

13 Response Flow Charts

Step-by-step response procedures for four safeguarding scenarios

How to use these charts

These four charts give you step-by-step guidance for the most common safeguarding situations. Print them, laminate them, and keep them visible — in the staff area, project folder, with your DSL, and at every residential or travel activity.

They do not replace the full procedures in F0 Section J and I2 (Safeguarding Reporting System), but they tell you what to do in the first critical minutes. When in doubt: follow the chart, then call the DSL.

Who these charts apply to: all participants — children (under 18), young people (18–30) and adults at risk. The duty of care in an emergency applies to every person, regardless of age. A note on timing: "report as soon as you are able" means within the same session or the same day. If you were in shock, needed to support the person first, or needed a few minutes to compose yourself — that is understood. Report when you can. A late report is not a failed report. "Immediately" in these charts means within seconds only for physical emergencies (calling 112, evacuating).

Concern classification — used in all four charts

MINOR: low-level welfare concern, no immediate risk. Monitor and document.

MODERATE: pattern of concern or single concerning incident. DSL assessment required. Possible precautionary action.

MAJOR: immediate risk to safety. Statutory referral threshold. Emergency response required.

A Minor concern can become Major with repeat behaviour or new information. When in doubt, treat as the higher classification.

Chart 1 — Disclosure

Someone Tells You Something

Use this chart when a participant, staff member or volunteer tells you directly that they have experienced or witnessed harm.

Step	
STEP 1 RECEIVE	Listen carefully. Stay calm. Do not interrupt. Do not take notes while the person is speaking — give them your full attention. Say: "Thank you for telling me. You did the right thing." Do NOT promise confidentiality. Say: "I need to share this with [DSL name] to keep you safe. I will tell you what I share and why."

STEP 2 ASSESS IMMEDIATE RISK	Is this person in immediate physical danger right now? YES → Call 112 immediately. Stay with the person. Call the DSL at the same time or immediately after. NO → Proceed to Step 3.
STEP 3 RECORD	Write down what the person said as soon as they have finished speaking. Use their exact words in quotation marks. Include: date, time, location, who was present, your name and role. Use I1 Part A. Complete within 24 hours at the latest — immediately is better. Use a reference code, not the person's real name. Real names are recorded separately in I1 Part C (Identity Index), held only by the DSL.
STEP 4 — AS SOON AS YOU ARE ABLE REPORT TO DSL	Contact the DSL as soon as you are able — within the same session or the same day. Read them what you recorded in Step 3. Hand over I1 Part A. If the DSL is unavailable: contact the Alternate DSL (Tier 2/3) or external backup (Tier 1). If the concern is about the DSL: contact the Alternate DSL or the board chair directly.
STEP 5 AFTER REPORTING	Your immediate responsibility is complete. The DSL takes over. Do: follow any instructions the DSL gives you. Be normally and calmly available to the person at risk. Contact the DSL immediately if new information comes to light. Do NOT: discuss the concern with colleagues who do not need to know. Investigate further. Approach the alleged perpetrator.
STEP 6 (DSL) CLASSIFY AND ACT	DSL classifies the concern (Minor/Moderate/Major — see above). MAJOR: statutory referral. Safety planning. Precautionary action if needed. MODERATE: assessment, consult Alternate DSL or external backup, decide action. MINOR: monitor and document. Set a review date. Document every decision in I1 Part B (Case Log).
STEP 7 (DSL) MONITOR AND DEBRIEF	DSL sets up the monitoring plan: named contact, contact schedule, risk indicators, support in place, review date, closure criteria. DSL debriefs with the Alternate DSL or external backup after the initial response. DSL records all further developments in I1 Part B. Reference: F0 Sections K (Confidentiality) and L (Recording) apply throughout.

Chart 2 — Observation



You See or Hear Something Concerning

Use this chart when you witness something that concerns you, even though no one has told you anything directly.

Step	
STEP 1 RECORD IMMEDIATELY	Write down exactly what you saw or heard: date, time, location, who was involved, who else was present, what happened (your words, not an interpretation). Do not approach anyone involved yet.
STEP 2 ASSESS IMMEDIATE RISK	Is anyone in immediate physical danger right now? YES → Call 112. Remove the person from risk if safe to do so. Call the DSL immediately. NO → Proceed to Step 3.
STEP 3 REPORT TO DSL	Contact the DSL as soon as you are able — within the same session or the same day. Do not wait to gather more information or speak to colleagues first. Share your written record from Step 1. The DSL classifies the concern (Minor/Moderate/Major).
STEP 4 (DSL) ASSESSMENT — BEFORE ANY ACTION	DSL assesses the concern before taking any further action: MAJOR (immediate risk): precautionary action (person steps back from role). Statutory referral if required. MODERATE: DSL and Alternate DSL assess together. Initial enquiry if needed — do not begin a formal investigation without completing the assessment first. MINOR: document, set a review date, monitor. IMPORTANT: do not move to suspension or reassignment before completing this assessment. Precautionary action (stepping back) is protective and does not imply guilt. A formal investigation finding (I4) is required before any disciplinary action.
STEP 5 (DSL) SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION	Ensure the person at risk is safe. Apply safety planning if needed. Tell the person who raised the concern that it has been received and is being acted on. Document all decisions and communications in I1 Part B. Use reference codes — not real names — in the case log. Real names in I1 Part C only.
STEP 6 (DSL) MONITOR AND DEBRIEF	Set up the monitoring plan. Review at the specified date. Debrief with the Alternate DSL or external backup after the initial response.

Reference: F0 Sections K (Confidentiality) and L (Recording) apply throughout.

Chart 3 — Allegation

Concern About a Staff Member or Volunteer

Use this chart when a concern is raised about a person who works with or for the organisation — whether paid staff, volunteer, contractor, mentor or partner staff member.

Step	
STEP 1 RECEIVE AND RECORD	Receive the concern. Write it down immediately in your own words. Use I1 Part A. Use a reference code — not the person's real name. Real names are recorded separately in I1 Part C (Identity Index), held by the DSL and Alternate DSL only.
STEP 2 REPORT TO DSL — DO NOT APPROACH THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR	Contact the DSL as soon as you are able. Do not speak to the person the concern is about before the DSL has made a triage decision. Approaching them can compromise any subsequent process and may increase risk to the person at risk. IF THE CONCERN INVOLVES THE DSL: contact the Alternate DSL or board chair directly.
STEP 3 (DSL) CONSULT ALTERNATE DSL BEFORE ACTING	Before taking any action in a concern involving a staff member or volunteer, the DSL consults the Alternate DSL (Tier 2/3) or external backup (Tier 1). This is mandatory. Document the consultation in I1 Part B: who, when, what was decided.
STEP 4 (DSL) ASSESS AND CLASSIFY	DSL classifies the concern (Minor/Moderate/Major). MAJOR (immediate risk, crime may have occurred): statutory referral immediately. Precautionary action. MODERATE: assessment, investigation decision, precautionary action if needed. MINOR: document, review date, monitor.
STEP 5 (DSL) PRECAUTIONARY ACTION IF NEEDED	If the concern is Moderate or Major: ask the person the concern is about to step back from contact with participants temporarily. Communicate precautionary action in writing. State clearly: this is a protective measure, not a finding of guilt. The alleged perpetrator retains their normal rights and is entitled to know a concern has been raised — but not the full details until the DSL has determined the appropriate point to share them (I4 Section 3). Document in I1 Part B.

STEP 6 (DSL) INVESTIGATION DECISION	DSL and Alternate DSL together decide whether an internal investigation (I4) is appropriate. In some cases, statutory referral replaces internal investigation. Do not investigate internally when: a crime may have been committed; a child is at risk of significant harm; or statutory authorities are already involved.
STEP 7 (DSL) MONITOR, DEBRIEF AND RECORD	Set up the monitoring plan for the person at risk. Support the person who raised the concern. Debrief with the Alternate DSL after the initial response. All decisions and communications recorded in I1 Part B. Reference: F0 Sections K (Confidentiality) and L (Recording) apply throughout.

Chart 4 — Travel and Partner Site

Concern Arising Away from Base

Use this chart when a concern arises during travel, at a partner organisation's site, or in another country. The principles are the same — the coordination requires additional steps.

Step	
STEP 1 IMMEDIATE SAFETY	Ensure the person at risk is physically safe. Stay with them or ensure a trusted person stays with them. Call 112 if there is immediate physical danger. You do not need management approval. Inform the on-site DSL (if at a partner organisation) or the person in charge immediately.
STEP 2 RECORD	Record what happened immediately. I1 Part A. Exact words, date, time, location. Use reference codes, not real names. Real names in I1 Part C only. Language barrier: if the disclosure occurred in a language you do not speak, use a professional interpreter. Do not use another participant as interpreter — this breaches confidentiality and creates a power imbalance.
STEP 3 CONTACT THE DSL	Contact your organisation's DSL immediately. If you are at a partner site: the host organisation's DSL takes the lead locally because they have physical access to the person at risk and know local services. Both organisations must inform their own DSLs within 24 hours (or immediately if urgent).
STEP 4 — AS SOON AS YOU ARE ABLE AGREE WHO LEADS	The host organisation usually leads the safeguarding response. Agree this explicitly between the two



	DSLs — do not assume. The lead organisation is responsible for: - External referrals in the country where the incident occurred (jurisdiction follows location). - Communication with the person at risk. - The monitoring plan.
STEP 5 EXTERNAL REFERRALS IN THE RIGHT COUNTRY	Referrals to police, child protection services or other statutory authorities are made in the country where the incident occurred and where the participant is currently located. Use the Country Legal Supplement to find the relevant services in that country.
STEP 6 DATA SHARING	Sharing personal data across organisations and across borders in an urgent safeguarding situation is lawful under GDPR Article 6(1)(d) and 9(2)(c) — vital interests (protecting life and physical safety). Tell the person at risk what is being shared, with whom, and why. Where possible, do this before sharing. See O3 (GDPR and Safeguarding Data Handling) for full guidance.
STEP 7 MONITOR AND DEBRIEF	Both organisations maintain a monitoring plan for the person at risk. If the person is returning to their home country, the monitoring plan must include a named contact in both organisations. Both DSLs debrief after the immediate response. All decisions and communications recorded in I1 Part B. Reference: F0 Sections K (Confidentiality), L (Recording) and N (Partnerships) apply throughout.

References

F0 Safeguarding Policy Framework, Sections J (Acting on Concerns), K (Confidentiality), L (Recording), N (Partnerships and Transnational Projects).

I1 Incident Form and Log — Part A (staff/volunteer form), Part B (DSL case log), Part C (Identity Index).

I2 Safeguarding Reporting System — full procedure including anonymous reporting.

I4 Internal Investigation Guide — when and how to investigate.

O3 GDPR and Safeguarding Data Handling — lawful basis for cross-border sharing.

Country Legal Supplement — statutory services by country.

Glossary of Key Terms (Safe Spaces) — for definitions of all bolded terms in this document.



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