

# Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

## Policy

The object of Slow The Flow is to advance the education of the public in Natural Flood Management, Sustainable Drainage Systems and other renewable methods of managing the environment, including the exploration of alternative practices which safeguard the natural environment and its resources in a manner which best fits the specifics of a local geography.

### **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:**

Child and Vulnerable Adult protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children and vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults; trustees or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults – and, in particular, protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Individual children and vulnerable adults, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services.

For those children and vulnerable adults who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the individuals and – where necessary – to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children and vulnerable adults. All agencies and professionals should:

- ✓ be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- ✓ be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and vulnerable adults;
- ✓ share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the individual's needs and circumstances;
- ✓ contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the individual's welfare;
- ✓ take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the individual against specific plans; and
- ✓ work co-operatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.

### **Definitions of abuse and neglect:**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adult may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the individual's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children or vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the individual's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the individual participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing the individual frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of an individual, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing an individual to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g.: rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving individuals in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the individual's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Staff awareness**

All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff. Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.

**Reviewing the Policy and Procedure**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

## Procedures

What to do if you have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult.

You may have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult because of something you have seen or heard, or a child or vulnerable adult may choose to disclose something to you. If a child or vulnerable adult discloses information to you, you should:

- ✓ Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Social Care Services.
- ✓ Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Accept what is said.
- ✓ Reassure the child or vulnerable adult, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep *ego: 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.*
- ✓ Do reassure and alleviate guilt if the child or vulnerable adult refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'.*
- ✓ Do not interrogate the child or vulnerable adult; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- ✓ Do not ask leading questions (*e.g.: Did he touch your private parts?*), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- ✓ Do not ask the child or vulnerable adult to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- ✓ Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- ✓ Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- ✓ Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child or vulnerable adult (do not paraphrase).
- ✓ Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with one of the Trustees. See the diagram on the next page for the process to follow.

If you still have concerns, you, or the Trustee, should refer to:

### Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

#### For a Child

Multi Agency Screening Team, Halifax Tel: 01422 393336  
Emergency Duty Team Calderdale (Out of hours service) Tel: 01422 288000  
Police Safeguarding Unit Halifax 01422 337042  
Police 01422 337000

#### For a Vulnerable Adult

Gateway to Care, Tel: 01422 393000  
Emergency Duty Team Calderdale (Out of hours service) Tel: 01422 288000  
Police Safeguarding Unit, Halifax Tel: 01422 337011  
Police 01422 337000

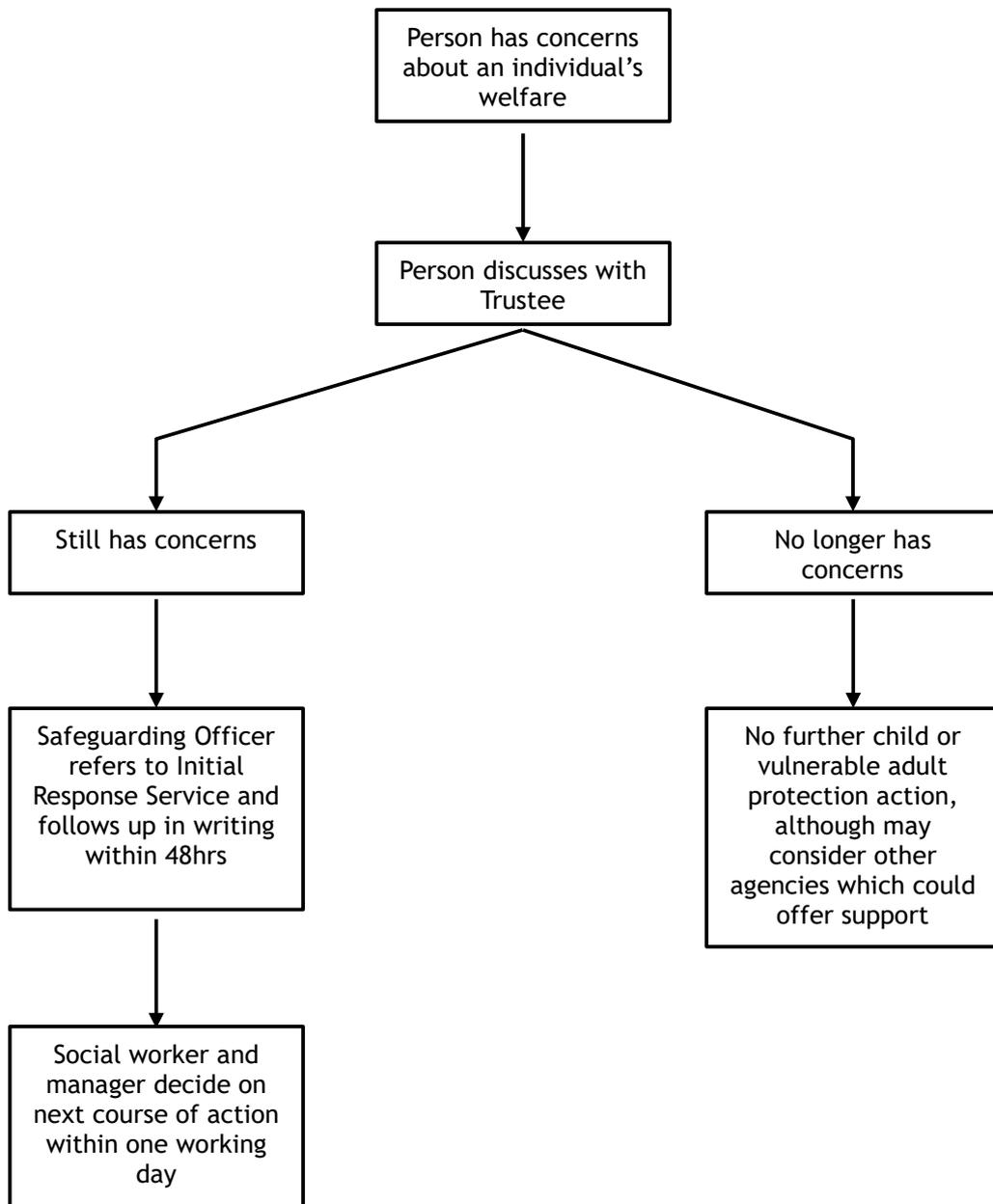
**Safeguarding Procedures:** <https://safeguarding.calderdale.gov.uk/report-concerns/>

### What information will you need when making a referral?

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. Such as the child's or vulnerable adult's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child or vulnerable adult may have, details of the parents, if applicable. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call.

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs.

## Process Chart Where There Are Concerns About A Child's or Vulnerable Adult's Welfare



## Allegations Involving a Members of Staff / Volunteer

Whilst Slow The Flow is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults who attend one of our events or volunteer days, it is possible that there may be occasions when there is an allegation against a Trustee or volunteer.

All allegations of abuse of children and vulnerable adults must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to The Safeguarding Officer.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children or vulnerable adults has:

- ✓ Behaved in a way which has harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult;
- ✓ Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child vulnerable adult;
- ✓ Behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children vulnerable adult.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting. The Safeguarding Officer will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the Calderdale Safeguarding team is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate. Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Calderdale Safeguarding team and the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the Safeguarding Officer will immediately refer the matter to the Calderdale Safeguarding team and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened straight away.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the Calderdale Safeguarding team. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the Child Protection Officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the Charity's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- ✓ The police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- ✓ Enquiries and assessment by Calderdale Safeguarding team as to whether the child or vulnerable adult is need of protection or in need of services
- ✓ Consideration by a Charity of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

### Change Record

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
27/5/2020	WG	Policy approved by the Trustees
1/11/2020	WG	1. Change 'Child Protection Officer' to 'Safeguarding Officer' throughout document. 2. Add 'Vulnerable Adult' to flow chart 3. Some minor grammatical changes
8/5/2021	WG	1. Reviewed with no changes