

Safeguarding Overview

These procedures apply to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Marches Family Network. All staff and volunteers at Marches Family Network have a responsibility to safeguard the children and young people in our care and ensure safe practice at all times.

The term 'safeguarding' does not just apply to children; we also have a duty to safeguard vulnerable adults in our care. A vulnerable adult is:

- a person who is or may be in need of community care services because of their mental health, age, illness, or other disabilities;
- a person who is or may be unable to take care of themselves;
- a person who is unable to protect themselves against serious harm or being taken advantage of.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children and young people from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children and young people's health and development
- ensuring that children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

Purpose and aim of this procedure

We aim to ensure those children and young people who attend Marches Family Network sessions, and any other children and young people who may come to the attention of Marches Family Network, receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse.

This procedure provides clear direction to staff and volunteers at Marches Family Network if they have concerns that a child or young person is in need of protection.

Different types of abuse and methods of abuse

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Peer on peer abuse
- Bullying
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

- Sexual exploitation
- Abuse via online methods
- Radicalisation
- Trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Abuse linked to beliefs such as spirit possession and witchcraft

Indicators of abuse in children and young people

The NSPCC website provides useful information about the signs and symptoms of abuse – see link below

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>

Abuse is not always obvious, and there are many reasons why children and young people may not tell anyone that they are being abused. They might not even realize that what is happening to them is abusive.

Many of the signs that suggest abuse may also be caused by other issues, and often it is a case of investigating agencies needing to build up a picture of a child's life by piecing together information held by different individuals and organizations.

It is also important to point out that children and young people can experience various types of abuse at the same time.

Abuse can happen to anyone but children and young people with disabilities are more likely to be abused or neglected than their non-disabled peers (Jones et al, 2012).

Children and young people with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse due to:

- Communication barriers
- Increased social isolation
- Dependency on others, particularly for personal care
- Inadequate responses to disclosure
- Staff and volunteers missing the signs
- Lack of education about staying safe
- Impaired capacity to resist or report abuse
- More frequently away from home

The different forms of abuse and indicators of abuse will be explored more thoroughly through safeguarding training.

Marches Family Network's Safeguarding Procedures and Systems

Key Points

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately
- Marches Family Network is registered on Ofsted's Early Years Register and on the Childcare Register. As such, Marches Family Network has a duty to report (a) a child accident, injury or death on the premises while the child is in our care, and (b) death of, or

serious accident or serious injury to, a child or any other person on the premises, **whether or not the child is in our care.**

- Marches Family Network has a process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals and will store these securely in compliance with current relevant legislation.
- In matters of data protection, confidentiality and information sharing, the protection of the child is always the most important consideration.
- Marches Family Network is committed to safe recruitment, selection and vetting of all trustees, staff and volunteers (see Recruitment Policy and Vetting Procedure Policy).
- All trustees, staff and volunteers working with children will have regular training with regard to safeguarding in accordance with their roles and responsibilities. A handbook provides general guidance for the conduct of staff members and all workers have access to a copy of the Safeguarding Policy, and other relevant policies, produced by the Charity.
- Children, young people, parents and carers are informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate.

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern – See Appendix 1

Key Points for Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

- Keep clear and detailed records
- Complete all paperwork fully
- Wherever possible have a witness with you, this safeguards both the young people and the staff members/volunteers
- If you are unsure about what to do contact your DSO, Manager or, if they are both unavailable, the local relevant social care team (See Useful Contacts)
- **Please remember** – it is not up to you to determine whether or not a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing abuse, it is your job to report any concerns

Safeguarding and Alcohol/Drugs Procedure

If a parent, carer or relative appears to be drunk or clearly under the influence of drugs (prescription or illegal) and it is apparent that s/he is (a) not fit to drive a vehicle or (b) too incapacitated to take care of the child/young person, Marches Family Network staff must NOT release the child/young person from their care and do the following:

1. Phone the emergency contact/s, to whom the parent/carer has given authorization to collect their child/young person
2. If the emergency contacts are unavailable, contact both the police and the duty social worker (MASH/ART/INITIAL contact Team, or if outside normal office hours, the Emergency Duty Team). The police and social care services are agencies with statutory powers, who will act quickly to secure the immediate safety of the child/young person where there is a risk to his/her life or a likelihood of serious immediate harm

Marches Family Network's duty and responsibility is to prevent the child or young person from

being harmed. In this situation we will ensure the child or young person's safety by not releasing the child/young person from our care. This is not the same as removing a child/young person from their parent's or carer's, which must NOT be done.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is the first point of contact for all staff and volunteers to go to for advice if they are concerned about a child or young person (this may also need to be out of hours so staff and volunteers should always know how to contact them);
2. They have a higher level of safeguarding training and knowledge than the rest of the staff;
3. They are responsible for ensuring that their organisation's safeguarding policy is kept up to date;
4. They ensure that they comply with safe recruitment procedures for new staff members and their induction.
5. They support staff to assist in information regarding concerns and support decision making about whether staff concerns are sufficient enough to notify Children's Social Care Services or whether other courses of action are more appropriate;
6. They make formal referrals to the Children's Social Care Services and Adult Referral Teams;
7. They ensure that concerns are logged and stored securely
8. They have joint responsibility with the management committee or Board of Trustees to ensure that the organisation's safeguarding policy and related policies and procedures are followed and regularly updated;
9. They are responsible for promoting a safe environment for children and young people;
10. They know the contact details of relevant statutory agencies eg Children's Social Care Services, Police, Local Safeguarding Children Board, and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff.

It is not the responsibility of the designated safeguarding officer to decide whether a child has been abused or not - that is the responsibility of investigative statutory agencies such as Children's Social Care Services or the police.

The Role of LADO and Allegations Made Against Staff Members and Concerns about Staff Conduct

In order to manage allegations against child care professionals, every Local Authority appoints a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO works within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk to children

In this context, the term "professional" includes paid employees, volunteers, casual/agency staff and self-employed workers who will have contact with children as a part of their role. If the practice of a child care professional does not fall into the above criteria but is or may be considered inadequate then the line manager must be made aware of this immediately so that appropriate action may be taken. Failure to report concerns may result in disciplinary action. The LADO ensures that all allegations or concerns about professionals or adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way. The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. The LADO provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process

Reporting Allegations/Concerns

1. Any allegation should be reported immediately to the manager and DSO. The manager/DSO will advise on action to be taken; any action taken will take into account the wellbeing and safety of the child or young person as the top priority. The LADO should also be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the police. The LADO must also be informed of any assessments/allegations about a professional's personal /family life which could suggest that they may be a risk to children with whom they are working.
2. All cases will be subject to an initial joint evaluation between the LADO and referring agency, involving relevant sectors as and when appropriate including, the Police, Children's social care services, employers and regulatory bodies .The assessment will focus on the nature of the concern, safeguarding for the particular child/children and appropriate consideration for the professional/volunteer involved.
3. The protection of a child/young person will be the prime consideration in the process of managing an allegation .The child/young person's involvement in the process including support and feedback will be given careful consideration with the LADO ensuring that the child's voice is heard.
4. For the professional involved, the assessment and subsequent action will be stressful whatever the outcome and support for each individual must be considered and provided where appropriate.
5. If an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Procedure in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff/volunteer

See Appendix 2

Action to be taken if an allegation of abuse leading to serious harm by a member of staff/volunteer has been recorded

If an allegation is made against an employee or volunteer, the manager will be **IMMEDIATELY** informed. The following action will then be taken by the manager:-

- The member of staff against whom the allegation is made will immediately be suspended;
- The Police and Ofsted will be notified immediately;
- Immediate contact should also be made with MASH/ART/INITIAL contact Team and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or if outside normal office hours, the Emergency Duty Team, who will advise further on an appropriate course of action;
- No discussions are to be held at this stage with the member of staff concerned and the matter should not be discussed further with the child or other persons involved unless requested by the relevant authorities. Confidentiality should be maintained throughout this matter, in order that any subsequent investigation is not prejudiced.

Disclosure Guidelines

If a child or young person wants to confide or disclose abuse –

Receive: Accept what is being said without judgement. Take the disclosure seriously.

Reassure: Reassure the child/young person, but don't make promises that you can't keep. Reassure the child/young person that they did nothing wrong and that you take what is said

seriously. Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets. You have a duty to report your concerns.

React: Listen quietly, carefully and patiently. Do not make assumptions or jump to conclusions. Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the child/young person is telling the truth. Remember that an allegation of abuse may lead to a criminal investigation, so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation. Let the child/young person explain to you in his or her own words what happened, but don't ask leading questions. Communicate with the child/young person in a way that is appropriate to their age and level of understanding. This is especially important for children and young people with disabilities and for children/young people whose preferred language is not English. Do not ask the child/young person to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff. Explain what you have to next including who you have to tell. Refer directly to your line manager, followed by the DSO or manager. Do not discuss the case with anyone who does not need to know. This includes other staff members who are not working directly with the child or young person.

Record: Make some brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible. Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by Court. Record the date, time, place, words used by the child/young person and how the child/young person appeared to you – be specific. Record the actual words used. Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions – keep it factual.

Useful Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for Marches Family Network	01568 614 908 or 07437 902 661
Ofsted	0300 123 1231
Herefordshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01432 261708
Herefordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	01432 260 800
Herefordshire Advice and Referral Team (ART)	01432 260 715 or 0330 123 9309
Herefordshire Emergency Duty Team (out of hours for when MASH are unavailable)	01905 768 020
Shropshire Initial Contact Team	0345 678 9021
Shropshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01743 254 408
Shropshire Emergency Duty Team (out of hours for when Initial Contact Team are unavailable)	0345 678 9040
NSPCC	0808 800 5000

Approved by Trustee Board

October 2016

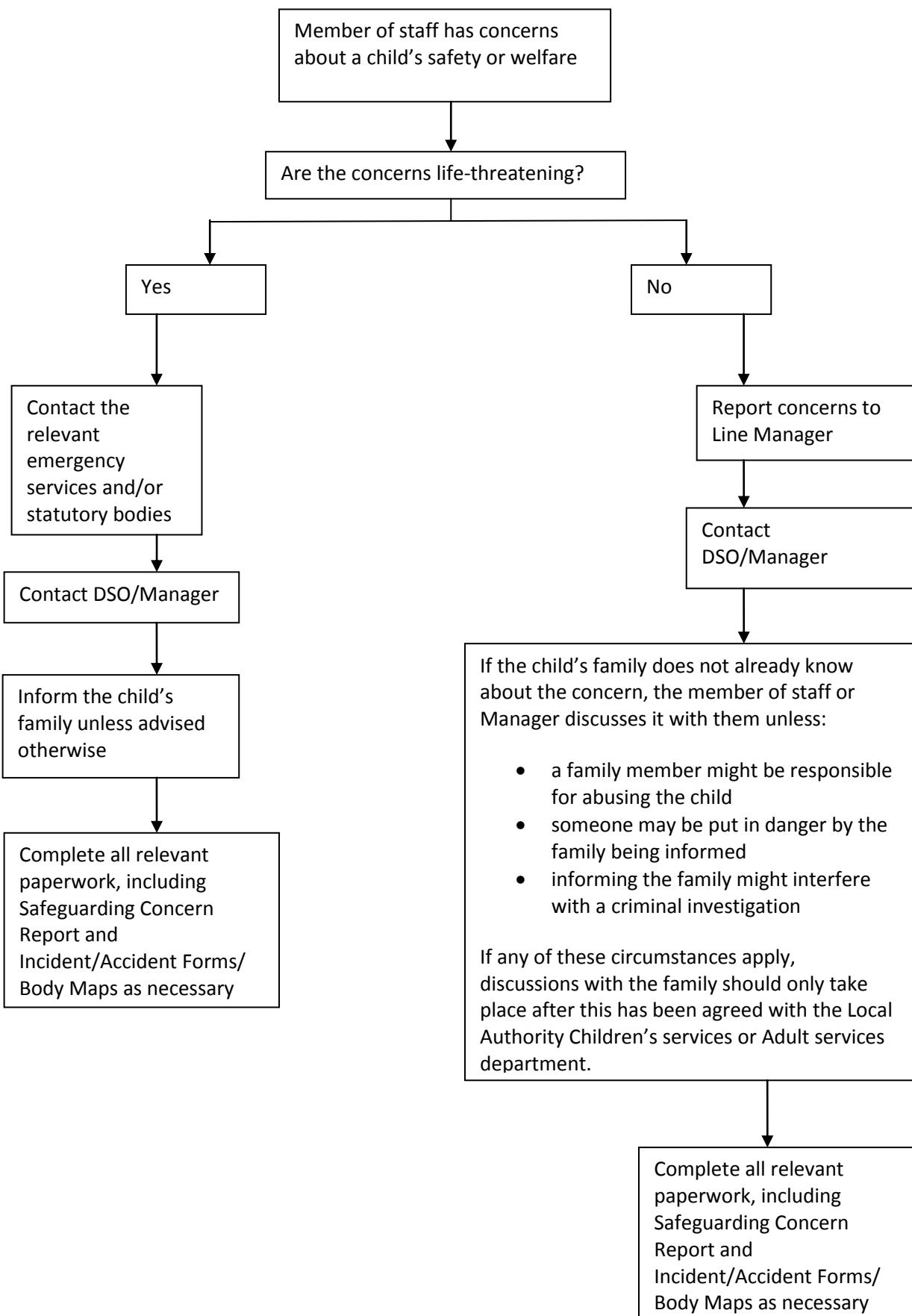
Signed

Print Name

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October 2018

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern



Reporting Allegations about Staff Members

