

Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

1. VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

- (i) The Church seeks to follow the example of Christ, to obey His commands, by bringing the love and Gospel of Christ to those in our community who are vulnerable and may be adults at risk. We seek to ensure that all such persons coming within our ministry are kept safe from any form of abuse and are afforded the dignity and respect that Christ Himself gave to the vulnerable with whom He came into contact.
- (ii) The underlying ethos of all our work and of this policy is the biblical teaching that each human being is made in the image of God, so no-one should be looked down upon. Neither should any have to live in fear of harm or suffer discrimination, thus all should respect the needs and rights of others. The Bible is full of exhortations to provide for and protect the needy and vulnerable. The Lord Himself showed us through His daily life how to respect, protect and care for adults at risk: the hungry, those who had physical or mental health needs, also those whom everyone else despised.
- (iii) The aim of the policy and procedures is to protect the adults at risk in our care, and to provide a safe environment for them and for those Leaders in managing a particular ministry.
- (iv) Leaders are defined as employees of the Church, church members who have the responsibility for managing a specific ministry, or church members who volunteer to help leading a specific ministry.
- (v) Adult abuse occurs irrespective of a person's race or ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, religion, mental or physical ability.

All adults at risk will be provided for in a manner that respects the rights, dignity, privacy and beliefs of all individuals concerned and does not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, religion, language, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation.

- (vi) The Trustees require that all Leaders, relevant employees and volunteers read and accept the following policy and procedures.
- (vii) The Care Act 2014 reforms the law relating to care and support for adults and carers, and it makes provision for safeguarding adults from abuse and neglect. The Act supersedes other legislation and it is this Act that local authorities have a duty to work to when dealing with safeguarding adults.

Who is an adult at risk?

The Care Act states that safeguarding duties apply to any adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- Is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect; and

- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Who has responsibility for safeguarding adults at risk?

The Care Act makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the local authority to deal with enquiries or to delegate that task to another agency if it believes an adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect. The Care Act lays down 6 key principles:

- ❖ Empowerment.
- ❖ Prevention.
- ❖ Proportionality.
- ❖ Protection.
- ❖ Partnership.
- ❖ Accountability.

These principles should underpin all that is done to safeguard adults at risk. The local authority should always have the individual's well-being in mind when making decisions or planning services for them.

HOWEVER, it is every Leaders responsibility to be aware of different types of abuse and to raise concerns if they suspect or know of an adult at risk experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.

What is adult safeguarding and why it matters?

- (i) The Care Act states that safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. At the same time it is important to promote the adult's well-being and, where appropriate, have regard to their views, wishes and feelings in deciding on action.
- (ii) The Care Act makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the local authority to make enquiries or to delegate that task to another agency if it believes an adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect. They have the statutory responsibility and are the decision makers. The Local Authority will also seek to determine the person's capacity to make decisions in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005. (See Appendix 2 for more information).
- (iii) The aims of adult safeguarding are to prevent or stop abuse or neglect, wherever possible, or reduce the risk of it happening. It is important to treat the adult at risk with dignity and respect.
- (iv) It is important that Leaders are aware of the need to take steps to help safeguard adults at risk by being aware of the different types of abuse and their signs, supporting adults to keep safe, being clear on their roles and responsibilities in this area, and knowing how to raise concerns.

Types of abuse and neglect

The Care Act 2014 provides the following categories of abuse and neglect. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but a guide to the sort of issues, which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

- **Physical Abuse**
The non-accidental infliction of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment.
Examples of behaviour: hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, physical restraint, harassment, enforced sedation, and inappropriate use of medication and catheterisation for management ease.
- **Sexual Abuse**
Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent.
Examples of behaviour: **Non-contact** – looking, photography, indecent exposure, harassment, serious teasing or innuendo, pornography. **Contact** – coercion to touch, e.g. of breast, genitals, anus, mouth, with or by penis, finger and/or other objects, rape.
- **Domestic Abuse** Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial and Emotional.
- **Psychological/Emotional Abuse** That which impinges on the emotional health and development of individuals. It also presents with other forms of abuse.
Examples of behaviour: shouting, swearing, insulting, ignoring, threats, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, depriving an individual of the right to choice and privacy, unjustifiable withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or Material Abuse** The unauthorised, fraudulent obtaining and/or improper use of funds, property or any resources of a vulnerable person.
Examples of behaviour: theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to adult's financial affairs or arrangements, misappropriating money, valuables or property, forcing changes to a will, denying the vulnerable adult the right to access personal funds.
- **Modern Slavery** Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use any means to coerce, deceive and force people into a life of abuse and/or servitude.
- **Discriminatory Abuse** Abuse of individual rights is a violation of human and civil rights by any other person or persons.
This includes harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability sexual orientation and religion.
- **Organisational Abuse** This includes neglect or poor practice within an establishment or specific care setting or in relation to the care provided at home. This may relate to one off incidents or on-going ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practise as a result of structures, policies, processes and practices within the organisation.
- **Neglect** Ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs.
Examples of behaviour: failure to provide appropriate food, shelter, heating, clothing, medical care, hygiene, personal care; the inappropriate use of medication, or overmedication; failure to provide appropriate access to health, care and support.

- Self-neglect is "the inability (whether intentional or not) to maintain a socially and culturally accepted standard of self-care with the potential for serious consequences to the health and well-being of people who self-neglect and perhaps even to their community" (Gibbons, 2006).

For example an individual may be considered as self-neglecting and therefore at risk of harm if they are: either unable or unwilling to provide adequate care for themselves; unable or unwilling to obtain necessary care to meet their needs; and/or declining essential support so that their health and safety needs cannot be met. Examples may include hoarding and/or failure to self-medicate.

Other types of abuse to be aware of:

- Professional Abuse

The misuse of therapeutic power and abuse of trust by volunteers and professionals, the failure by them to act on suspected abuse/crimes.

Examples of behaviour: entering into a sexual relationship with a club member, failure to refer disclosure of abuse, punitive responses to challenging behaviour.

- Restraint that is unlawful or inappropriate is a form of physical abuse. Restrictive interventions can only be justified when they are used in the best interest of the person and / or to protect the safety of others. Where these are necessary the least restrictive approach should always be used.

If the person lacks capacity regarding this, any interventions must be in line with the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Code of Practice.

Human trafficking, Hate crime, Mate crime, Honour based Abuse, Forced marriage.

Values

- (i) Where adults at risk are clearly able to make choices, they must be advised of the options available and their wishes respected, unless, exceptionally, a statutory responsibility to intervene arises or there is a risk to others. If agencies are to enable people to experience both the opportunities and challenges of an 'ordinary life', some risk-taking is essential. In jointly determining appropriate action, every effort must be made to enable adults at risk to express their wishes in a way that is appropriate. Basic human and civil rights must be respected.
- (ii) All support provided by Leaders and is underpinned by the principles set out in the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Human Rights Act 1998. It should be noted that, where an individual has capacity, they must retain the right to make what might be seen as eccentric or unwise decisions. Where an individual does not have capacity, any action taken on their behalf should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms. (See Appendix 2).

Who abuses and neglects?

- Spouses/partners
- Other family members
- Neighbours
- Friends
- Acquaintances
- Leaders
- Strangers
- Paid staff and professionals

AND

Abuse can happen anywhere.

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of abuse occurring

Safe recruitment procedures

The Adult Safeguarding Lead (ASL) for the Church will ensure all Leaders, where appropriate, undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check, to be repeated three yearly.

- Leaders will make themselves familiar with the policy and procedures.
- Ministry Leaders will ensure all Leaders read the document and then sign to say they have done so.
- Trustees, the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator (CSC) and the Adult Safeguarding Lead (ASL) for the Church will regularly review and update this document as appropriate.
- Trustees, the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator, and the Adult Safeguarding Lead for the Church and Ministry Leaders will ensure systems are in place, whereby concerns regarding possible abuse of adults at risk can be reported, and issue clear guidance to all Leaders regarding the reporting mechanism (See Appendix 1)

Prevention of physical abuse

All such abuse must be avoided and physical restraint should only be used when the life or health and safety of the person needing to be restrained, or another person in the group or a leader is at risk.

Neither should any threat of abuse or force be used, including verbal threats or, for example, raising one's fist. Adopting a threatening posture should be avoided, including invasion of a person's space or cornering them. Play fighting between all Leaders and adults at risk should normally be avoided.

Prevention of sexual abuse

All Leaders work within a relationship of trust. Any form of a sexual relationship between them and an adult at risk is deemed as abusive and must be avoided at all costs. This is because of the imbalance of power and influence in the relationship.

We should seek to give true dignity and respect to all those in our care, protecting them from any form of sexual embarrassment. Thus great care should be taken to safeguard the privacy of those in our care. Other than in exceptional circumstances, when we have a duty of care towards someone or a person is deemed to be seriously at risk, no-one should be disturbed whilst undressing or dressing or whilst in the toilet.

Avoidance of sexual embarrassment should include the avoidance of the use of innuendos when speaking with an adult at risk. It should also include the wearing of modest clothing. Sexualised behaviour, or behaviour which could be misconstrued between Leaders or between Leaders and an adult at risk, should be avoided, as this could lead to insecurity for the adult at risk and lead to their believing it is right they should behave in the same way, thus placing them and/or others at risk.

Prevention of emotional abuse

It is extremely easy for Leaders to abuse someone in their care emotionally, so it is very important that we act in a thoughtful and sensitive manner at all times. It is unacceptable for anyone to make fun of an adult at risk.

Emotional abuse can also occur when Leaders request an adult at risk to keep a matter secret by using a threat or any form of coercion.

Prevention of financial abuse

In order to avoid even the appearance of financial abuse, the following guidelines must be carefully implemented:

- (i) No Leader should agree to look after money for an adult at risk. If in unusual circumstances this becomes necessary, a receipt (receipt book) should be given to the person concerned and a copy kept.
- (ii) An adult at risk may very easily be persuaded to give money to Leaders, or easily persuaded to spend their money on items chosen by a Leader. We have a duty of care to advise those who are particularly vulnerable and to help them in their choice of spending. However, any suggestion to spend money on items chosen because of a Leader's own interests must be carefully avoided.
- (iii) Leaders should not lend money to an adult at risk. This can lead to difficulties in trying to recoup money owed, giving rise to pressure on Leaders, or to accusations of unfairness.
- (iv) On no account should a Leader borrow money from an adult at risk.
- (v) An adult at risk may lack the capacity to make a decision on appearing in photographs, social media, etc. Care must be taken to ensure they are giving informed consent. (see Church media policy)

Practical measures to prevent accusation

- (i) It is important that all Leaders recognise the fact that, when working with adults at risk, they themselves may be at risk of accusation of inappropriate behaviour or abuse. If the ministry Leader is aware of particular individuals who are likely to make accusations or to misinterpret a Leader's behaviour, the Ministry Leader is expected to warn the Leader of the risk. If any Leader is aware of such a risk, they should inform the Ministry Leader.
- (ii) As far as is reasonably practical, no Leader should be on their own with someone who is known to make allegations. If this situation cannot be avoided, it is down to the Ministry Leader to risk assess the specific situation and recommend what steps need to be put in place to minimise risk to both the adult at risk and Leaders. If experiencing difficulty, it is the responsibility of any Leader to follow advice given and to request further advice from the Ministry Leader where needed.
- (iii) It must be remembered that an adult at risk may misinterpret Leader's actions or words because of earlier, harmful and confusing experiences. However, it is the responsibility of the Ministry Leader to take seriously an accusation made by any adult at risk, and to take appropriate steps.
- (iv) Although the welfare of the Leaders will always be most carefully considered, the accusation will also be most carefully considered. It may be deemed necessary immediately to request the accused Leader to withdraw their services from the ministry whilst the matter is being investigated. Thus it is vital that Leaders act on any advice given with regard to avoiding accusations of abuse.

- (v) In general Leaders should avoid the following:
- Being alone with an adult at risk, who is of the opposite sex, including the provision of transport. Owing to limited transport facilities, it is appreciated that this may not always be possible.
 - Being in a one to one counselling situation with a person who is of the opposite sex, or with a person who is disclosing sexual abuse or other very personal matters. If it is absolutely necessary, the door of the room should be left open.

Recognising signs and signals of possible abuse

Where abuse has occurred one or more of the following signs or indicators may have been or may be present, for example:

- Seeking shelter or protection
- Unexplained reactions towards particular individuals or settings
- Frequent or regular visits to the GP or the accident and emergency department, or hospital admissions
- Frequent or irrational refusal to accept investigations or treatments for routine difficulties
- Unexplained bruising, burns, fractures or broken bones
- Unusual physical changes
- Unexpected change in material circumstances
- Inconsistency of explanation regarding the area of possible concern
- Carer(s) or third party always wishing to be present during conversations
- Panic attacks, withdrawal of verbal communication, regressive behavior
- Absconding/wandering
- Dislike of being touched and flinching on being touched
- Obsessive or challenging behavior
- Self-harm
- Withdrawal

None of these indicators alone definitely suggests abuse. However, suspicions should be heightened if one or a combination of factors exists.

Adult at risk may also be an abuser

It must be recognised that an adult at risk themselves can cause abuse as well as be a victim of abuse. In this case, if an alleged crime or incident has been committed, it should be assumed that the person has the capacity to know what they are doing and the decisions they are making, unless it has been established that they do not have capacity. If a Leader becomes aware that an adult at risk may be, or is, abusing others, they should inform the Adult Safeguarding Lead or the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

(i) **MINISTRY LEADERS, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS AS ABUSER**

If a Leader is aware of another Leader abusing an adult at risk, they should inform the Adult Safeguarding Officer immediately (see Section 13 below). If the accusation is against the Adult Safeguarding Lead they should inform the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

If the allegation is against an employee, the same reporting procedures apply and the relevant HR policies and procedures will be followed.

(ii) **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

If Leaders are aware that an adult at risk is living in an environment where they are witnessing domestic abuse, it is important that the Adult Safeguarding Lead is informed without delay.

Managing concerns

(i) OVERVIEW

Listen to what the adult at risk is saying, but do not question them.

Ensure the immediate safety of the adult at risk, alerting emergency services if necessary.

Inform the Adult Safeguarding Lead for the Church, (or if they are unavailable, the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator), who will then follow the local authority safeguarding adults procedures.

The Leader should carefully record what the adult at risk is communicating. This communication should be taken seriously as it could be regarded as a source of evidence. No internal investigation should occur at this time. It is, therefore, important to listen and not ask leading questions, which may suggest or invite an anticipated or acceptable answer. Record the concerns precisely, as expressed by the adult at risk, including the time, date and location that the disclosure was made. All written notes should be made as soon as practicable, as they may become the basis for a formal interview at a later date.

(ii) LEADERS GUIDANCE (see Appendix 1)

The Leader should:

Remain calm. Listen very carefully to what is being said. Demonstrate a sympathetic approach by acknowledging concern that this has happened to them. Reassure the adult at risk, by telling them

- that they have done the right thing by sharing the information with you
- that you are treating the information seriously
- that the abuse is not their fault (if information shared by the victim).

Be aware of the possibility of needing to capture forensic evidence. Explain that it is necessary immediately to share the information with the Adult Safeguarding Lead or Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator in order to safeguard the welfare of everyone concerned. Reassure the adult at risk, that any further investigation will be conducted sensitively and with their full involvement, wherever possible. Reassure the adult at risk, that the Leader will take steps to support and, where appropriate, protect them in the future.

The Leader should **NOT**:

- confront or contact the alleged abuser.

This may put them, and the adult at risk, at risk. This could be the role of the police during the investigation, if a criminal offence has been committed.

- begin an investigation on your own and **not** question the adult at risk as they could prove to be leading questions.

There are staff from the police and social care teams, learning disability and mental health teams in the area where the alleged abuse took place, who have been trained to carry out safeguarding adult's assessments and investigations.

- damage/destroy possible evidence.

Be aware that you may be the first to hear about allegations of abuse. It is important that the adult at risk, gives their full account to people who have a role in investigation. If a physical or sexual assault may have been committed, the police need to be informed immediately in order to gather possible forensic evidence.

- discuss the alleged abuse with people other than the Church Adult Safeguarding Lead.

Police involvement

In cases of serious assault and sexual assault/rape, i.e. an offence against a vulnerable person, it is the responsibility of the police to gather evidence, even if the victim does not wish to make a statement or to press charges. It is, therefore, very important that the police should be informed *and no action is taken that might compromise forensic evidence.*

Helping those who have experienced abuse in the past

DO

- Listen carefully to what they say
- Accept what is said, even if very shocking
- Encourage them to believe things can change
- Ask if you can pray for them
- Act to help the abused person
- Think about counselling/further help

DON'T

- Ask lots of questions
- Panic!
- Promise to keep the abuse secret
- Touch the person without permission
- Expect them to forgive the abuser now
- Believe you have all the answers!

Confidentiality

Wherever possible, the consent of the adult at risk to share information should be obtained where a disclosure of abuse has been made. On some occasions it may be necessary to pass information on without their consent. This could include incidents where:

- A criminal offence has been or is likely to be committed
- The adult at risk, or someone else may be in imminent danger
- There is a significant risk to health/well-being – physical and/or mental health
- There are concerns around adult abuse/neglect

However, the person disclosing the alleged abuse should be told of this and advised that they will be consulted so their views can be established.

Who do we go to with a safeguarding concern?

Whether the abuse is intentional or not, whether it is just a suspicion, it is still important to raise the concern. CEC has an Adult Safeguarding Lead, and a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Contact details can be found below for the ASL, the CSC and CCPAS.

But as stated earlier:

The Care Act makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the local authority to make enquiries or to delegate that task to another agency if it believes an adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect.

Contact the Social Services office that covers the area where the alleged abuse/ neglect took place.

Who is responsible for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults?

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, and where abuse is discovered or suspected it must be reported. The safeguarding of vulnerable adults is a high priority for our church.

Issues regarding the safeguarding of vulnerable adults should come to the Adult Safeguarding Lead (ASL).

Adult Safeguarding Lead (ASL)

Contact number:

Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator (CSC)

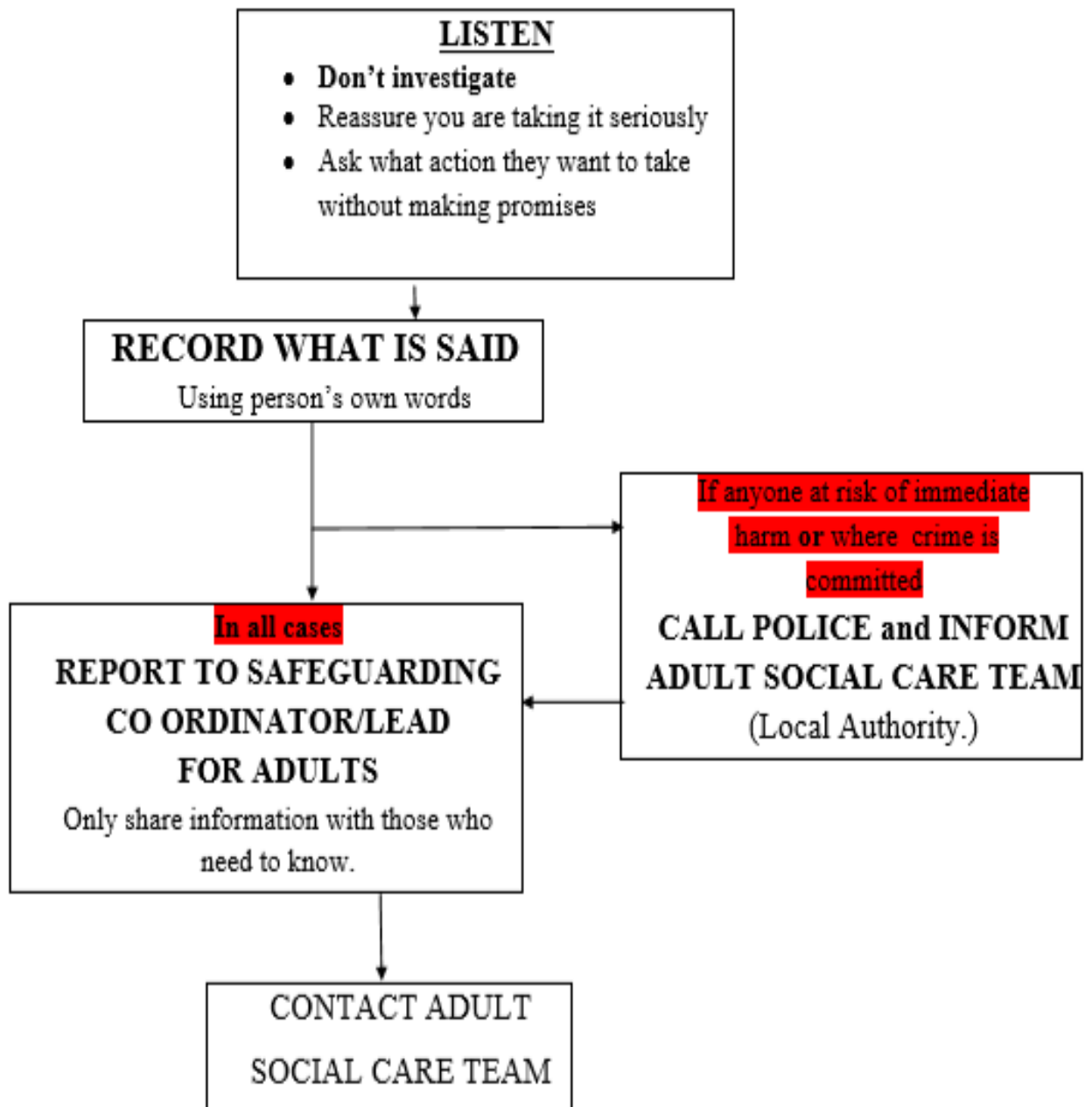
Contact number:

Lead DBS Recruiter

In emergency dial 999

YOUR Council Social Care Team

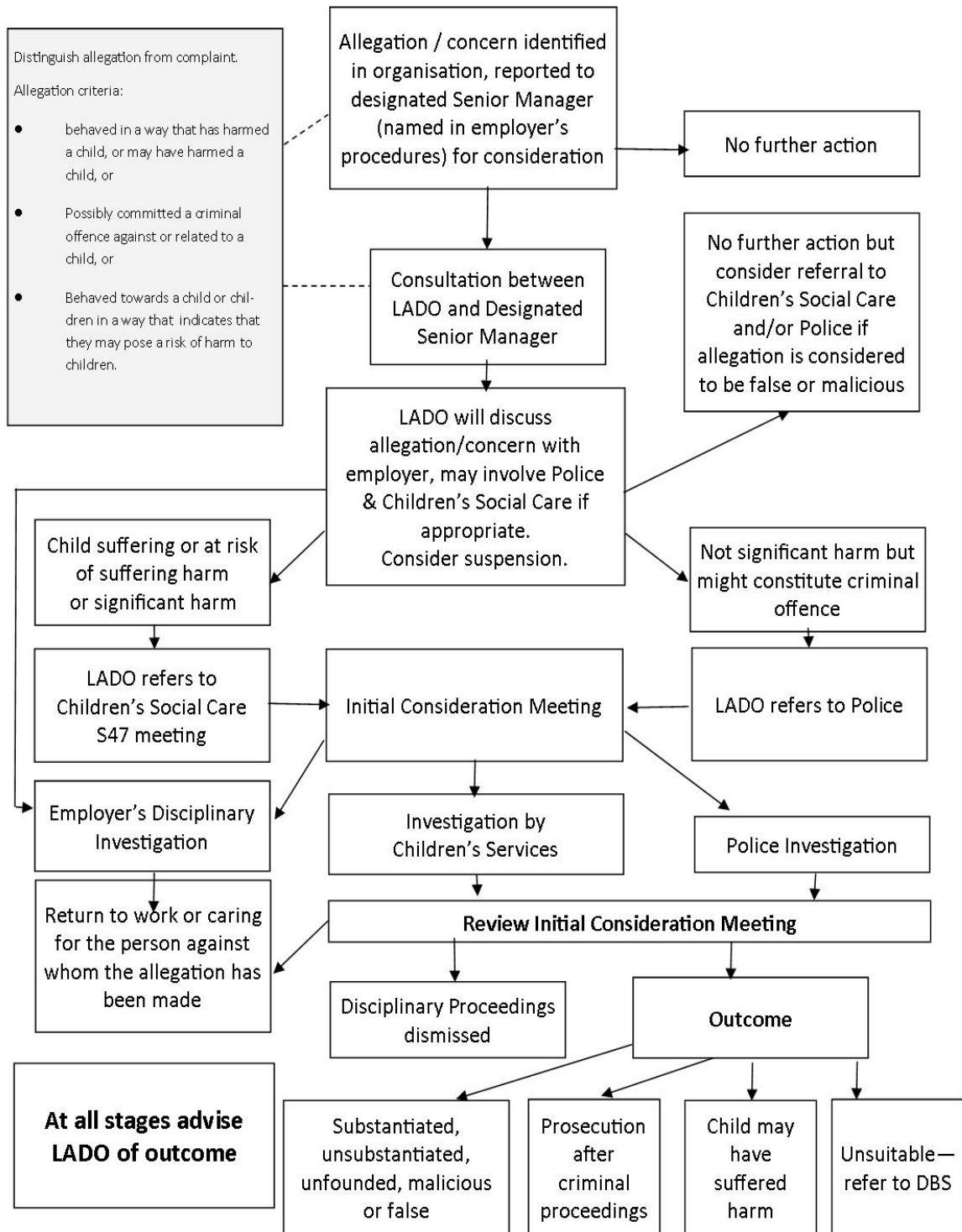
Responding to a report about actual /suspected abuse



Remember

- You do not need to share information with family members if the adult at risk has not given their consent
- Sharing information could compromise any safeguarding investigation

2.3 Worker



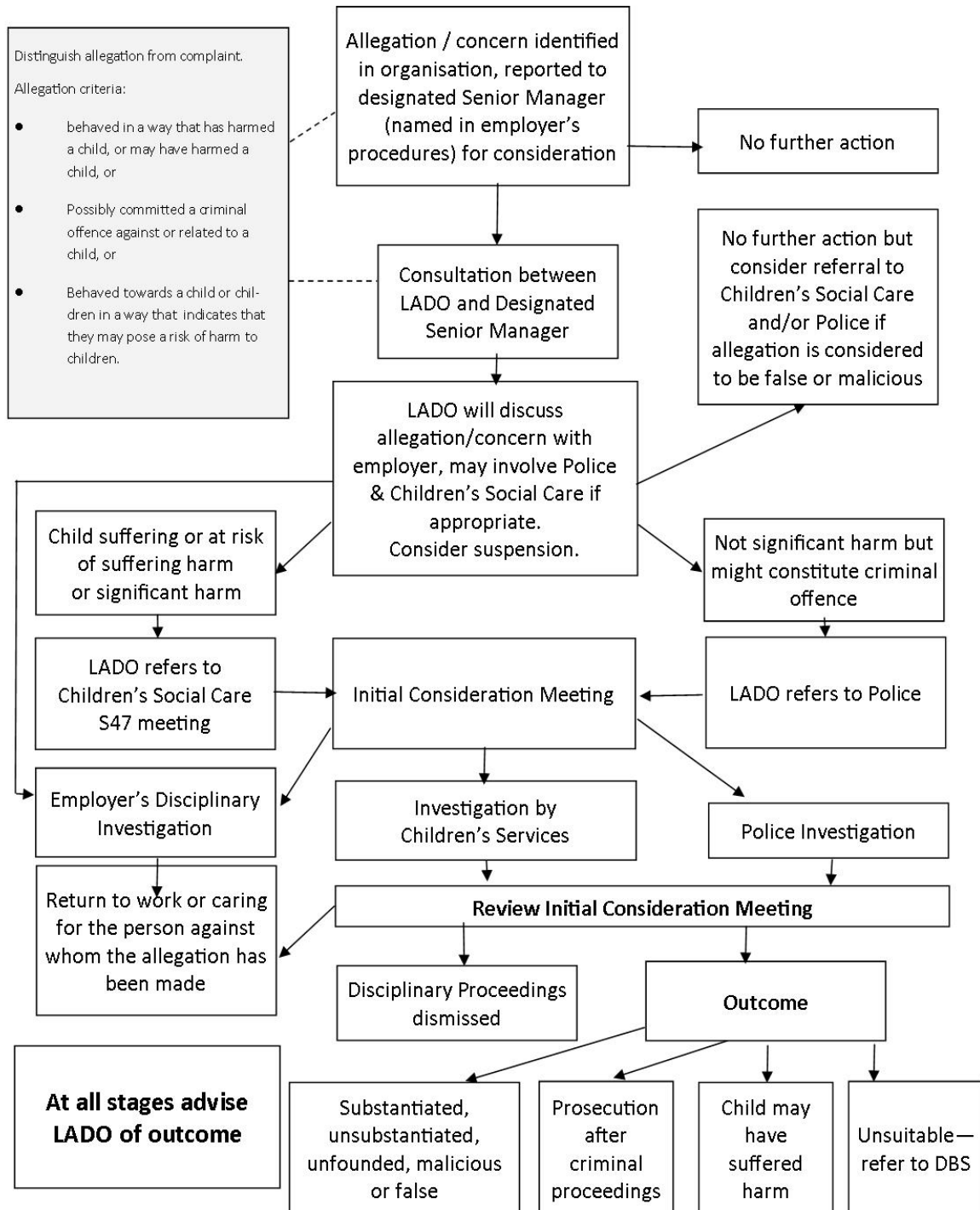
Support for the Individual, and Aftercare

Employers have a duty of care to their workers and should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations & disciplinary process. Support to the individual is key. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by social care or police. They should be advised to contact a trade union representative, if they have one, and given access to welfare counselling or medical advice where this is provided by the employer. Particular care needs to be taken when employees are suspended to ensure that they are kept informed of both the progress of their case and current work-related issues. Social contact with colleagues and friends should not be discouraged except where it is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence. Throughout the process the individual should be aware of the concerns and why his or her suitability to work with children is being questioned and given the opportunity to state his or her case. When an employee returns to work following a suspension, or on the conclusion of a case, arrangements should be made to facilitate his or her reintegration. This may involve informal counselling, guidance, support, re-assurance and help to rebuild confidence in working with children and young people. Employers notified in writing at the end of the process of outcomes.

It is important for employers to take into account the emotional effects that allegation investigations can sometimes bring to a workplace (regardless of the outcome or whether staff are involved or not) and for organisations that do not have good HR/aftercare to consider that staff may have unresolved feelings & will need support.

APPENDIX 2

2.3 Worker



Support for the Individual, and Aftercare

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