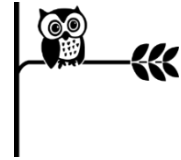


Dealing with concerns and allegations:



The majority of cases arise from our knowledge of children and our observations. This enables us to build a picture over time that might constitute a child protection concern. Another aspect of our work is dealing with disclosures when children tell us about something.

What stops children from telling:

- Being blamed
- Threats and fear
- Awareness of the implications
- Lack of communication or vocabulary
- Not recognising the experience as abuse
- Lack of trust
- Feeling responsible
- Lack of opportunity to be heard

Dealing with disclosures:

Remember: If a child alleges abuse, this may be the beginning of a legal process, as well as a process of recovery for the child. Legal action against the perpetrator can be seriously damaged by any suggestion that the child was led in any way. It is ok to ask the 4 'W Questions' – What ? When? Who? and Where?

Do:

- Listen and be supportive, take the child seriously
- Reassure them, what has happened is not their fault
- Be honest about your own position, who you will have to tell and why
- Keep the child fully informed about what you are doing and why
- Give the child information about confidential sources of help

Don't:

- Panic or make promises that you can't keep
- Interrogate the child with lots of questions
- Cast doubt on what they are saying
- Say anything that might lead the child to feel responsible
- Communicate feelings of anger without saying it's the abuser you feel angry towards
- Stop a child who is freely recalling significant events or push them to tell you more than they wish

Children have said that they need(Working together to Safeguard Children)

- Vigilance to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- Understanding and action: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- Stability: to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- Respect: to be treated with the expectations that they are competent rather than not

- Information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- Explanation: to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- Support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- Advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views

Duty to refer:

All professionals have a duty to refer cases where abuse is known to have occurred or is suspected. No professional has the right or responsibility to withhold information or to respect a child's wish for confidentiality.

Recording concerns:

A record should be made using CPOMS in any circumstances where an allegation is made, or someone in your organisation has concerns. Records should be made as soon as possible, notes made within 24 hours are considered contemporaneous. Record should be kept and stored securely. Poor records have been a recurring theme in Serious Case Reviews. Consider how your records link to previous concerns and to other siblings.

Recording concerns:

- Child name, age and date of birth
- Parent/carer's name(s) and details of any siblings
- Home address and telephone contact details
- Special circumstances e.g. Language barrier
- What has prompted this concern? Include dates and times etc
- Any physical behavioural signs?
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? If so record details
- Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details
- Has anyone been consulted? If so, record the details

If you have any questions or would like more information please see one of the Safeguarding Team Members or our designated Safeguarding leads.