



# Down's Syndrome Support Group

## *Procedures for children and adults at possible risk of abuse*

### **Procedure for children and adults at possible risk of abuse**

This procedure applies to any paid member of staff or volunteer who may be concerned about the safety and protection of a child or adult at risk.

### **Purpose and aim of this procedure**

We aim to ensure those children/adults at risk who attend activities of DownSouth, and any other children/adults at risk who may come to the attention of DownSouth, receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse.

This procedure provides clear direction to staff and volunteers at DownSouth if they have concerns that a child/adult at risk is in need of protection.

### **Different types of abuse**

**Physical abuse** is violence causing injury or occurring regularly. It happens when:

- a child/adult at risk is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, thrown, burned, scalded, bitten or cut
- someone tries to drown or suffocate a child/adult at risk
- someone gives a child/adult at risk poison, alcohol or inappropriate drugs
- someone fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child/adult at risk.

In some cases the injuries will be caused deliberately. In others they may be accidental but caused by the child/vulnerable adult being knowingly put at risk.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when someone uses power or control to involve a child/adult at risk in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. It may include:

- forcing or enticing a child/adult at risk to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child/adult at risk is aware of what is happening
- encouraging children/adults at risk to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- showing children/adults at risk pornographic material or involving them in the production of such material
- involving children/adults at risk in watching other people's sexual activity or in inappropriate discussions about sexual matters.

**Emotional abuse** is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child/adult at risk that is likely to cause serious harm to his/her development. It may include:

- persistently denying the child/adult at risk love and affection
- regularly making the child/adult at risk feel frightened by shouts, threats or any other means
- hurting another person or a pet in order to distress a child/adult at risk
- being so over-protective towards the child/adult at risk that he/she is unable to develop or lead a normal life
- exploiting or corrupting a child/adult at risk, eg by involving him/her in illegal behaviour
- conveying to a child/adult at risk the message that he/she is worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or his/her only value is to meet the needs of another person. This may or may not include racist, homophobic or other forms of abuse.

**Neglect** involves persistently failing to meet a child/adult at risk's physical, psychological or emotional needs. It may include:

- failing to ensure that a child/adult at risk's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, hygiene and education are met
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a child/adult at risk out of danger. This includes lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child/adult at risk alone in the house.

#### **Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention**

- a child/adult at risk might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
- a child/adult at risk might make a direct disclosure about another child/adult at risk
- a child/adult at risk might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- a member of staff might be concerned about a child/adult at risk's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards a child/adult at risk
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child/adult at risk is suffering or at risk of suffering
- a parent might offer information about a child/adult at risk that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

#### **Talking to a child/adult at risk who has told you that he/she or another child/adult at risk is being abused**

- Reassure the child/adult at risk that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child/adult at risk who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- Let the child/adult at risk know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child/adult at risk tell his or her whole story. Don't try to investigate or

quiz the child/adult at risk, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.

- Ask the child/adult at risk what he/she would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Give the child the ChildLine phone number: 0800 1111 or give an adult the Mencap Direct helpline number 0808 808 1111.

### **Helping a child/adult at risk in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention**

- If the child/adult at risk is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police.
- If the child/adult at risk is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child/adult at risk.
- You also need to contact your supervisor/manager or named person for safeguarding to let them know what is happening.
- A decision will need to be made about who should inform the child/adult at risk's family and the local authority children's social care or adult social care department, and when they should be informed. If you have involved the police and/or the health services, they should be part of this decision. Consider the welfare of the child/adult at risk in your decision making as the highest priority.

### **Issues that will need to be taken into account are:**

1. the child/adult at risk's wishes and feelings
2. the parent's right to know (unless this would place the child/adult at risk or someone else in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
3. the impact of telling or not telling the parent
4. the current assessment of the risk to the child/vulnerable adult and the source of that risk
5. any risk management plans that currently exist.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, follow the steps set out in the flowchart at the end of this document.

### **Keeping a record of your concerns**

Use the Safeguarding Report Form to record the concern and how it is dealt with. The relevant sections of the form should be completed and signed at each stage of the procedure. It can be used to forward information to the statutory child/vulnerable adult safeguarding authorities if a referral to them is needed.

The form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially on the child/adult at risk's file. The name of the person making the notes should be written alongside each entry.

### **Reporting safeguarding concerns**

If a child/adult at risk is in need of emergency medical attention or in immediate danger, follow the procedure set out in on the section on helping a person in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention.

You should then take the steps set out in the following flowchart to ensure the concern is dealt with.

### **Useful contact details**

**Safeguarding Lead: Clare McGrath 07972 789095**

**Named person and deputy: Veronica Dowall/Sue Bate 07972 789095**

**Local police: 101**

**Local Authority Adult Safeguarding:**

- For Teignbridge and South Hams between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and between 9 and 1pm on Saturdays phone Care Direct on 0345 155 1007. Outside these hours phone Devon Emergency Duty Team 0845 6000388.
- For Torbay Safeguarding Adults Team phone 01803 219700

**Local authority children's social care department:**

- For Teignbridge and South Hams in hours Monday-Friday the Devon Multi agency safeguarding hub can be contacted on 0345 155 1071  
Out of hours (Mon-Thurs 17:00-09:00 and from Fri 16:00 to Mon 09:00)  
Devon Emergency Duty Team 0845 6000388
- For Torbay in hours Torbay Multi-agency safeguarding hub can be contacted on 01803 208100  
Out of hours (Mon-Thurs 16:30-09:00 and from Fri 15:45 to Mon 09:00)  
Torbay Emergency Duty Team  
01803 524519

**NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)**

**ChildLine: 0800 1111 (textphone 0800 400 222) or [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

**Victim Support: 0808 168 9111**

This policy was last reviewed on: .....*20 July 2015*.....

Member of staff has concerns about a child/adult's safety or welfare

Member of staff makes notes of their concerns using the reporting form, and discusses them with Lead person. The named person for safeguarding should also be involved in discussion

If the child/adult's family does not already know about the concern, the member of staff or manager discusses it with them **unless**:

- a family member might be responsible for abusing the child/adult at risk
- someone may be put in danger by the family being informed
- informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.

If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the family should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority adult or children's social care department

If there is still uncertainty about the concerns, the named person (or supervisor/manager if named person not available) can discuss with adult or children's social care department or with NSPCC Helpline without disclosing the identity of the child/adult/family.

**Concerned**

Named person refers to local authority adult or children's social care department and confirms in writing within 48 hours.

**No longer concerned**

No further safeguarding action needed. Staff member and Named responsible person decide whether to discuss the initial concern with other services (eg school) to ensure that the child/adult at risk's needs are being met elsewhere.