



Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy

Important:

Remember it is not up to you to decide if abuse has taken place, that is the role of Leicestershire's Social Care Services, **BUT** it is up to you to report **ANY** concerns to your Designated Safeguarding Officer.

We have a legal responsibility to respond to any issues that may concern us even if they don't involve our staff or services

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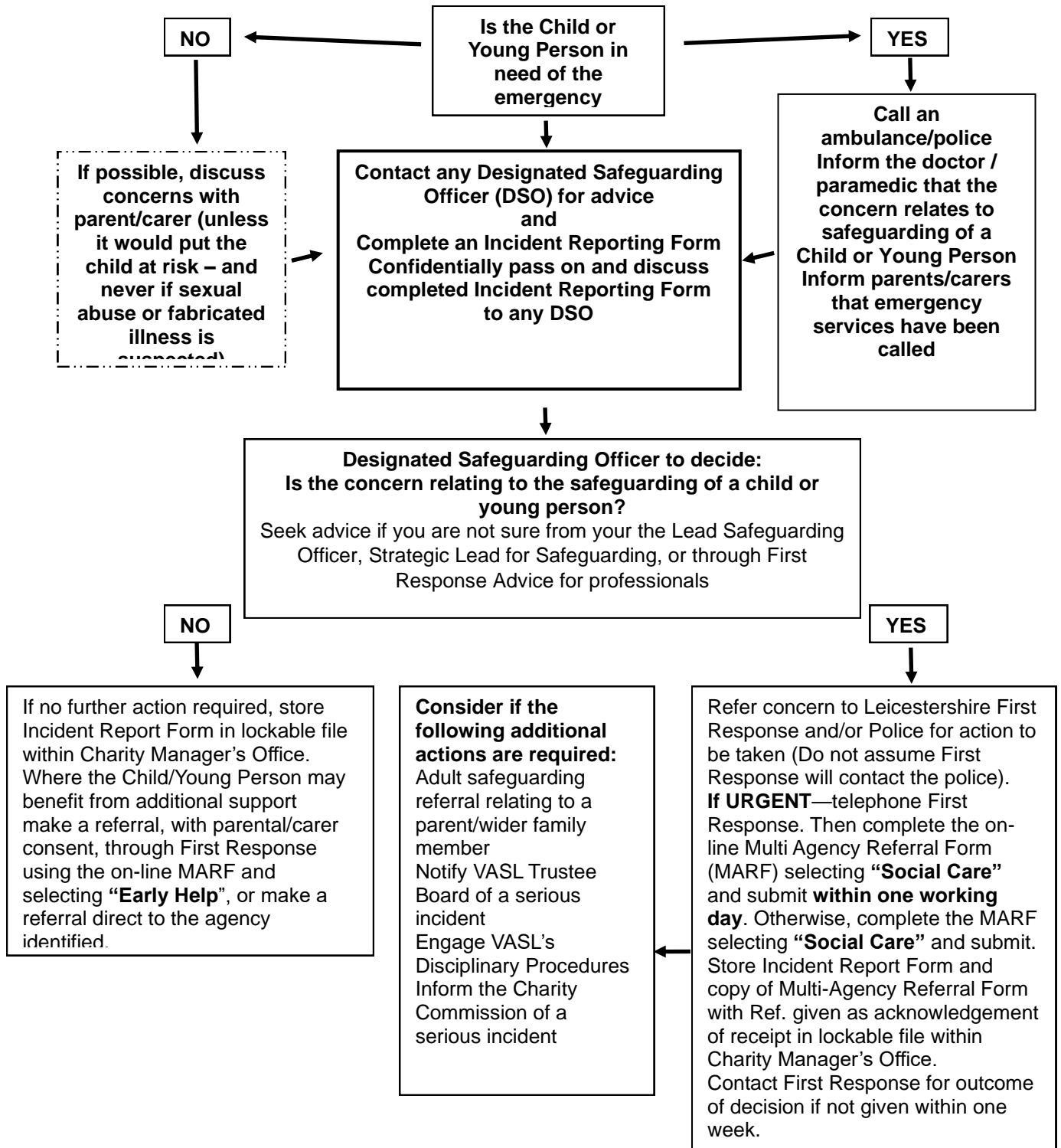
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Guide for dealing with concerns relating to a Child or Young

Staff, Member, volunteer, or parent/carer relays concerns about a Child or Young Person
or
A Child or Young Person has disclosed information relating to safeguarding to you

Stay Calm

- If a child or young person is present reassure them
- Don't make promises of confidentiality or outcome
- Keep questions to a minimum



Who are the Designated Safeguarding Officers for concerns relating to Children and Young People?

In the first instance report to:

(Kate Hawkins) (Designated Safeguarding Officer – children) – Young Carers Activity Group Manager – Tel:07845789782
Kerry Turnbull (Designated Safeguarding Officer – adults) – Carers Project – Tel:07548215978
Maureen O'Malley (Lead Safeguarding Officer – adults/children) – VASL Senior Manager - Tel: 01858 439267 or 07890858705



Outsourced Young Carers Project Safeguarding Support available from:
Olivia O'Brien – HCYC Operations Manager
Tel: 07502 365379
(Tuesday to Thursday)



If unavailable, contact:
Linda Jones (Strategic Lead for Safeguarding) -Trustee
Tel: 07851 163712



If no VASL contact is available (or outsourced support for concerns relating to children) contact First Response for advice (see key contacts).

Report actions to a VASL contact as soon as possible.

1.0 Introduction

Every Child or Young Person has the right not to be abused.

What does 'safeguarding' mean?

The government guidance on Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 defines safeguarding children and promoting their welfare as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Who is this policy for?

This policy is for you if you are a member of VASL, a volunteer or anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for or representing VASL.

It is important to be aware that VASL has both a moral and legal obligation to fulfil the duty of care for children across all of its services. VASL staff may come across cases of suspected abuse either through direct contact with children and young people, for example running a sports event, or as peripatetic staff visiting homes as part of their day to day work. We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised by VASL.

What does this policy cover?

The policy equips you with the information you need regarding what actions to take if you suspect or are told about abuse, and what will happen next. Read it now and then keep it somewhere safe, this may just be the tool that helps you to save a child's or young person's life.

While it is not our role to establish whether or not abuse is taking place, it is our responsibility however to report any concerns we have over the welfare of children or young people. This duty extends to the identification of abuse, poor practice by internal members/staff of VASL, as well as allegations brought to the attention of VASL by a member of the public/community.

This policy outlines that your primary concern is to ensure that you record relevant information and pass it on to the Designated Safeguarding Officers without delay, so that they can discuss any action or referral to the relevant authority.

Safeguarding Children

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation and procedures:

- The Children's Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

- ISA guidance and requirements relating to Disclosure and Barring procedures
- Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board Procedures

1.1 Policy Statement

VASL accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children and young people, safeguard their well being and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by VASL. We aim to do this by:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- Raising the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to children and young people throughout VASL
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and to protect them from harm
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, trustees and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse, and minimise risk to themselves
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children or young people in line with this Policy and Guidelines and implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures
- Requiring staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by the VASL's Children and Young People's Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines, informed by the requirements of the local Safeguarding Children Board
- Reviewing and evaluating this Policy and Guidelines document on a regular basis

1.2 Definitions and principles

This policy and these procedures are based on the following definitions and principles:

- The term child, or young person, is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18yrs
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parent, carers and guardians
- The terms staff and volunteers is used to refer to employees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for, or representing VASL
- There are 4 broad types of child abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Full definitions of these can be found in Chapter 3 of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures available from <http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>
- The welfare of children, and young people is the primary concern
- All children and young people have the right to protection from abuse
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018

1.3 Support for members of staff or volunteers raising concerns

In the event of having a concern, you may choose to talk to your line manager in the first instance, who will support and help you to report your concerns to an appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer.

When a member of staff, an elected member or a volunteer raises concerns with their Designated Safeguarding Officer, the DSO will ensure that:

- The procedures are followed appropriately in consultation with Social Care Services
- The appropriate agencies, staff members, parents/ carers are informed
- Information is recorded and stored appropriately
- Staff involved are supported as required. This includes access to a confidential counselling service

VASL recognises that when safeguarding concerns relate to a colleague's conduct, this can involve additional stress to reporters. VASL will fully support and protect all staff/members who, in good faith (without malicious intent), report his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a Child or Young Person may be being abused.

1.4 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned in the safeguarding of children and young people. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Your line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Officer will guide you as to who needs to know information about the case.

Where a staff member is approached regarding an allegation, issues of confidentiality should be clarified early in the discussion. The person should be informed that the member of staff will at the very least, have to disclose the conversation to the line manager and depending on the severity of the information may be disclosed to Social Care Services or the Police.

There may be occasions where a child or young person expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued. Decisions about whether to respect the person's wishes must have regard to the level of risk to the individual and/or others and their capacity to understand the decision in question and to make decisions relating to it. In some circumstances the persons' wishes may be overridden in favour of consideration of safety for the person and other children or young people. Where possible, this decision will be the product of discussions between the line manager and Designated Safeguarding Officer.

For best practice guidance in sharing information refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

The responsible **Designated Safeguarding Officer** will:-

- Ensure that the procedures are followed appropriately in line with the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Children Safeguarding Board procedures
- The appropriate agencies are informed
- The appropriate agencies, staff members, referring agencies, parents/ carers are informed
- Information is recorded and stored appropriately
- Provide information to staff reporting concerns about support available to them

2.0 Procedure for responding to concerns relating to the safety or welfare of a child or young person

This Policy and its procedures inform all staff, elected members and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse, i.e. response actions.

VASL staff may come across cases of suspected abuse either through direct contact with children or young people, for example, running a holiday activity or as peripatetic staff visiting homes as part of their day to day work. It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not a child or young person has been abused. It is however your responsibility to report your concerns.

Your primary concern is to ensure that any relevant information is passed to the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer/s who will then discuss any action or referral to the relevant authority (e.g. Police or Social Care Services) without delay.

2.1 Responding to Suspicions

You are not expected to investigate suspicions or concerns. Other agencies are trained to do this. However, you can explore the situation with the child to gain clarification. Be careful not to ask leading questions.

Most suspicions arise because a member of staff notes a pattern of occurrences or a significant incident happens.

If you have a concern about the safety or welfare of a child or young person:

- Do not delay in taking action/reporting
- Note the concerns and your reasons using the incident reporting form
- You may speak to the Designated Safeguarding Officer to gain support to complete the form
- Report to an appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer if you have not done so already
- Maintain confidentiality in line with Section 1.4

Do not

Undertake further investigations.

It is best practice to discuss concerns with parents/carers and let them know you are reporting your concerns, however, staff should contact the DSO to check if it is appropriate and safe to discuss concerns with parents/carers first, to ensure that the child would not be put at risk of harm by sharing the information.

Where there are concerns of sexual abuse or fabricated illness, the parents should not be contacted as this can lead to increased danger for the child/young person.

Where there are ongoing concerns regarding a parent or carer in relation to the alleged abuse of a child or young person the parent or carer should not be contacted about new allegations of abuse. Social Care Services and/or the Police will do this at an appropriate time.

The process on how to respond to concerns is detailed in the flowchart on page 3.

2.2 Responding to Disclosure

Abused children or young people are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child or young person is saying you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

What to do if a child or young person discloses information to you:

- React calmly
- Take what the person says seriously
- Do clarify your understanding of what the person has said but avoid asking detailed or leading questions and do not try to investigate
- Reassure the person that they were right to tell **and do not make promises of confidentiality**
- Be open and honest, explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Immediately record all details in writing, using the child or young person's own words.
- As soon as possible fill out the Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 1) again including all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or young persons own words. Attach your original notes to the Incident Reporting Form and give these to an appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The process on how to respond to disclosure is detailed in the flowchart on page 3 (Guide for dealing with concerns relating to a child or young person abuse).

Actions to Avoid

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Dismiss the concern
- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show

- Probe for more information than is comfortably offered – do not overpressure for a response
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Suggest any action/s or consequences that may be undertaken in response to the disclosure

Remember: Listen – write it down – report it

2.3 Child and Young Person Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

You need to fill in an Incident Report Form for all concerns, suspicions and disclosures relating to the safeguarding of children or young people (see Appendix 1 for Incident Reporting Form). This needs to be done as soon as practicable to ensure all the facts are recorded. Copies of the Incident Report Form are available from:

- VASL's Common Drive
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer

If you have to ask someone in order to find this form, do not discuss the situation with them. The same form is used for all disclosures and allegations and suspicions. Do not worry if all the sections do not apply to your situation, it is purely to help you to remember as much relevant information as possible. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to take a lead on suspicions and report them to Social Care Services and/or the Police to take any appropriate course of action.

3.0 Additional considerations when concerns relate to an internal employee/member of the Council e.g. staff, volunteers and contractors

It can be very worrying to have concerns about a person's safety or welfare that relate to the conduct of a colleague. VASL recognises that this can involve additional stress for those reporting concerns. Within the incident reporting structures there are support mechanisms in place to ensure that staff are confident that these concerns will be dealt with appropriately. These include confidentiality guidelines and access to counselling services.

Where you have concerns about a colleague, the reporting procedures should be followed in exactly the same manner as outlined above. If the concerns involve the DSO, you should speak to your line manager (unless this is the DSO), or the Chair of the Trustee Board. The appropriate action in relation to disciplining staff or misconduct by staff or volunteers will be followed, and you will be guaranteed confidentiality in accordance with the VASL Public Interest Disclosure/Whistleblowing Policy.

Remember that the safety of the child or young person is paramount.

There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse, but this should always be communicated to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for guidance and appropriate action. Managers wishing to seek further advice

can refer to Chapter 13 of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures available from <http://www.lrlscb.org/index.htm>

3.1 Types of Investigation

Where there are allegations of abuse or concerns about poor practice of an employee or member there may be three strands of investigation:

1. Child Safeguarding investigation (externally led by Social Care Services)
2. Criminal Investigation (externally led by the police authority)
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (internally led)

In the first two instances, VASL will not be involved in any form of investigation unless requested to do so by the Social Care Services or the Police authority and feedback on outcomes of any investigation will not usually be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Officer involved, unless there are outstanding misconduct issues to address.

As a VASL employee the usual terms and conditions for disciplinary investigations will apply. If this happens consideration will be given to suspension on full pay pending the outcome of the investigation.

VASL will assess each individual allegation on its own, taking into account the findings of any criminal investigation and respond to the outcome of the investigation in line with VASL's policy and procedures. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, VASL will assess the appropriateness of the staff member returning to work in their previous environment. A decision to withdraw permission for the employee to work with vulnerable groups may lead to VASL having a legal duty to report the person to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. This also applies in instances where VASL would have withdrawn permission for the individual to engage in regulated or controlled activity had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated or controlled activity.

4.0 Key Contacts

The DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS for VASL are:

Name	Job Title	Contact No.
Maureen O'Malley	Charity Manager	01858 439267 or 07890858705
Kate Hawkins	Young Carers Activity Group Manager	07845789782
Kerry Turnbull	Carers Project	07548215978
Linda Jones	Lead Safeguarding Trustee	07851163712

Social Care Services Duty Teams

Adult and community Service Centre – single contact point:

Tel: 0116 3050004

Fax: 0116 3050010

Email: adultsandcommunitiescsc@leics.gov.uk

Email for general communication – Not to be used for referrals or sensitive information as insecure

Children’s Central Duty 24/7

Tel: 0116 305 0005

Fax: 0116 305 0011

Email: childrensduty@leics.gov.uk

Email for general communication – Not to be used for referrals or sensitive information as insecure

Police – Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU Referral Desk)

Ring 101 and ask for the Referral Desk or Child Abuse Investigation Unit

Email:(Secure) caiu referrals@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

Advice Options (*not* for referrals) - children only

Advice and Guidance Line: 0116 305 5500 (available 9.00 - 4.00 pm Monday to Friday).

Children and Families Referral Forms:

Multi-agency On-line Referral to Children’s Social Care – Safeguarding Concerns

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/report-abuse-or-neglect-of-a-child>

Multi-agency On-line Referral to Early Help – Additional Support Needs

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/report-abuse-or-neglect-of-a-child>

Local Offices (to be used only when named social worker known)

Broughton Astley – Hinckley – 01455 636954

Lutterworth - Bassett Street – 0116 2787111

All other areas of Harborough District - Market Harborough - 01858 465331

Leicestershire Constabulary

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Local Authority Designated Officer (County Hall) – for reporting allegations

0116 305 7409/8453 - Adults

0116 305 7575 – Children

PREVENT Coordinator (reporting information relating to Extremism (Islamic, Fascist etc)

Sean Arbuthnot (Prevent Coordinator) **Tel: 07377 370991**

Email: prevent@stphilipscentre.co.uk

Twitter: https://twitter.com/Leics_AVE

Base: St Philip's Centre, 2a Stoughton Drive North, Leicester UK, LE5 5UB

Tel: 0116 2733459 www.stphilipscentre.co.uk

Main Police PREVENT email: prevent.team@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Team – Leicestershire

CFS.CSETeam@leics.org.uk

Domestic Abuse (Harassment, Stalking, Honour Based Violence)

Tel: 0808 802 0028 (Leics. Helpline) or 0116 2550004 (Professionals Helpline)

Drug and Alcohol Support for young people/adults

Turning Point – For Leicester, Leicestershire Referrals:

LLreferrals@turning-point.co.uk

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 500

National Youth Agency, Leicester

Training and support <https://nya.org.uk/youth-work-academy/>

4.1 What is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officers?

All suspicions, concerns and disclosures have to be reported immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Officer. (See pages 4 and 12 for the list of Designated Safeguarding Officers)

They have the responsibility to:

- Ensure that arrangements are made to identify staff that require training in child and young person safeguarding within their responsive area
- Ensure that Incident Report Forms and copies of the policy and procedures are available to all staff
- Receive information from staff, volunteers, trustees and others who have concerns, and record them, using appropriate form and procedures identified
- Ensure that the procedures for reporting concerns are followed appropriately in line with Leicestershire Safeguarding Children's Board procedures.
- Ensure that the appropriate agencies are informed
- Ensure that information is recorded and stored appropriately
- Provide information to staff/volunteers/trustees reporting concerns about support available to them
- Represent VASL on formal investigations into allegations of abuse led by the Local Authority
- Receive the appropriate training

4.1 Escalating Concerns

In situations where the DSO/Lead Safeguarding Officer has concerns that advice from Children's Social care **not to refer** a case to them, or where a Social Care decision of **No Action** has been taken, and the DSO/Lead

Safeguarding Officer believes this is not the correct course of action **based on the DSO/Lead Safeguarding Officer's awareness and understanding of a case**, they should do the following:

- DSO/Lead Safeguarding Officer to consult the **Pathway to Services** document for Children's Social Care http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/pr_assessment.html and attempt a resolution with the original decision maker/practitioner using the document to support the case.
- If this does not resolve the situation, Lead Safeguarding Officer to contact the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding (Trustee) for collaborative decision making on whether further escalation is required.
- Lead Safeguarding Officer to contact Children's Social Care with referral information and an explanation of the reason for escalation of the case – speaking to the original practitioner's line manager.
- If it is felt that there is still a failure to respond appropriately to the concern, Lead Safeguarding Officer to raise concern with the VASL Trustee Board and to initiate a resolutions meeting with Children's Social Care which should be chaired by Children's Social Care Service Manager/Head of Service.
- All actions to be recorded internally using the established procedures

Appendix 1

For DSO Use Only

Ref No (on-line multi-agency referral form):

Date Seen by DSO:

Surname of Child:



Children and Young People's Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

This form is used for reporting both suspicions and disclosures of possible abuse; therefore not all sections may be appropriate. Please complete with as much information as possible, using verbatim reports from people involved where possible. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

About you, the reporter

Your name:

Your job role:

Your telephone number and email address:

Are you reporting the concern on behalf of someone else?

If yes to above, what is their name and their position?

What involvement have you had? (Have you had contact with family/ other professionals etc)

About the child or young person

Name:

Age and date of birth:

Gender:

Address, telephone and email contact details:

Housing tenure (tenant/ Housing Association/ private rented/ owner occupier):

Ethnic and/or religious background:

Disabilities or other special factors:

About the person's family/support network

Who is the person's next of kin?

Address, telephone and email contact details:	
Names of other people living at the address or significantly involved:	

About the concern

What has happened/ what are your concerns? (Please give full details, using verbatim reporting where possible and include physical or behavioral indicators)	
Have you or anyone else involved spoken to the person or with their parents/ family/ others involved? If so, what was discussed (record this verbatim where possible)? <i>Remember, you are not expected to undertake investigations so don't worry if you don't know.</i>	
Dates and times of significant events:	

About the alleged abuser, if known

Name:	
Job position/ role:	
Address, telephone and email contact details:	

About other agencies involved

Are you aware of any other services or professionals who are involved with the person?	
Name of agency and professional:	

Address, telephone and email contact details:	
Details of involvement and any advice you have received with dates:	
<i>For Designated Safeguarding Officer use only</i>	
<i>DSO name:</i>	
<i>Date, time, venue/ method of initial staff report regarding suspicions, concerns or disclosure relating to safeguarding: Who was present:</i>	
<i>Date, time and venue of Incident Reporting Form handover: Who was present:</i>	
<i>Notes regarding DSO follow up actions(use follow on sheet if necessary):</i>	

Remember; do not discuss this with friends or colleagues. Arrange to see your Designated Safeguarding Officer urgently, they will initiate appropriate action.