



SDCAS Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children's Policy

Policy Statement

SDCAS is committed to ensuring that service users are welcomed into a safe and caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere. SDCAS recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff, paid and unpaid, to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of vulnerable adults and children and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

This policy outlines the steps SDCAS will make to safeguard those with care and support needs if they are deemed to be at risk or at risk and not be in a position to protect themselves against harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including: their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss, age in the case of children, physical or learning disabilities. This could be those who are usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction, illness etc.

SDCAS adheres to the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work (See Care Act guidance).

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

Staff and volunteers should ensure that their work reflects the principles above and ensure adults with care and support needs are involved in their decisions and informed consent is obtained.

Roles and responsibilities

All staff, management, trustees and volunteers are expected to:

- **Recognise** indicators of abuse or harm; **report** effectively and in line with procedures; **respect** and uphold the rights and dignity of adults at risk, families, children and young people;
- **Know the categories of abuse; be aware of the six safeguarding principles** and be able to use them to inform their response to safeguarding;
- **Be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to vulnerable adults and children;**
- **Follow the safeguarding procedures** as set out in this policy;
- Access and **take an active part in safeguarding training and ongoing learning opportunities.**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for safeguarding adults and children and should be the initial point of contact for safeguarding queries or concerns. In their absence contact the second designated lead for safeguarding.

The Director is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy and ensuring that the recruitment of staff both paid and unpaid is done in accordance with safer recruitment.

The Volunteer Coordinator has delegated responsibility for safer recruitment of volunteers and ensuring that all volunteers receive regular training on SDCAS safeguarding policy and procedures.

The SDCAS trustees are responsible for ensuring that SDCAS has policies and procedures in place for protecting adults at risk and children; that there are named people designated to lead this work and for overseeing the operation of this policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) are listed at the end of this document.

- All staff and volunteers should contact the DSL with any concerns/queries they have with regards to safeguarding adults and/or children.
- Key staff members/trustees will be responsible to make decisions about notifying adult or child social services if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.

SDCAS should ensure that the safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk. Partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. SDCAS should be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions.

If the allegation is against one of SDCAS members, volunteers, trustees or directors, seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). If the allegation is against the DSL, seek advice from SDCAS Chair of Trustees.

- The designated safeguarding lead should be responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern.
- Feedback should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- If the police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.
- The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage.
- SDCAS should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.
- Staff and volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

Prevent

- Radicalisation and extremism of adults or children with care and support needs is a form of emotional/psychological exploitation. Radicalisation can take place through direct personal contact, or indirectly through social media.
- If staff are concerned that an adult or child with care and support needs is at risk of being radicalised and drawn into terrorism, they should treat it in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.
- For more information about Prevent see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

This policy is based on the following relevant law and guidance:

- The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support statutory guidance
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009
- Care Act 2014
- Children & Families Act 2014
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- GDPR Regulations 2018
- Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked, Home Office, 2011
- Care of Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children, HM Government 2014
- Modern Slavery Strategy, Home Office 2014
- HM Government's 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018
- Prevent Duty Guidance 2021 under s29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Pan London Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures
- London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Practice Guidance
- The Human Rights Act 1998 under which everyone has the right to live free from abuse and neglect. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act>

Adult Safeguarding procedures

Staff and volunteers who have any adult safeguarding concerns should:

Respond

- Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention/if a crime is in progress. Dial 999 for emergency services.
- Where emergency action has been taken, and when it is safe to do so, you should complete the SDCAS safeguarding report and submit to the DSL.
- To respond to a non-emergency, get brief details about what has happened; what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation.
- Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.

Record

- Preserve evidence and ask the adult what they would like to happen.
- Complete a safeguarding form (attached and online) with all the relevant details and submit this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed.
- Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential and in a location where the alleged abuser will not have access to the record. Access should not be given to any unauthorised personnel for accessing confidential information including the sharing of passwords.

Report

Any potential safeguarding concerns should be reported to the SDCAS Designated Safeguarding Lead. This can be done by completing and submitting the safeguarding report form.

Refer

In making a decision whether to refer or not, the designated safeguarding lead will take the following into account:

- In the case of an adult - the adult's wishes and preferred outcome
- whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
- the safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs
- whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
- whether a crime has been committed

This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to:

- the police if a crime has been committed, and/or
- GP and/or Southwark or other borough Adult Social Care
- relevant Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for possible safeguarding enquiry if children are involved
- relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Charities commission
- service commissioning teams
- family/relatives as appropriate (seek advice from relevant adult social services)

The DSL should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring. The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage. The named organisation should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.

Procedure for protecting children and young people (under 18 years)

What to do in an emergency

If you think a child is in immediate danger or a criminal act has taken place you should telephone the police on 999. You should then contact the DSL, second DSL or Safeguarding Officer on the SDCAS Trustee Board as appropriate.

In a medical emergency your first action may need to be one of the following:

- Telephone for an ambulance, or,
- Ask the parent/carer to take the child to hospital at once, or,
- Only as a last resort and only if another adult is able to accompany you, take the child to hospital yourself.

The child or young person is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer and they must be involved as soon as practical unless to do so would put the child at immediate risk of harm.

Where emergency action has been taken, and when it is safe to do so, you should complete the SDCAS safeguarding report and submit to the DSL.

In all other circumstances you need to follow the procedures below.

Recognising abuse

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs or behaviour that make you feel concerned. All staff paid and unpaid, should be alert to the following types of behaviour in children and young people:

- Becoming excessively aggressive, withdrawn or clingy;
- Seeming to be keeping a secret;
- Significant changes in their behaviour;
- Deterioration in their well being;
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- Any bruising or marks on a non mobile baby;
- Unreasonable fear of certain people or places;
- Acting out in an inappropriate way perhaps with adults, other children or young people, toys or objects;
- Children and young people's comments which give cause for concern eg. Inconsistent explanations of bruising, injuries or burns;
- Sexually explicit language or actions;
- Self-harm;
- Are upset, withdrawn or angry after using the internet or texting;
- Demonstrating that their mental health is suffering;
- Children or young people who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions when they have been expected or have an appointment at SDCAS

Staff should be equally vigilant regarding signs relating to disabled children and young people and not automatically assume that any of the above relates to their impairment.

Respond

SDCAS is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively.

If you suspect a child or young person is being harmed or they disclose that they are being harmed you should:

- Stay calm;
- Listen to what the child/young person is actually saying;

- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you;
- As soon as possible, inform the DSL and if appropriate they will take over from this point.
- Ask open questions e.g. can you tell me why you are upset? Can you tell me why you don't want to go home today? Can you tell me what is frightening you?
- Do not ask leading or closed questions. For example a leading question is: Are you afraid to go home because your mum will hit you?
- Do not ask the child/young person to repeat what they have told you. If the matter is to be investigated further it will be done by trained professionals.
- Do not promise the child that this can be kept a secret as subsequent disclosure could then lead to the child feeling betrayed. If appropriate, explain to the child/young person who you are going to tell and why. If the child asks what might happen next it's ok to say you don't know but you can be there to support them if they want.
- Reassure the child/young person that the people who will be informed will be sensitive to their needs and will be looking to help protect them.

Record

- Make a note of any conversations with the child or young person, trying to make these as detailed as possible, including when and where the conversations took place.
- Record as soon as possible and use the actual words used by the child or young person.
- Keep all records factual.
- Submit your record to safeguarding@sdcas.org.uk or directly by using the safeguarding form (attached and online).

Refer

The DSL and Director will make the decision whether to refer.

In doing so they will contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 7525 1921 (weekday 9-5) or 020 7525 5000 (out of hours) or email them on MASH@southwark.gov.uk. The referral form for the MASH can be found on the Southwark.Gov website <https://safeguarding.southwark.gov.uk/asking-for-help/>

The DSL should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring. The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage. The named organisation should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.

Concerns about the practice of colleagues within SDCAS

If you have serious concerns about the practice of any staff member, paid or unpaid, you should consult the whistleblowing policy which states: If an employee has a concern about the conduct of a fellow employee in the working environment (e.g. that they are not treating colleagues with respect) they should raise these with their line manager, or if that is not possible, with the Director, Chair of Trustees or through the Charity Commission's whistle blowing policy whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk. If you have exhausted the whistleblowing process you should escalate outside the organisation www.gov.uk/whistleblowing.

Whilst it can be very difficult to raise issues about the professional practice of a colleague this should not be ignored where to do so might leave a child or an adult with care and support needs at risk of abuse or neglect.

In the case of an allegation against a staff member or volunteer, a report must be made to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO). In Southwark the LADO role is based within the Quality Assurance Unit.

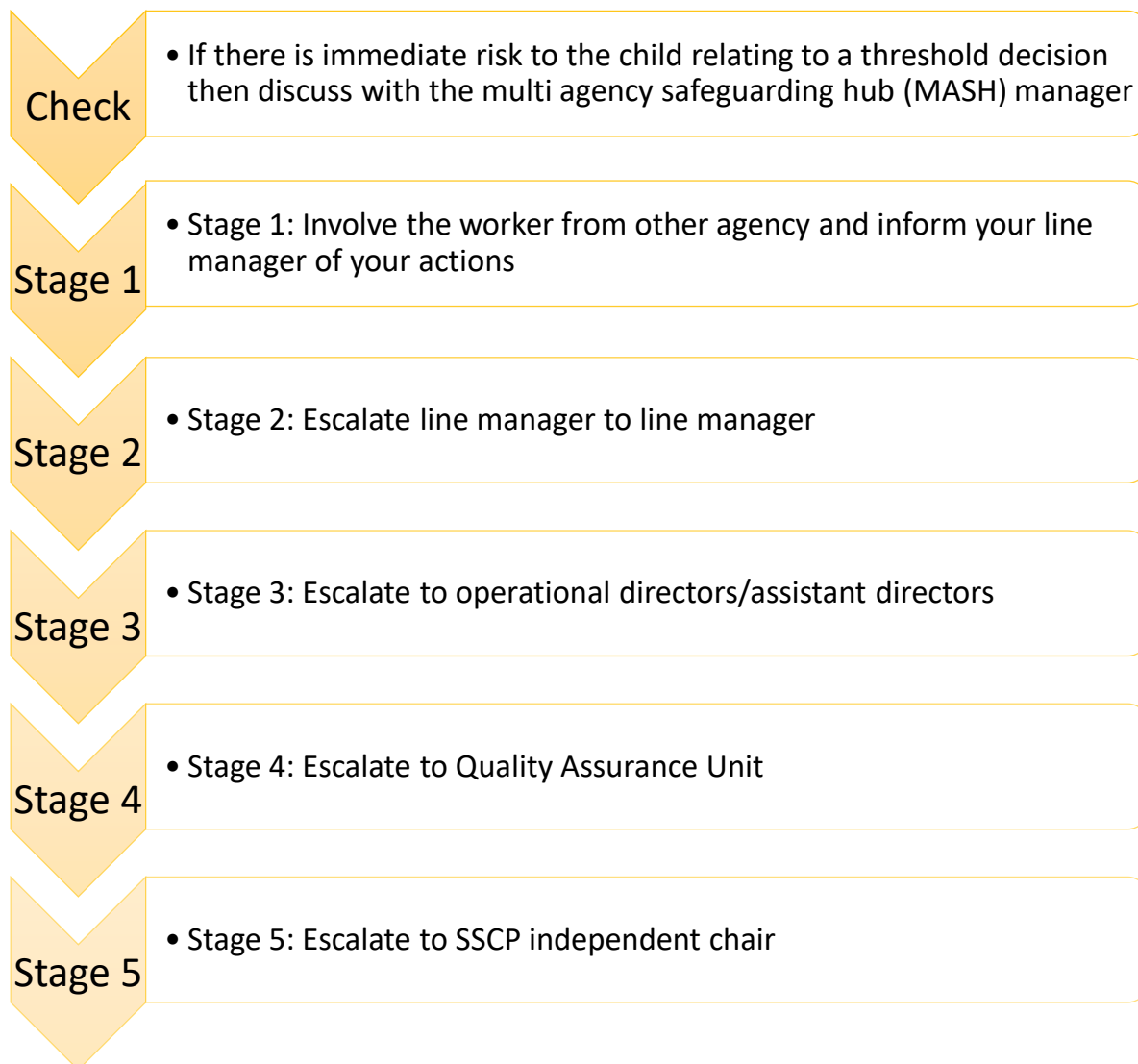
Contact numbers: QAU duty number 020 7525 3297 QAU service manager (LADO) 020 7525 0689

Escalation

Escalation is the process by which professional disputes about safeguarding issues should be dealt with. Learning from Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Adult reviews highlights the importance of resolving professional differences of opinion to ensure that children, young people and adults are not left at risk of harm. If sufficiently serious and when disagreements are not able to be resolved, it is important that they are escalated formally and recorded.

Flow Chart to guide Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) multi-agency escalation procedure for professionals or volunteers with child protection or child welfare concern

If a professional or volunteer is unhappy with a decision or response from any agency following a referral within the partnership then the following flowchart sets out a quick glance at the process



Complaints procedure

SDCAS promotes transparency and honesty when things go wrong.

- SDCAS should apologise and be honest with service users and other relevant people when things go wrong.
- If a staff or volunteer or any other member of the organisation is unhappy with SDCAS's decision about the safeguarding concern, refer them to the organisations complaints policy and procedure.
- Consider incidents of abuse which may be one-off or multiple and may affect one person or more.
- Staff and volunteers should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns.
- SDCAS is registered with the Charity Commission and therefore all staff and volunteers have a legal Duty of Care to give a full and honest explanation to people when things go wrong.
- SDCAS is committed to ensuring that staff and volunteers who in good faith whistle-blow in the public interest, will be protected from reprisals and victimisation.

Recruitment and selection

SDCAS is committed to safe recruitment practices, such as Disclosure and Barring checks and the taking of references, to reduce the risk of exposing adults and children with care and support needs to people unsuitable to work with them.

Training, awareness raising and supervision

- All staff and volunteers should be clear about the core values of SDCAS and commitment to safeguarding.
- SDCAS ensures that all staff and volunteers receive basic awareness training on this policy and safeguarding of adults and children. This is offered on an annual basis.
- Those adults may report things of concern to staff or volunteers who should be equipped with the basic knowledge around safeguarding and be confident to identify that abuse is taking place and action is required.
- It is also useful to discuss training with staff who have attended training sessions to ensure they are embedding this in practice.

Voluntary organisations (including volunteers) who support adults and children with care and support needs can access the basic awareness safeguarding training provided by Southwark Council contact: My learning source (Appx A)

SDCAS Designated Safeguarding Lead: Pascale Vassie 07534 588635
Second Designated Safeguarding Lead: Pauline Nandoo 07944 310298
Trustees responsible for safeguarding: Alan Robertson alan@sdcas.org.uk Sally Inman sally.i@sdcas.org.uk

Review of this policy

Approved: March 2023

The SDCAS Trustee Board will ensure that this policy is reviewed annually.

Appendix A

Useful local contacts

The [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) Telephone: 020 7525 1921 or 020 7525 5000 (out of hours, Email: mash@southwark.gov.uk and [Common Assessment Framework \(CAF\)](#))

[Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) In Southwark this role is based within the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) duty number 020 7525 3297, QAU service manager (LADO) 020 7525 0689 or Head of social work improvement and quality assurance 020 7525 0387

[Southwark Safeguarding Training](#) is provided via **My Learning Source**. SDCAS is registered as a community partner. To access My Learning Source contact judith@sdcas.org.uk . For any problems or training requests email learning@southwark.gov.uk

[Southwark Council Early Help Service](#): tel. 020 7525 4780, email earlyhelp@southwark.gov.uk

Southwark Council [Staying Safe and Reporting Abuse](#) - various contact numbers and emails for a variety of different needs including reporting self reporting child abuse.

Southwark Council contacts for reporting [adult abuse](#)

Reporting abuse or neglect of an adult at risk

To report a concern about an adult with care and support needs who is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, contact Southwark Adult Social Care. There are a number of ways you can do this:

- for adults with a physical or sensory disability and older people (65 years and above):
 - Email: OPPDContaktteam@southwark.gov.uk
 - Phone: 020 7525 3324
- for adults (aged 18 to 65) with a mental illness:
 - Email: MHContact@southwark.gov.uk
 - Phone: 020 7525 0088
- for adults with a learning disability:
 - Email: LearningDisabilitiesDuty@southwark.gov.uk
 - Phone: 020 7525 2333

For reasons of consistency and practicality, the charity's procedures for safeguarding vulnerable adults will be the same as those for safeguarding children and young people except where the law, or the specific circumstances of an individual's need require otherwise.

Appendix B

Categories and definitions of abuse

Abuse and neglect can take many different forms. Below are some examples. Descriptions relate to child abuse in particular.:

- **Physical abuse** - a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or failure to prevent physical injury. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child or young person. Any injury to a pre-mobile baby should be reported to the Designated Person and or First Response immediately for further consideration.
- **Psychological abuse aka emotional abuse** - severe or persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing a child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Neglect (including self neglect)** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born neglect may involve a parent/carer failing to:
 - a) Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
 - b) Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
 - c) Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
 - d) Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

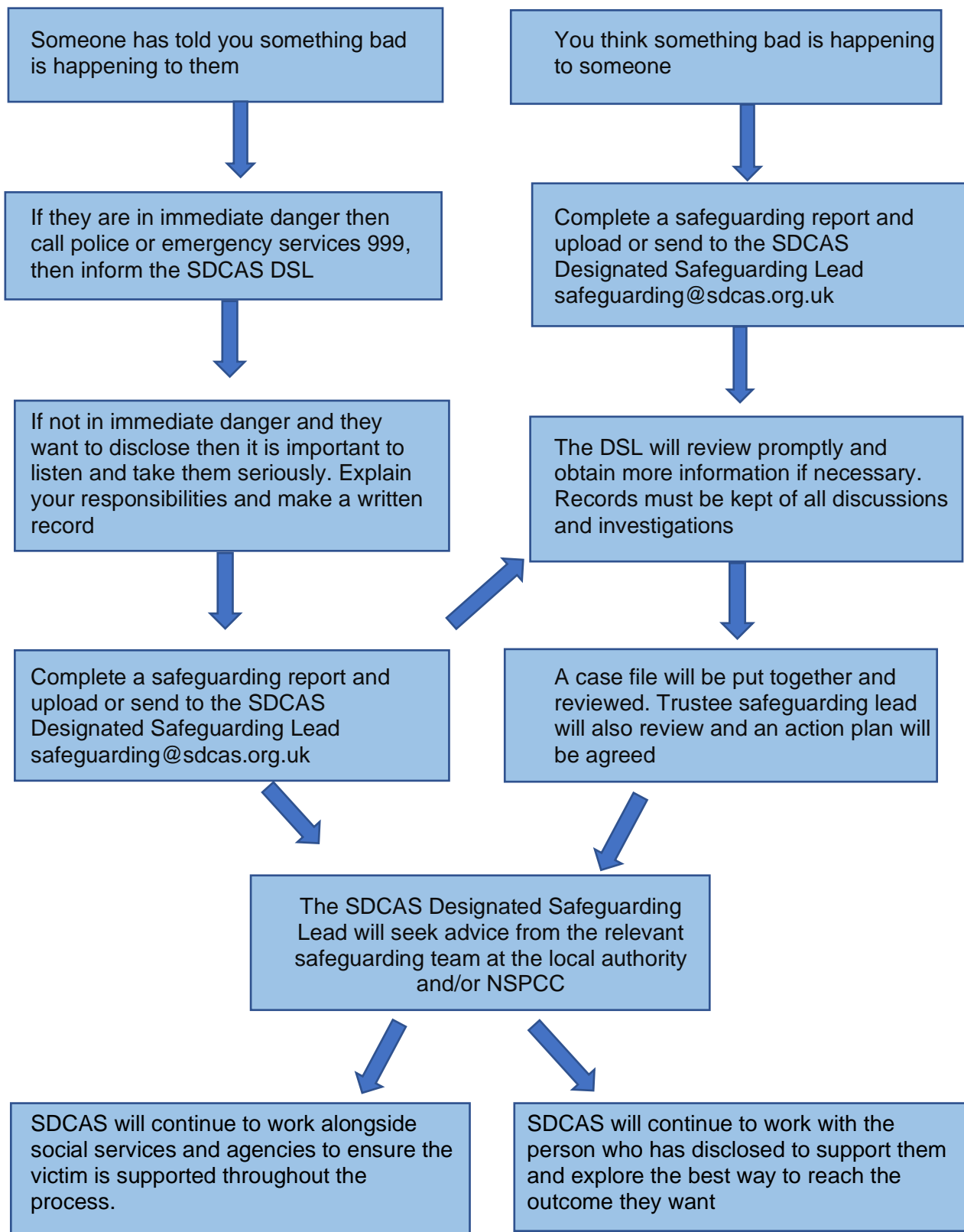
- **Sexual abuse or exploitation** - actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or young person, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching the outside of clothing. Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities, such as involving children and young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. . Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. (see child on child abuse).
- **Spirit possession or witchcraft** - Spirit possession is when parents, families and the victim believe that an evil force has entered a child or adult at risk and is controlling them; the belief includes the child or adult at risk being able to use the force to harm others. A child or adult at risk may suffer emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect if they are labelled and treated as being possessed with an evil spirit. Significant harm may occur when an attempt is made to 'exorcise' or 'deliver' the evil spirit from the child or adult. Dismissing the belief may be harmful to the child or adult at risk.

- **Historical abuse** - there may be occasions when a child, young person or adult will disclose abuse (either sexual, physical, emotional or neglect) which occurred in the past. This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.
- **Financial or material abuse** - Financial or material abuse is about unauthorised, fraudulent access to, and improper use of, funds, property or any resources of the adult at risk. This is often present with other types of abuse.
- **Disability** - A disabled person is more likely to experience domestic abuse and may be less able to protect themselves – making them more vulnerable to the possibility of being abused. The risk of abuse can be increased as they are often reliant on the perpetrator for their care.
- **Hate crime** - is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.'
- **Discriminatory abuse** - is the unequal treatment of an individual based on age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- **Domestic abuse** - Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate family partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial and emotional. If the victim of the DVA gives consent, report disclosures of DVA to the Southwark Domestic Abuse Service sdas@refuge.org.uk 020 7593 1290. DVA charities may be able to support the victim. Contact [Women's Aid](https://refuge.org.uk/Women's Aid) and/or the National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247 <https://refuge.org.uk/> Children can be victims of domestic abuse and exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting impact on children. Children experiencing this may demonstrate many of the symptoms listed in the Recognising Abuse section. Staff will need to treat them sensitively, record their concerns and consider informing First Response.
- **Organisational or institutional abuse** - the mistreatment of people typically in their workplace brought about by poor or inadequate care or support, or systematic poor practice that affects the whole care setting.
- **Human trafficking and modern slavery** - Human trafficking is defined as arranging or facilitating the travel of another person with a view to exploitation and includes travel within a country, not just across international borders. Modern slavery includes labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and criminal exploitation.
- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)** - comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003, it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent residents to take a child abroad to have FGM.
- **Forced marriage and honour based violence** – this is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both parties is 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 their parents or a third party in identifying a spouse.
- **Restraint** - unlawful or inappropriate use of restraint or physical interventions.

Appendix C:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Quick reference guide – what to do if you have a concern or have seen a safeguarding incident



Appendix D:

Record of Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers Safeguarding Concern

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Complete and submit report as soon as possible after concern is raised. Do not wait to have complete information. These notes are strictly confidential and must not be photographed or copied. Permission must be obtained from the designated safeguarding officer before they are shared with other people.

1. Name of adult considered to be at risk or child (give DOB and address if not sure person is on CRM)*

2. Nature of alleged abuse/risk of harm *

Physical	psychological	sexual	financial
neglect including self-neglect	discriminatory	institutional	other

3. What was disclosed to you or observed by you (incl. place and date) *

4. Did the adult at risk or child, disclose or express the safeguarding concern directly?
Note what outcome they want if expressed by them.

5. Other adults and/or children potentially at risk. Give name/s, age/s and location/s where appropriate/known.

6. Systemic issues (use this space if you want to note any factors you believe contribute to the safeguarding issue you are reporting).

7. Use this space if you want to note any other relevant information not entered elsewhere.

8. Name of person completing form *

9. Email of person completing form *

10. Phone of person completing form

This form can be completed [online](#)