

## PROCEDURE:

# Responding to a Concern about a Child's Welfare

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### Document control

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## 1.0 Purpose of this procedure

The Blaggrave Trust and its employees are committed to keeping children safe from harm. Our full [Safeguarding Policy](#) can be found on our website or by request.

### **This procedure aims to:**

- Provide clear guidance for staff and non-constituted individuals / collectives working under our safeguarding policy and working with children (this includes Blaggrave staff where applicable) on how to report concerns about the welfare of a child (under 18 years old).
- Identify key contact details for reporting both concerns within Blaggrave, and to relevant external organisations.
- Support staff, volunteers, and non-constituted individuals / collectives at Blaggrave to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse.

As The Trust doesn't work directly with children, this procedure mainly applies non-constituted individuals / collectives who are directly working with children and are operating under Blaggrave's policies and procedures as a requirement of their funding.

Where applicable, as outlined in the scope of this procedure, it may also apply to Blaggrave staff and volunteers that may at times come into contact with children outside of regulated activity.

It's important to remember that it is not your role nor responsibility to determine if something is abuse, and you should avoid any form of investigation. Your responsibility requires you only to recognise, respond, record, and report any concerns of abuse to the relevant safeguarding team named within this procedure. **This procedure will take you through that process step by step.**

**The child's welfare is paramount.  
Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

## 2.0 Scope of this procedure

### **Non-constituted individuals / collectives**

If you are a non-constituted individual or collective funded by The Trust (for example through Challenge and Change or the Pathways Fund) who currently don't have in place any safeguarding policy or set of procedures, you will have been asked to operate under our procedures (this also includes whistleblowing, and adult safeguarding). If this is you, this procedure is primarily written to provide you with safeguarding support for any children in which you might work with through your funded project. Accessing this support will in no way negatively affect your funding, rather it is a requirement of it. We hope it will help you to better understand how to develop your own safeguarding policies and procedures in the future, enabling you to keep children safe and increase the impact of

your projects. The Blaggrave safeguarding team are available to you five days a week, 9-5pm to call or email. You can fill out the [safeguarding incident form](#) at any time.

As an non-constituted individual or collective, you will also have access and be required to attend free safeguarding training to ensure you feel confident in using this procedure (including that of Blaggrave’s adult safeguarding and whistleblowing procedure).

Please ask a Blaggrave member of staff if you feel you need further support in how to use this procedure effectively.

### **Staff working with children in the community and external groups**

Blaggrave staff/volunteers may observe safeguarding concerns regarding the welfare of children they do not have direct responsibility for, e.g. a charity event, or grant making visit. In this instance Blaggrave staff and volunteers should still report directly to the Blaggrave safeguarding team as outlined in this procedure. In these instances, the safeguarding team will raise your concerns directly to the charity partner DSO/DSL where appropriate. If the incident is during a visit, you might also choose to do this yourself however you must also report it directly to the Blaggrave safeguarding team – please ensure you include any actions that you have taken when reporting the incident.

It is important to never assume any other organisation, e.g. a charity partner, has or will in the future report your concerns. To avoid such situations, you should always record your concern and any actions taken via the [safeguarding incident form](#) unless advised otherwise by a member of the Blaggrave safeguarding team.

### **3.0 Glossary of terms**

<b>Vulnerable Adult</b>	An older term under the Care Act 2014 that has now been replaced with ‘Adult at Risk’ (see below).
<b>Adult at risk</b>	A person 18 years and over, where safeguarding duties apply, that meets the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)</li> <li>• is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Young adult</b>	Any person between the ages of 18 years and 30.
<b>Children</b>	As per the Children Act 2004, this is a legal term that refers to all those who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. Duty of care for this group may include those referred or accessing any activity or project delivered by The Trust or through that

	delivered by individual grantees who operate under The Trusts safeguarding policy and procedures.
<b>Adviser</b>	A person 18 years or older that is paid on a freelance basis by The Trust to provide expertise in specific youth-focused programs. These individuals are usually part of a group of advisers who are facilitated by an externally contracted facilitator.
<b>Non-constituted individuals / collectives</b>	A young adult or a collective of young adults who have received a grant from The Trust and whose funded work is not supported nor affiliated in any way with a charity or regulated body outside of The Trust. This person will most likely operate under The Trust's safeguarding policies and procedures, including this one.
<b>Delivery partner</b>	A group, individual or organisation that has received a grant from The Trust.
<b>Staff</b>	A paid individual with either an employment or freelance contract with Blagrave (this does not include 'young advisors').
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	A role and person within the organisation who has ultimate responsibility for operational safeguarding processes and procedures.
<b>Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)</b>	Roles of one or more individuals within the organisation who supports the DSL, in a deputised role, to carry out their safeguarding duties.
<b>Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL)</b>	A role and person on the trustee board who is responsible for ensuring organisational compliance to legislation and external regulators.
<b>Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)</b>	A government service that helps employers make safer recruitment decisions.
<b>The Trust / Blagrave</b>	The Blagrave Trust

#### 4.0 Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

This procedure recognises abuse as any act, or failure to act, which results in significant harm to a child. This often corresponds to a significant breach of a child's human rights, as per the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

Equally, due to a child having very poor mental health they may be at risk of significantly harming themselves. In these instances, any concerns such as suicidal ideation, self-harm, psychosis etc. should all be reported as safeguarding concerns in line with this procedure. As always, there is no requirement to be an expert in mental health or investigate your concerns, rather if you have a concern relating to a child's wellbeing, be it abuse or mental health, your duty is to recognise, respond, report and record - following this procedures processes.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#), includes definitions of the four broad categories of abuse which are used for the purposes of recognising child abuse:

- **Physical Abuse**
- **Emotional Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Neglect**

These categories overlap, and an abused individual frequently suffers more than one type of abuse. Full information and supporting guidance for recognising these and other categories of abuse can be found [here](#) on the NSPCC website.

## 5.0 Responding to concerns

If a child tells you they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault. Never promise a child that you will keep anything a secret. Explain that you need to share what they've told you with someone who will be able to help.

**All non-constituted individual or collectives, staff, volunteers, and Blaggrave as a charity, have a responsibility to ensure that all concerns and disclosures are followed up. This will include:**

- If a child or young person describes abuse, being suffered by themselves or another individual (direct disclosure);
- If you see or hear something that concerns you about the possibility of abuse;
- If a third party tells you something about suspected abuse.

**In the case of a disclosure, do:**

- Take it seriously
- Listen and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Report what they have said as soon as possible using the safeguarding concern form (always within 12 hours), and use their exact words – do not try and correct anything
- Ask only open questions, e.g. "when did this happen?"
- Ask the child what they would like to happen next
- Let the child know you will have to tell somebody else in order to keep them safe
- Contact a member of the safeguarding team directly if you feel the concern is urgent
- Get support for yourself following the disclosure

**Positive things to say:**

- "I am glad you told me"
- "I am sorry this has happened"

- “It is not your fault”
- “We are going to do something about this together, what would you like to happen next?”

**Do not:**

- Assume someone else will act or already knows
- Promise to keep it a secret as the disclosure must be shared with a DSO/DSL
- Interrupt or ask leading questions, e.g. “Did your Dad do that to you?”
- Express disbelief in what you are being told
- Seem to tell off the child, e.g. “why didn't you tell me this before?”
- Discuss the incident with other staff or volunteers not directly involved outside of the safeguarding team

There is a remote possibility that a child or young person may suddenly announce that they do not want to go home because they are frightened to do so. We cannot legally prevent a child from going home. However, you can insist on calling the police and staying with them if you suspect that an offence may be about to be committed (e.g. a parent arrives drunk and abusive). Equally, you may choose to call for an ambulance if the child or young person is at immediate risk of harm to themselves (e.g. suicidal). A DSO/DSL in both instances should be informed as soon as possible.

## 6.0 How to report your safeguarding concerns

### **Emergency services should always be called if a child is at risk of immediate significant harm – call 999**

In line with The Children Act 2004, the DSL/DSO should try to seek the views of the child about what they would like to happen as a result of the concern. This will help to inform what actions are taken.

The flow diagram below provides a quick reference point to follow in the instance of a safeguarding concern. When applying this procedure note that all verbal reports to DSO's or the DSL should be followed up in writing using the appropriate [safeguarding incident form](#).

Details of safeguarding concerns should not be shared with team leaders or line managers, unless:

- It is in best the interests of the child to do so before reporting/speaking with your DSO, e.g., any delay in sharing concerns with other staff working with the child may result in the immediate significant harm of that child
- You are instructed to do so by your DSO/DSL

You may of course let a team leader, line manager or other colleagues know that you need to make a safeguarding report, but details of the report should always remain

confidential. If you are uncertain if your concern is of a safeguarding nature, you can always contact the safeguarding team, who will guide you through this procedure.

## 7.0 Who to contact if you have a safeguarding concern

The Trust has appointed individuals who are responsible for leading safeguarding across the organisation. Within the Blaggrave Safeguarding Team, the DSL will hold overall responsibility for safeguarding processes and procedures and should be contacted directly for more serious, or whistleblowing, concerns. All other safeguarding concerns should in the first instance be reported to a named DSO.

All DSOs within Blaggrave will share safeguarding concerns with the DSL for central storage of information and oversight.

- **DSL** – Valeria Tavares [valeria@blagravetrust.org](mailto:valeria@blagravetrust.org) (07713 643209)
- **DSO** – Rochell Rowe [rochell.rowe@blagravetrust.org](mailto:rochell.rowe@blagravetrust.org) (07565228517)

In the unlikely event that the safeguarding team are uncontactable, or a concern raised is regarding the DSL or the CEO, then the TSL should be your first point of contact:

- **TSL** – Clare Cannock, [tsl@blagravetrust.org](mailto:tsl@blagravetrust.org)

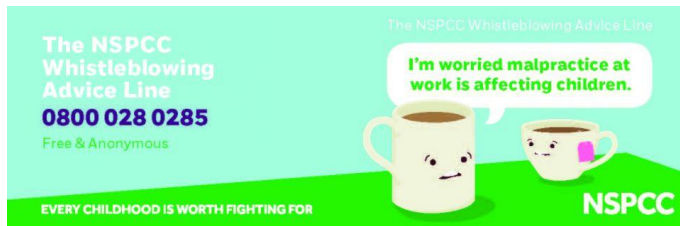
A summarised list of the roles and responsibilities of the DSL/DSO are available within the relevant 'DSL/DSO job descriptions', which can be requested at any time from a member of the Blaggrave safeguarding team.

The contact details below should be used by the safeguarding team for reporting concerns to child services. Please note each local authority has its own processes and procedures for reporting concerns and so may all look and feel slightly different.



**Details for how to report a concern to your local authorities child services can be found by scanning this QR code, or by clicking [here](#). In the event any delay might cause additional significant harm to a child, you should call immediately 999.**

In the instance that you feel that either the DSO or DSL are not carrying out their responsibilities in externally reporting concerns raised regarding children, you are encouraged to speak to the TSL directly, or alternatively can call the **'NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line'**:



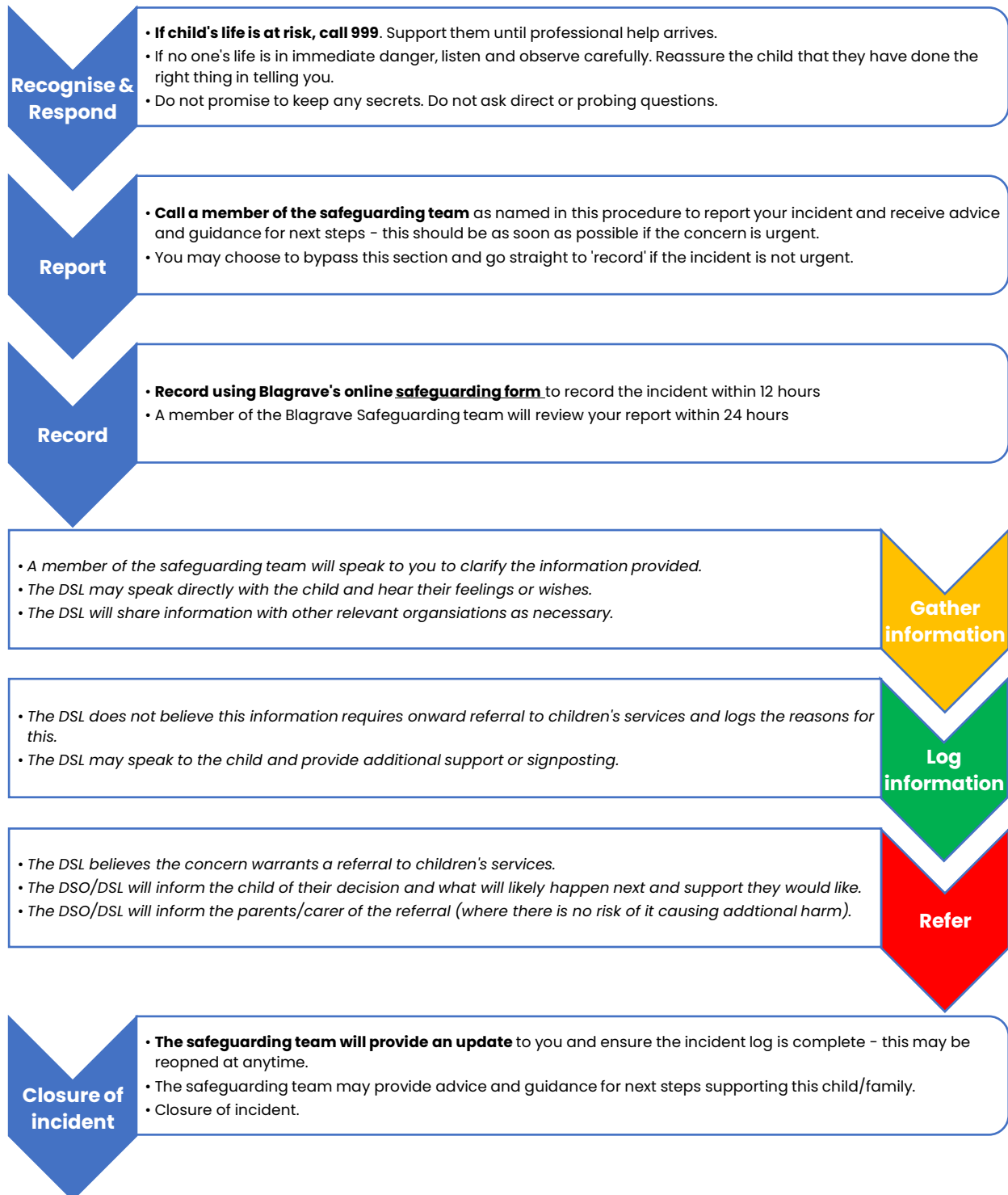
The NSPCC also operates a 'Reporting Concerns Hotline' (and email address) which anyone can use to receive advice or guidance about a safeguarding concern.





## 8.0 Reporting flow diagram

All sections highlighted in **blue** indicate your role within the reporting process, those on the right-hand side relate to the actions of the safeguarding team at Blaggrave.



## 9.0 How to record your concerns

All recorded safeguarding information should be factual and not based on opinions; record what the person tells you or what you have seen, and include any witnesses if appropriate. This should always be completed by the person reporting the concern and done within 12 hours of the incident to support accurate recall. It is recommended when completing the form to write in the third person, i.e., use of initials to identify self and individuals concerned. This often helps to remove personal emotion and opinions from reporting.



**The safeguarding concern form is available electronically by scanning this QR code or via this [link](#). Guidance for completion is available in the form's introduction.**

The information that is recorded will be kept secure and held within encrypted files, compliant to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

## 10.0 Making an allegation against a colleague, volunteer, or partner organisation

If you are reading this section because your safeguarding concern is regarding the conduct towards a child by a member of staff, volunteer, or member of non-constituted group or collective that sit under Blaggrave's safeguarding policies, you should refer to Blaggrave's '[Whistleblowing Policy](#)' which will give you a clear understanding of what to do next. In brief, the below outlines examples of conduct and roles held by individuals that may result in a whistleblowing allegation. This list, however, is not exhaustive.

### **Circumstances in which staff may 'Whistleblow' include:**

- Behaviour or conduct in their personal life that might indicate unsuitability to work with children (e.g., domestic abuse or assault against another adult).
- Behaviour 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.

### **These whistleblowing concerns may relate to colleagues who:**

- Work directly with children, e.g. non-constituted groups / collectives.
- Work in a setting where children regard them as safe and trustworthy.
- Have access to sensitive information regarding children.
- Are senior managers or trustees who have responsibility for appointing people to work with children or adults at risk.

If you were involved in an incident could give rise to a concern, including the potential for misinterpretation by others, you are strongly advised to self-report the incident directly to the DSL. The DSL will then handle the matter in a fair, neutral, and timely manner.

Concerns related to the conduct towards children by staff members of delivery partner organisations should be raised directly with the delivery partner according to their policies.

## **11.0 Supporting staff following a safeguarding incident**

We recognise how personally distressing it can be following an observation or disclosure of potential abuse. We encourage you, where you may feel comfortable and able to do so, to speak with your line manager who will be best placed to explore with you what emotional support may be available, for example, via the Employee Assistance Programme.