people and adults when using the internet, digital and mobile technology. We have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online.

Online abuse is any type of abuse that takes place on a digital platform via the internet. This could include social media and online communities, online gaming, webinars or using mobile phones. Adults at risk can be particularly vulnerable to certain online abuse such as phishing scans, fraud, grooming, trolling and cyber-stalking. It can take place anywhere and anytime.

Everyone deserves to be, and to feel, safe online and we can all play a role in helping make online spaces safer. Being safe online means SWT and individuals are protecting themselves and others from potential online harms and risks which could expose their personal information, lead to unsafe communications and affect individuals' mental health and wellbeing or the reputation of SWT.

The Online Safety Act 2023 established new regulations aimed at enhancing online safety, particularly of children. It was largely directed at tech companies to:

- have a duty of care to ensure online platforms take action against illegal content and content that could be harmful to children
- conduct regular risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential harms.

The Act mandates that platforms enforce age limits and promote safety measures to protect users especially minors. Ofcom has been appointed the online regulator to oversee compliance with the act.

The Act also introduced new criminal offences including cyberflashing, epilepsy trolling, and encouraging or assisting serious self-harm which is now illegal even if done anonymously. It is also a crime to share deep fake pornography or send false information with intent to harm. Laws on non-consensual intimate images have been strengthened to cover threats to share, and images altered using AI.

Online Safety is everyone's responsibility and all staff, volunteers and trustees have a role to play in keeping people safe. Assessing online risks must be done before staff or trustees establish new online communities, utilise new technologies, run virtual activities or share news with participants.

Online safety guidance is available for staff and volunteers undertaking virtual activities with children, young people or adults at risk. You **must** notify the relevant designated lead before any activities happen so they can ensure you have the right information and training. These guidelines must be followed by all those involved in SWT's online activities.

When communicating digitally (online or via mobile phone) someone under the age of 18 may try to contact or befriend staff or volunteers on their personal accounts. In this instance they should not respond but instead return the contact from a SWT account explaining that it is SWT policy to only use SWT verified communication channels, copying in a second member of staff. They should also make the DSL aware this has happened.

If an incident occurs online that amounts to abuse against a child or adult at risk, the safeguarding procedures outlined above must be followed, and the safeguarding lead may also need to contact the Police and Local Area Designated Officer if the incident amounts to an alleged crime e.g. online grooming, non-contact sexual abuse, exploitation or radicalisation.

10.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 Safeguarding Concern Form

Child/Young person's or adult at risk's name:

Date of Birth:

Address if known:

Your name:

Role:

Date:

Please provide details of your concerns – try to be as factual as possible e.g. who, where and what happened? Include date and time of the incident (if applicable) and if there were any witnesses present.

Has anybody been named as the alleged abuser? If yes, give details e.g. name, address and date of birth if known:

Have you spoken to the child/young person/adult at risk - what is their perspective and what would they like to happen (if applicable)?

Have you spoken to parents or primary carer about your concerns and do you have their consent to make a referral if necessary? If not, reason why

Any other details you feel might be relevant

Part 2 - For use by the Safeguarding Leads

Date and time received:

Any advice sought? Provide details of who and when:

Action taken e.g. referral to children's social care / early help services / another service:

Date and time referral made:

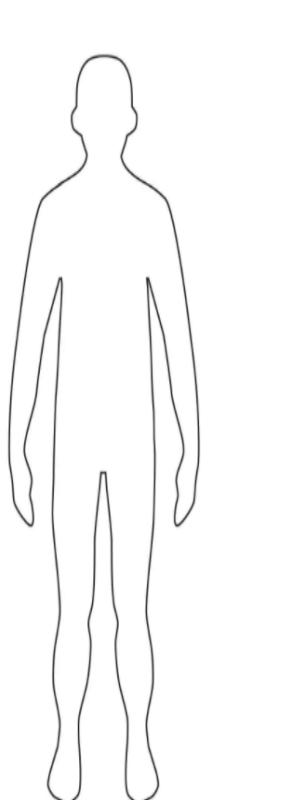
Please detail any further actions, if any, that have been taken:

NOTE: Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

- Information must only be shared on a “need to know” basis i.e. only if it will protect the child/adult at risk.
- Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

Appendix 2

If you are working with a child or adult at risk who is showing signs or has made a disclosure of physical abuse you may wish to use a body map like the example below to document and illustrate signs of harm. Use the pictures to draw on your observations – look out for signs that indicate injuries have not occurred accidentally e.g. clusters of bruises on the upper arm or outside of the thigh as well as bruises with the imprint of a hand or fingers.



Name

Date Of Birth

Name Of Worker

Date Recorded

Observations

Appendix 3

For adult safeguarding leads: procedure for responding to a concern.

Initial response

1. Ensure any immediate actions necessary to safeguard anyone at risk have been taken.

If the risk is said to be due to the behaviour of an employee or other person involved in the organisation use the relevant procedures (e.g. Volunteer Code of Conduct; Disciplinary or Grievance procedures) to prevent that person making contact with the adult being harmed. In this case contact the CEO / HR Manager to determine the process.

2. If you have a Safeguarding Concern Form check that you can understand what is written and that all the necessary parts have been completed.

If you are being contacted directly by a member of staff or a volunteer request that they complete the form if they have not already done so as soon as possible.

If the report is being made by the adult themselves or a member of the public, fill in the Safeguarding Concern Form yourself gaining the details with the person contacting you.

3. Inform, reassure, and advise the person raising the concern.

Explain what to do/what not to do. Explain what will happen next. Reinforce the need for confidentiality.

4. Consider what is known about the situation, what the risks are, what is known of the views of the adult, whether they have given their consent to the report being made and whether they might be considered to be an 'adult at risk'.

Find out whether the person making the report believes the adult has the mental capacity to make decisions about what safeguarding actions they want to be taken (they are not expected to assess this, only provide their opinion).

Decide if you need to contact the adult (if you have a safe way of doing so) to get more information, determine their wishes, or explain what actions you need to take.

5. Ensure that the adult has been given information about the process and what will happen next. Ensure that they have been provided with information about other organisations that can support them. The Hub of Hope website is a very good resource.

[Mental Health Support Network provided by Chasing the Stigma | Hub of hope](#)

ONLY do this if you have a known safe way of contacting them.

Taking Action

In all situations, ensure those at SWT who can act (within their remit) to prevent further harm have the information to do so. This includes supporting the person at risk. Depending on the situation you may need to pass information to and work together with other organisations such as the Police and the Local Authority safeguarding team.

6. Consult and Decide.

If necessary, consult with the Local Authority / the Police and decide which of the following actions need to be taken. If you are unsure whether or not to make a referral you can ask for advice by contacting the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team to discuss the situation with them without disclosing the identity of the adult or the person who may be causing harm.

Where a referral is not appropriate you should still support the adult with signposting and guidance.

Ideally consent should be obtained before referring into services but this can be overridden in the following circumstances:

- if other adults at risk are potentially in danger
- if there are children in the accommodation (refer to child safeguarding)
- if the alleged abuser is a member of staff (do investigation)
- if a serious crime could be prevented
- if the alleged abuser has care and support needs and could be at risk
- if you suspect the person is under duress or being coerced
- the case meets the criteria for a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
- a court or legal authority has requested the information.

You still need to inform the person concerned that you are referring without their consent.

7. Contact the police (where the crime took place) if:

- a serious crime has been committed
- a crime has been committed against someone without the mental capacity to contact the police themselves
- the adult has asked you to make a report to the Police on their behalf because they are unable to themselves.

8. Make a referral / report to the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team (where the adult lives) if you believe they may be an adult at risk AND:

- the adult appears not to have the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety and well-being
- the risk is from a person employed or volunteering in work with adults with care and support needs (including within a sports organisations)
- there are other 'adults at risk' (e.g. another family member, another club member or other people using a service)
- the adult at risk lives in Wales or Northern Ireland (no consent required)
- the adult at risk lives in England or Scotland and they have asked you to make a report or have given their informed consent to you making it.

If a child is at risk you must also make a child safeguarding referral to the Local Authority. This includes all situations where there is domestic abuse within the household where the child lives.

Often, you will not hear back after a referral is made but you can contact them to find out what has happened.

9. Use policy and procedures to stop harm within the organisation.

If the person who may be causing harm is a person involved in SWT in whatever capacity inform the CEO / HR Manager.

Decide what policy and procedures the organisation will use to decide which actions will be taken e.g. disciplinary procedure, grievance procedure.

Agree what short term arrangements can be put in place to enable the adult, who may be being harmed, to be able to continue participating in activities with SWT.

The arrangements made must respect the rights of the person who may be causing harm and must be consistent with the relevant policy and procedures.

10. If statutory agencies are involved work together with them to agree the next steps. E.g. the Police may need to interview an employee before a disciplinary investigation is conducted.

If statutory agencies say that they will not be taking any action in relation to a referral this should not stop SWT taking internal steps to safeguard the adult. E.g. the Police may decide not to pursue a criminal investigation where there is an allegation against an employee, but the organisation should still follow its disciplinary procedure.

11. Decide who in the organisation will maintain contact with the adult to consult with them, keep them informed and make sure they are receiving the support they need.

Unless advised not to by the Police or Local Authority, and only if there is a safe way to do so, contact the adult to let them know about the actions you have taken and the outcomes so far. Find out if the actions taken are working, what matters to them, what they would like to happen next and what outcomes they want to achieve.

12. Share and coordinate actions internally.

- share information about what has happened with those at SWT who have a role in safeguarding the adult
- share the views of the adult
- share any actions being taken by the Police/Local Authority
- agree who will coordinate between SWT and other agencies
- decide what actions SWT will take
- coordinate action by SWT.

Where relevant provide support to the person raising the concern as outlined in the procedure. It is important you access support for yourself as well if needed.

13. Document everything so decision making is transparent, and actions agreed are followed. Follow up meetings should be held as necessary until all the actions needed are complete. Records should be held in accordance with GDPR and safeguarding practise.

14. The Trustee responsible for safeguarding should be informed about all safeguarding incidents. It should also be added to the concern log so it is included in the annual summary report for trustees.

15. Update the safeguarding procedure or policies based on learning, if needed.

16. See note about wellbeing at the end of appendix 4.

Appendix 4

For children safeguarding leads: procedure for responding to a concern

Initial Response

Ensure any immediate actions necessary to safeguard children have been taken.

If the risk is said to be due to the behaviour of an employee or other person involved in the organisation use the relevant procedures (e.g. Volunteer Code of Conduct; Disciplinary or Grievance procedures) to prevent that person making contact with the child. In this case contact the CEO / HR Manager to determine the process.

Agree what short term arrangements can be put in place to enable the child, who may be being harmed, to be able to continue participating in activities with SWT. The arrangements made must respect the rights of the person who may be causing harm and must be consistent with the relevant policy and procedures.

If you have a Safeguarding Concern Form check that you can understand what is written and that all the necessary parts have been completed, with original notes if relevant.

If you are being contacted directly by a member of staff or a volunteer request that they complete the form if they have not already done so as soon as possible.

If the report is being made by the child themselves or a member of the public, fill in the Safeguarding Concern Form yourself using details from the person contacting you.

Inform, reassure, and advise the person raising the concern. Explain what to do/what not to do. Explain what will happen next. Reinforce the need for confidentiality.

Assessment

Determine if it is a safeguarding concern. What type of safeguarding concern is it or should it be dealt with by other means, for example the complaints procedure, code of conduct or disciplinary procedures.

Does the concern need to be shared with outside agencies (eg, the school DSL, partner organisations' DSL, Local Authority or Police)? If you're unsure, use external resources such as the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000). You can do this anonymously. You can also contact first point of contact at Shropshire Local Authority (0345 678 9021) or Telford and Wrekin Family Connect (01952 385385) for advice.

Contact the Police on 101 if you suspect a crime has been committed.

Consent. What is known of the views / wishes of the child involved? Children should be given the opportunity to decide whether they agree to their personal information being shared. You do not need consent from a child to refer into services, but you should try to explain your reasons and what will happen next. Ideally consent should be obtained from the parent / guardian before referring into services but this can be overridden if a child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, immediate significant harm. When deciding whether to share information without consent, you should consider each case individually. The Data Protection Act 2018 and General

Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) do not affect this principle - safeguarding a child is a clear and legitimate reason for sharing information (Information Commissioner's Office, 2023).

Parents or carers should always be informed UNLESS you think this may increase the risk of harm to the child or it may interfere with a criminal investigation.

Ensure that the child (and their parents / guardians if appropriate) have been given information about the process and what will happen next. Ensure that they have been provided with information about other organisations that can support them.

Consider who needs to know and, importantly, exactly what information can be shared. Think about managing speculation and gossip and what, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community. Do you need help from the CCM Team?

Start the Safeguarding case file

1. Keep a record of all discussions and any actions taken, including:
 - next steps, by whom and by when
 - a decision/rationale to contact the relevant authorities
 - any further information needed, from whom and who will be responsible for gaining this information
 - here appropriate, how the person subject to a complaint or allegation will be informed and updated
 - other people who need to be informed about the concern and how information will be kept confidential.

Ongoing actions

Whatever the concern, your next task is to monitor and log any new information or actions as they arise. Records should be held in accordance with GDPR and safeguarding practise.

If possible, you should also let people who have shared the concern with you know that you have acted on it. You don't need to give them all the details, but when people know action has been taken, they are more likely to share concerns in future.

In all situations, ensure those at SWT who can act (within their remit) to prevent further harm have the information to do so. This includes supporting the child at risk.

If the person who may be causing harm is a person involved in SWT in whatever capacity inform the CEO / HR Manager. Decide what policy and procedures the organisation will use to decide which actions will be taken e.g. disciplinary procedure, grievance procedure. Agree what short term arrangements can be put in place to enable the child, who may be being harmed, to be able to continue participating in activities with SWT. The arrangements made must respect the rights of the person who may be causing harm and must be consistent with the relevant policy and procedures.

Remember, your role is not to take the place of the statutory authorities. Depending on the situation you may need to pass information to and work together with other organisations such as schools, the Police and the Local Authority safeguarding team.

Where a referral is not appropriate you should still support the child / family with signposting and guidance, if appropriate.

If other agencies are involved, you should maintain regular contact with them. Where possible agree when updates will be given and follow up if you do not hear back. Often, you will not hear back after a referral is made to the Local Authority Safeguarding Children Team but you can contact them to find out what has happened.

Gather addition information. Additional, relevant information may need to be gathered. This should be recorded and passed to key safeguarding agencies if requested.

You need to contact all those involved in the concern to keep them informed of progress or establish how they are coping and if there are any additional support needs. Unless advised not to by the Police or Local Authority - maintain contact with the child and their family to consult with them. Find out if the actions taken are working, what matters to them, what they would like to happen next and what outcomes they want to achieve.

There may be a need to continue to monitor the situation internally, to make sure actions are being carried out or that a situation does not get worse.

If a safeguarding concern is in the public, you will need to talk with the communications team about how you respond.

Staff and/or volunteers may need a simple briefing about what has happened. This may include whether they can talk to the media or other people about what has happened.

Follow up meetings should be held as necessary until all the actions needed are complete.

Closure

As DSL, you are responsible for deciding when a safeguarding concern is 'closed'. Each concern will be different. Some may be closed the same day; others may take several months.

All safeguarding concerns should be closed once it has been agreed that you, as DSL, no longer have any ongoing role, or any actions left to complete.

If the police or Social Services are involved, they will inform you of the outcome of an investigation or tell you when there are no further actions required from you.

Anyone involved in the safeguarding concern should be informed that it has been closed and you should complete any safeguarding records.

Complete a final report when the safeguarding concern is closed. This provides a historical record of the concern. It should include:

- a clear and concise summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up any actions taken and outcomes
- any lessons learnt from the case
- any recommendations for changes to policy or working practices.

The Trustee responsible for safeguarding should be informed about all safeguarding incidents. It should also be added to the concern log so it is included in the annual summary report for trustees.

Update the safeguarding procedure or policies based on learning, if needed.

Wellbeing

Managing safeguarding concerns can be challenging and may affect an individual's mental health and wellbeing. Ensure that everyone involved – including yourself – has access to appropriate support as outlined in the procedure.

Make use of the wider safeguarding team to talk through any concerns or worries. Please remember that you do not have to manage safeguarding situations alone.