



Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy

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Executive Summary

Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility.

Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every child and young person. This policy aims to ensure that safeguarding is at the heart of every interaction HWFRS personnel have with children and young people.

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework and guidance for all personnel who may come into contact with children and young people when conducting their daily duties. Where a child or young person is experiencing abuse or neglect, potential abuse or appear to be in an abusive environment it is important all HWFRS employees are able to recognise and act appropriately.

This policy identifies individual responsibility in regards to safeguarding. It also identifies the types of abuse and how to report these concerns so support can be quickly identified and incidences of abuse can be prevented or readily acted upon. Further information on indicators and recognising abuse can be found in GN01 Safeguarding Children and Young People Guidance.

Safeguarding practices within HWFRS aligns to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Safeguarding Fire Standard and the Safeguarding Guidance for Children, Young People and Adults which aims to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services are doing all that they can to support and promote the safeguarding of those within their communities, employees and volunteers.

Responsibility for ensuring safeguarding is part of the Service's core business lies with the Assistant Chief Officer: Director of Prevention. Safeguarding forms part of the Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and is a key element of the Prevention Strategy in putting the community first by keeping people safe from fire and other risks and protecting the most vulnerable in our communities. How we deliver our services to achieve our core purpose is guided by the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England.

Alternative Formats

If you require this document in another format please contact the Human Resources and Development Department.

Risk Critical Information

Abuse may take many forms and all staff must be aware of the signs of abuse and always act on potential safeguarding concerns. **Doing nothing is not an option.**

Responsibilities for all staff and their managers, who come into contact with children and young people, as part of their working duties, are outlined in section 5. These duties will include; Operational Incidents, Home Fire Safety Visits, Fire Station visits and open days and other community engagement and partnership working. These may be planned or unplanned and can be of any duration.

Where there are incidents of immediate harm or any suspicions or allegations of abuse these must be reported as summarised in Appendix A (HWFRS Safeguarding Reporting Process).

Reference to 'personnel', 'staff' or 'employees' within this document refer to all employees of H&WFRS, all volunteers, temporary staff and casual workers and agency workers and contractors that work on behalf of HWFRS either in a paid or unpaid capacity.

All HWFRS Personnel will receive the appropriate Children's Safeguarding Training.

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Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy.

1. Our Philosophy and Principles of Safeguarding

1.1 Many of the services provided by HWFRS involve children and/or young people, either directly or indirectly. These include:

- Open days or community events which children / young people may attend, either accompanied or unaccompanied
- Operational incidents or home visits at premises where children and young people may be present
- Visits to educational establishment or other youth settings to provide fire safety/community safety advice and information
- Service-run youth activities e.g. Fire Cadets
- Service-run youth support programmes e.g. Juvenile Firesetters (JFS)

1.2 We are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people and will take all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, emotional, sexual or on-line abuse and neglect. This applies to all the children and young people with whom we come into contact with through work.

1.3 As part of our commitment to safeguarding we have relevant policies and procedures including:

- Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Children and Young People Guidance.
- Health and Safety and Risk Assessment
- Safer Recruitment Principles, including vetting and criminal record checks using DBS
- Code of Conduct based on the [Core Code of Ethics \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Reporting of Complaints, Concerns or Allegations including confidential reporting pro
- Disciplinary Policy
- Management of Allegations against Staff and Volunteers
- Prevention of Extremism, Radicalisation and Terrorism

1.4 Our policies can be accessed through the Service intranet site by staff, if any staff are unable to access these policies they should speak to their line manager. These recognise the obligations and duty of care on our work with children and young people as identified in the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. These acts define children and young people as anyone up to the age of 18 years. We recognise that similar responsibilities cover work with young people with learning disabilities until they are 25 years of age.

We fully support Worcestershire's and Herefordshire's Children and Young People's Plans.

[Herefordshire Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2024](#)

[Worcestershire's Children and Young People's Plan | Worcestershire County Council](#)

2. Safeguarding Children and Young People

2.1 HWFRS recognises that the welfare of children and young people is paramount and that we have a duty of care when they are in our charge or when we come into contact with them in our day to day activities. We will do everything we can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they attend our activities.

We will:

- treat all children and young people with respect and promote their care and welfare
- be watchful for children and young people who may be experiencing harm or neglect and report our concerns (see Appendix A).
- respond to disclosures, concerns and allegations quickly and appropriately
- adopt good practice with regard to safeguarding children and young people and ensure adherence to our policies and procedures
- ensure that safer recruitment and selection principles are followed
- ensure staff and volunteers are trained in accordance with their roles
- work in partnership with children, young people, parents/carers and other agencies

3. Types of Abuse

3.1 Recognising abuse is not easy, and it is not staff and volunteer's responsibility to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. You do, however have responsibility to act if you have a concern or if you believe or are told that a child or young person is at risk of neglect or any form of abuse. The main forms of abuse are identified as:

- **Physical** - includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child/young person.
- **Emotional** – involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child / young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child / young person's emotional development.
- **Sexual** – forcing or enticing a child /young person to take part in contact or non-contact sexual activities, such as watching sexual images or activities, being encouraged to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, taking sexually explicit photographs or grooming a child /young person in preparation for abuse.
- **Neglect** – the persistent failure to meet a child /young person's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child /young person's health or development.

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Guidance Note has more information about types of abuse and how to recognise these.

4. Prevention of Extremism, Radicalisation and Terrorism

- 4.1 HWFRS supports the Government's Prevent strategy and will ensure staff and volunteers know how to recognise and respond to concerns that a child or young person may be susceptible to radicalisation. The threat from terrorism and extremism in the UK is real and severe and can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people.
- 4.2 Although the most serious threat is from international terrorism influenced by Al-Qaeda or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), terrorism can be motivated by a range of ideologies or other factors. Extreme right-wing groups and single-issue groups, such as animal rights campaigners, can also pose a significant threat.
- 4.3 We recognise it is essential that workers and volunteers are able to identify children and young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified. This is known as the Prevent Duty.
- 4.4 Prevent Training is mandatory for key staff roles and completion of this will be monitored via the Competency Training Record (CTR)
- Any concerns will be reported via the Safeguarding Reporting Process.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is Everybody's Responsibility.

5.1 Staff and Volunteers

- This policy applies to all employees of HWFRS, volunteers, lay members, temporary staff, casual workers and agency workers that work on behalf of HWFRS. All inductions must include reference to this policy and line managers should ensure personnel have safeguarding training relevant to their role.
- Staff and volunteers will, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of all children and young people with whom we work and behave in an appropriate way.
- Please find link to Core Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.
[Core Code of Ethics \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- All staff and volunteers who work on behalf of HWFRS will act if they have a concern about a child or young person and will follow the HWFRS Safeguarding Reporting Process.
- The Service will ensure through safeguarding training that staff and volunteers know how to recognise and respond to suspicions/allegations of abuse or neglect regarding a child or young person.

5.2 Line Managers:

Must ensure all personnel for whom they are responsible, are aware of and understand the importance of this policy and the process for reporting any concerns. They must also

ensure that the staff they are responsible for, have completed the appropriate Safeguarding Training.

We will ensure additional targeted safeguarding training is available to the following roles:

- Safeguarding and Signposting Leads
- Prevention Technicians
- Fire Cadet Instructors
- Prevention Engagement Officers
- Group Commanders
- Head of Prevention
- Prevention Manager
- Prevention Team Leader
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Station Commanders
- Human Resources Managers

5.3 Safeguarding and Signposting Leads

Safeguarding and Signposting Leads have been appointed as the day to day contacts for safeguarding. They are responsible for:

- receiving, monitoring and recording safeguarding concerns
- making referrals to Local Authorities
- notifying the Champion for Safeguarding of any issues or allegations
- liaising with other agencies
- keeping written records of concerns and allegations securely.

The Prevention Team manage safeguarding concerns during working hours.

5.4 Group Commanders

Group Commanders are responsible for managing safeguarding concerns out of office hours.

(See Appendix A)

5.5 Area Commanders and Human Resources

Area Commanders with support from Human Resources are responsible for handling allegations against staff / volunteers (See Appendix B)

5.6 Champion for Safeguarding

- The Champion for Safeguarding is responsible for ensuring everyone adheres to the policies and procedures with regard to safeguarding Children and Young people. They report annually to the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) on any safeguarding issues and / or any allegations which have arisen over the previous twelve months.
- The Champion for Safeguarding is the Director: Prevention and the deputy is the Assistant Director: Prevention

6. Staff and Volunteer Recruitment

6.1 All staff and volunteers whose role involves direct work with children and / or young people will be recruited using safer recruitment principles and we will ensure they are suitable to work with children / young people. Those with supervisory responsibility for children and / or young people will be a minimum age of 21 years.

- 6.2** All staff and volunteers who have unsupervised regular direct contact with children and young people are required to have a relevant satisfactory enhanced check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before they can work unsupervised. They will be rechecked every three years.
- 6.3** Appropriate safeguarding training will be arranged through the Prevention Team, Training Centre or line manager and refreshed as necessary.

7. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 7.1** In cases of disclosure of abuse or neglect, whether by children, young people, parents, carers or other adults, confidentiality cannot be promised. We are obliged to share the information with the Safeguarding Lead who may have to refer our concerns to Children's Services.
- 7.2** In all instances, any information which identifies or could identify a living individual, must only be processed in accordance with the Service's data protection policy. This includes the collecting, using, amending, sharing, archiving or deleting of all personal information.
- 7.3** Personal information must only be used if there is a lawful basis to do so, it must be kept up to date and secure at all times. Any breaches e.g. if data is lost or stolen, sent to the wrong people or deleted in error / deliberately, must be reported to Fire Control immediately upon discovery as per the Information Security Incident Management policy.
- 7.4** All staff have a duty to manage personal information responsibly and in line with Service policy.

[Data Protection - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

8. Allegations

What to do if an allegation of abuse is made against HWFRS personnel

- 8.1** HWFRS takes any allegations against its personnel seriously and will comply immediately and fully with any police investigations or Section 47 Child Protection Investigations. Concerns about the welfare of a child, including the possibility of abuse or neglect, may also be raised by behaviour or other indicators noticed by a member of staff, but not disclosed by the child. In these instances, it is equally important to act, and these concerns should be raised and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. When dealing with reported or suspected safeguarding concerns involving allegations against a member of staff or volunteer, remember the welfare of the child is paramount but the Service also has a responsibility to ensure staff and volunteers are treated fairly and with respect.
- 8.2** Any allegations of safeguarding concerns? towards a child by an employee or volunteer must be reported immediately to the Duty Group Commander via Fire Control. The Duty Group Commander may also contact the police, Children's Services, the LADO and Head of Human Resources and Development (or an appropriate HR representative).
- 8.3** It can be extremely difficult to report a colleague, however, HWFRS will support and protect anyone who, without malicious intent, reports their concerns about a colleague's

actions or behaviour, or the possibility that a child may have been or may be being abused by a colleague. Please see the Whistleblowing Policy for further details - [Whistleblowing Policy v4.03 - 2022-08-22 .docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

Further details on Say So, confidential reporting line can be found on following link - [Confidential Staff reporting Line \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

- 8.4 If an allegation is made against an individual at Group Commander level or above then the next management level above them will take responsibility for the reporting line.
- 8.5 HWFRS Safeguarding Policy and reporting process must also be followed by HWFRS personnel dealing with allegations of child abuse by a member of HWFRS personnel when it is historic.
- 8.6 The person dealing with the allegation should confirm that the individual who is the subject of the allegation has no further contact with the child.
- 8.7 Dealing with allegations can be complex due to the competing requirements of balancing dual rights to confidentiality against obligations to disclose information in order to safeguard children. HWFRS and the services they commission are responsible for ensuring that concerns are shared and escalated outside of their organisation where this is **required** and **appropriate**. Each case must be dealt with on its own facts and with reference to relevant legislation and Information Sharing Protocols particularly when deciding to disclose confidential information, in order to demonstrate **justification** and **proportionality**. Legal advice may be sought due to the **legal complexities** involved and to ensure HWFRS is acting in accordance with the law.

LADO details:

[Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\) - A Guide - Worcestershire Safeguarding Boards \(safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk\)](#)

[Children's Policies & Guidance - Herefordshire Safeguarding Boards and Partnerships](#)

Please see Appendix B for the Safeguarding Reporting Process following an allegation of abuse or complaint against a staff member or volunteer

9. Safeguarding Procedures and Guidance

- 9.1 Please follow the Safeguarding Reporting Process (Appendix A) if you have a safeguarding concern about a Child or Young Person.

Please see Appendix C for guidance if a child or young person discloses abuse.

10. Safeguarding Training

- 10.1** All HWFRS staff will have safeguarding training appropriate to their role and this will be recorded on the training recording system. The Safeguarding Competency Training Framework identifies the level of safeguarding training required for each role within HWFRS. This can be found on the Safeguarding page of SharePoint.
- 10.2** If volunteers are not able to access the training recording system then their line manager must ensure that they have access to the e-learning training and that completion of this and refresher courses are recorded.
- 10.3** Staff will have refresher training every 2 years.
- 10.4** The Prevention Team will be responsible for the quality of the training and will ensure that it reflects current legislation and good practice by undertaking an annual review of training content.

11 Safeguarding Supervision

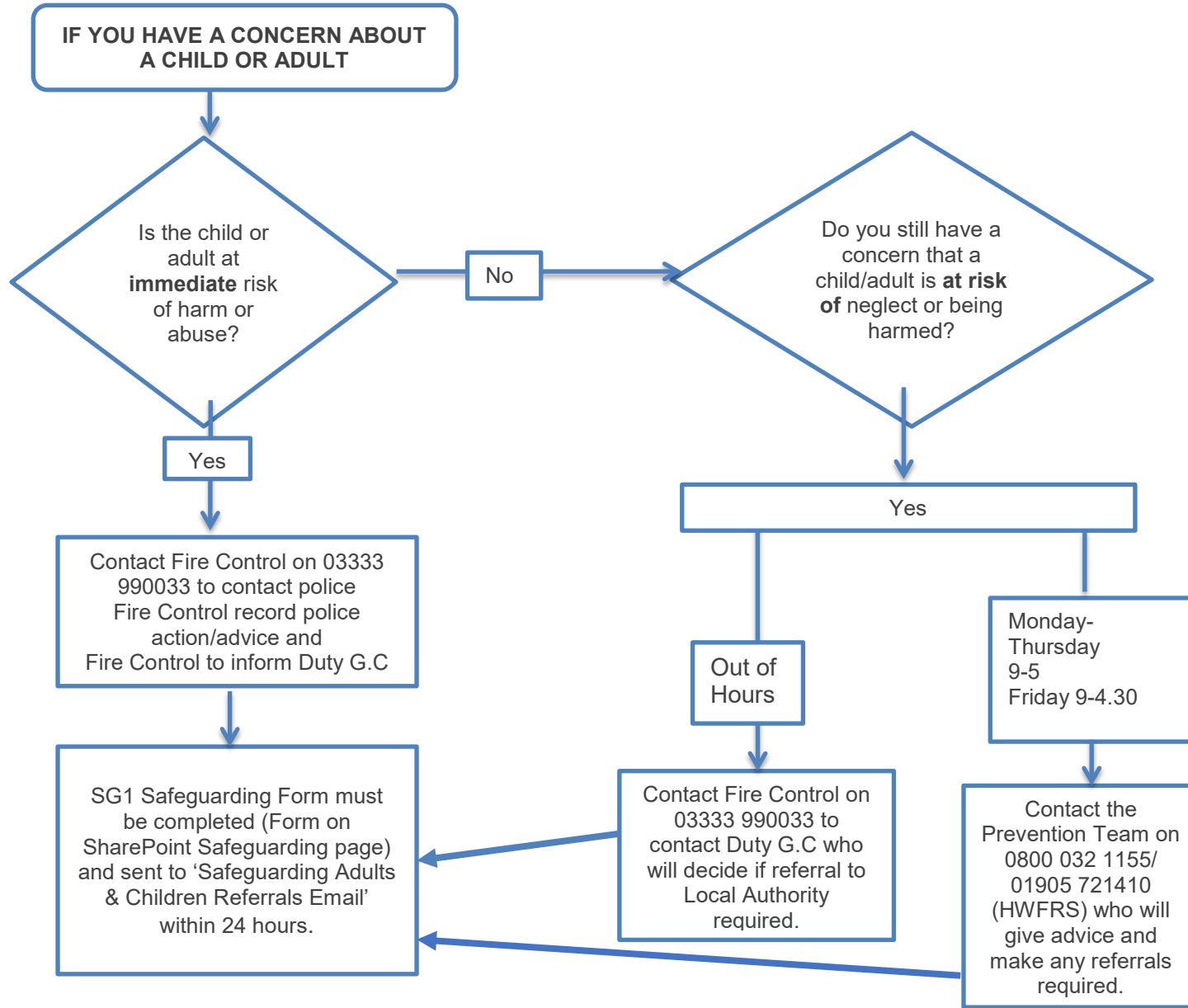
- 11.1** Professional Supervision is a positive, confidential and enabling process that offers the opportunity to bring an employee or volunteer and a skilled supervisor together to reflect on work practice. It is the process by which an employee or volunteer can review, analyse, explore and evaluate their work through discussion, report and observation with the skilled Supervisor. (NFCC Supervision Guidance)

12 Professional Disagreement.

- 12.1** When professionals are working together in the complex business of safeguarding children and young people there will inevitably be occasions when there are professional differences of opinion. Constructive challenge is an important component in positive partnership working, but where differences of opinion cannot be resolved quickly and easily practitioners have a duty to take action to address professional disagreements in a way that is appropriate, timely and proportionate.
(Escalation Policy: Resolution of Professional Disagreements – WSAB)
- 12.2** It is important that HWFRS practitioners and managers understand what action they need to take in order to address professional differences of opinion and the systems in place in their organisation to support this action.
- 12.3** The Safeguarding and Signposting Leads will aim to resolve professional concern or disagreement through discussion and / or meeting within 1- 3 days of the disagreement occurring.
- 12.4** If the disagreement remains unresolved the Safeguarding and Signposting Leads will notify the Prevention Team Leader who will then contact the equivalent manager of the agency to resolve the disagreement. If the disagreement remains unresolved then the Head of Prevention will be notified and they will contact the equivalent level manager in the agency.
- 12.5** If the disagreement is not resolved through HWFRS and the agency then the appropriate Safeguarding Board will be contacted.

13 Joint working and commissioning Services.

- 13.1** This policy will be drawn to the attention of and made available to all agencies and organisations in joint working situations. Where partnership working involves a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for another organisation to provide services on its behalf, the HWFRS personnel responsible for the agreement will ensure that the partner organisation has appropriate safeguarding policies in place.
- 13.2** If a HWFRS employee becomes aware of abuse or allegations of abuse relating to personnel from a partner organisation, then the HWFRS employee should follow the Safeguarding Reporting Process.
- 13.3** If a member of a partner organisation becomes aware of abuse or allegations of abuse relating to HWFRS staff then they should follow their Safeguarding Procedures and ensure that HWFRS are made aware of the allegation(s) via Fire Control.



HWFRS SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCESS

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION

Local Authority Contact Details:

Worcestershire Adults:
01905 768053

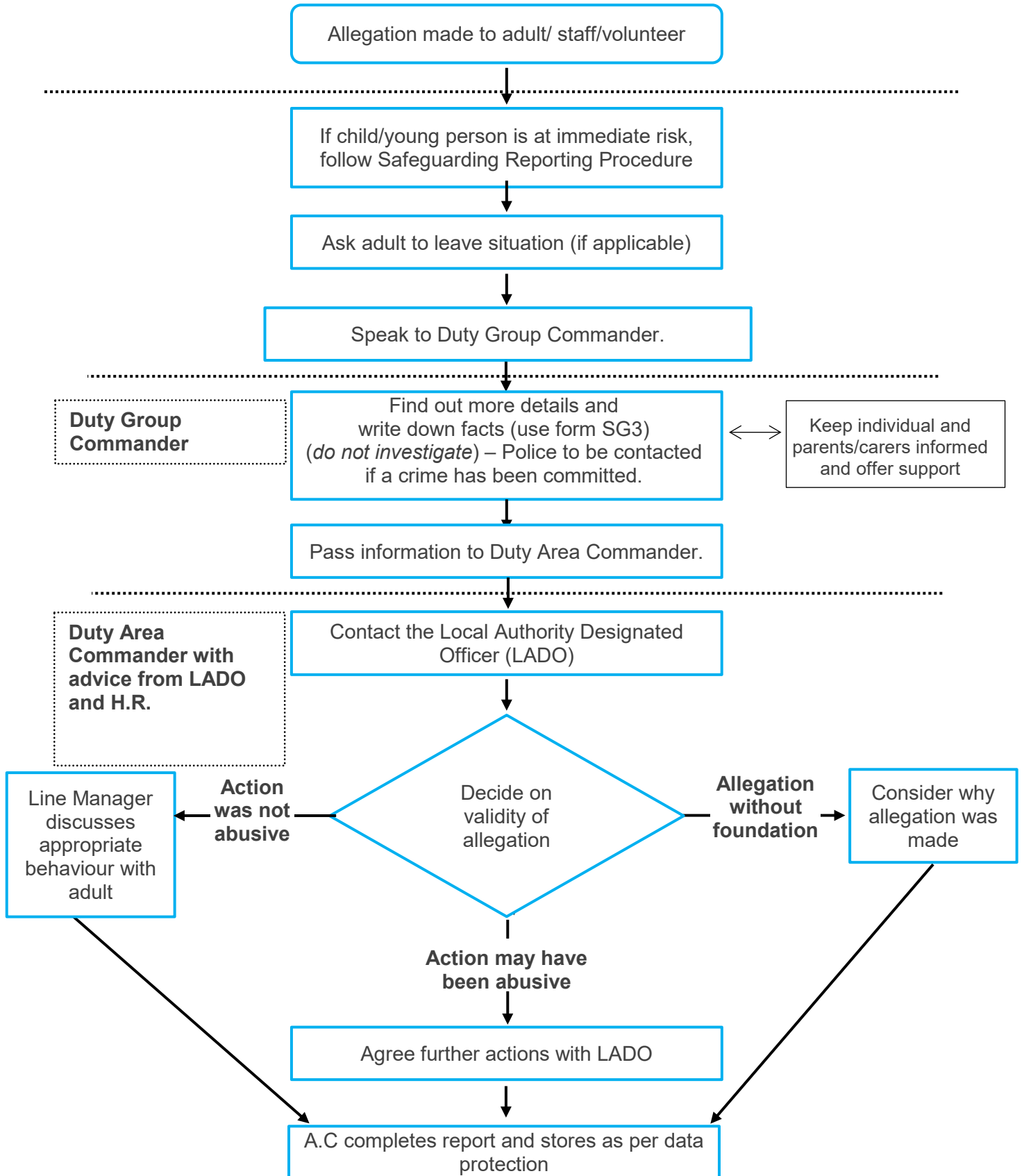
Worcestershire Children:
01905 822666 (8.30 – 17.00/16.30 Fri)
Emergency Duty Team – 01905 768020 (17.00/16.30 Fri – 8.30 am, weekends and public holidays)

Herefordshire Adults:
01432 260715 (weekdays 9am-5pm)
0330 123 9309 (after 5pm, weekends and public holidays)

Herefordshire Children:
01432 260800 (8.30 – 17.00)
Emergency Duty Team 01905 768020 (17.00 – 8.30 am, weekends and public holidays)

APPENDIX B

Safeguarding Reporting Process Following Allegation of Abuse Against a Staff Member or Volunteer



NOTES:

- The Area Commander will liaise with the Human Resources Department about whether a suspension is necessary. (Suspension should be seen as a neutral act without prejudice).
- Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality.
- The nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence will determine the outcome, with the advice of the LADO.
- Even if the individual resigns the allegation must still be followed up.
- A record must be kept of any allegations made and how it was followed up and resolved. This must be kept for 10 years. A copy will be given to the individual.
- If an employment reference is provided for an individual against whom an allegation has been made, then it must clearly state this even if it was found to be false or unproven.
- Following an allegation process, we will review our policies and procedures to help prevent similar events in the future.

The Local Authority Designated Officer, LADO, is part of the County Council's Children's Services and is there to coordinate information, concerns and allegations, as well as to provide advice.

Guidance if a child/ young person discloses abuse:

- Keep calm. Do not show if you are shocked or surprised
- Listen to the young person.
- Accept what you hear without passing judgement.
- Ask questions only for clarification, don't ask leading questions, don't investigate.
- Offer support and understanding.
- Don't make promises.
- Explain that you cannot keep it secret and what may happen next (they may choose to stop telling you their information but this is OK).
- Reassure the young person that they were right to talk to you.
- Act on the advice given
- Make notes of your conversation with the Duty Group Commander and any advice offered.
- Sign and date your notes and give them to the Signposting Coordinator to keep in a confidential file.

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

IF IN DOUBT – CONSULT

- Respect the confidentiality of everyone involved in the incident and keep the matter restricted only to those who need to know.
- Make sure support is provided for the young person making the disclosure and for yourself if necessary.

DON'T:

- press for explanations
- be afraid to express your concerns
- put it off
- leave it to someone else to help

For advice or support contact: the **Duty Group Commander via Fire Control on 03333 99033 or Prevention Team on 0800 032 1155 (Mon – Fri office hours only)**



Safeguarding Form SG1

What is Safeguarding?

There are a lot of definitions of what 'safeguarding' means but simply put Safeguarding is . . .
"Protecting people's health, well-being and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect."

Safeguarding is EVERYONE'S responsibility

Once completed this form should be treated as Private & Confidential

When a safeguarding issue is identified, once any immediate risk of harm or neglect has been addressed, this form must be completed **IMMEDIATELY** and sent to SafeguardingAdults&ChildrenReferrals@hwfire.org.uk .

Outside of office hours, weekends and Bank Holidays please contact Fire Control and send form to FBcontrol@hwfire.org.uk , copying in SafeguardingAdults&ChildrenReferrals@hwfire.org.uk

It is essential to include as much detail as possible to ensure that when the referral is made to the relevant safeguarding team, HWFRS are providing a relevant and factual account of concerns raised.

Your contact details

Name	
Role	
Station & Watch/Department	
Contact Number	
Email	
Date & Time of Concerns	
Incident Number (If applicable)	

Details of adult / child* that this referral is about (* Delete as applicable)

	Person 1	Person 2
Gender		
Name		
Address (Including postcode)		
Current Address (if different from above)		
Telephone Number		
Date of Birth & Age		
Childs school (if applicable)		
NHS Number		
GP practice		
Name of adults/child's* Social Worker (if applicable)		

Details of why the concern has been raised

<p>What type of care and support needs / significant medical history does the adult/child* have?</p> <p>Care and support is the term used to describe the help an individual/family needs in order that they can live in the best way they can, despite any illness or disability they might have.</p>	
<p>Describe the abuse or neglect the adult/child* is experiencing or at risk of experiencing.</p> <p>What is it that you have seen, heard or been told and by whom?</p> <p>Please provide as much detail as possible.</p>	
<p>Why do you believe the adult/child* is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect?</p>	

If disclosure, use adult/child's* own words where possible.

Consent/Capacity

The adult/parent has consented to the reporting of this safeguarding concern.	YES / NO
If no, why was consent not gained?	
Is the Adult/Parent/Carer* aware of the referral?	YES / NO
If 'yes', what was their response? (Remember it may not be appropriate for the parent/carer to know about the concern).	

Protection

What have you done to make the adult/child* safe?	
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Are they still at risk?	YES / NO
Does the alleged abuse appear to be a crime?	YES / NO
Have the Police been informed?	YES / NO
Detail any identified risks to others as a result of your concerns.	
Is there a risk to staff visiting the adult / child*? If YES, please provide details.	YES / NO

Outcomes

<p>Have you spoken with the adult/child* and what is their desired outcome?</p> <p>Please discuss and document what this person would like to happen as a result of the safeguarding concern being raised?</p>	
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Type of Abuse

Consideration needs to be given to whether the concerns raised constitute domestic abuse.

Type of Abuse *Mandatory* Select ALL that apply e.g. Physical Abuse, Domestic Abuse, etc. Please mark the box with X	Physical		Sexual	
	Psychological and Emotional		Neglect and Omission	
	Financial and Material		Discriminatory	
	Organisational		Domestic Abuse	
	Modern Slavery		Sexual Exploitation	
	Self-Neglect		Not Applicable	

Is domestic abuse a factor within this concern?	YES / NO
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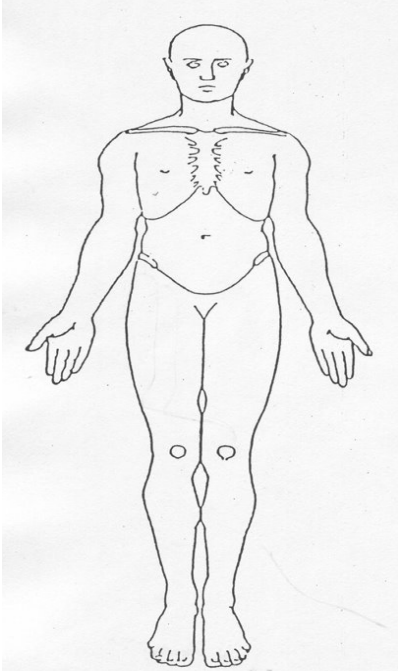
If Yes please select all sub-categories that apply Please mark the box with X	Coercive Control	Sexual Abuse	Stalking
	Psychological and/or emotional abuse	Financial Abuse	Online or Digital Abuse
	Physical Abuse	Harassment	N/A

Other agencies already involved (If known)

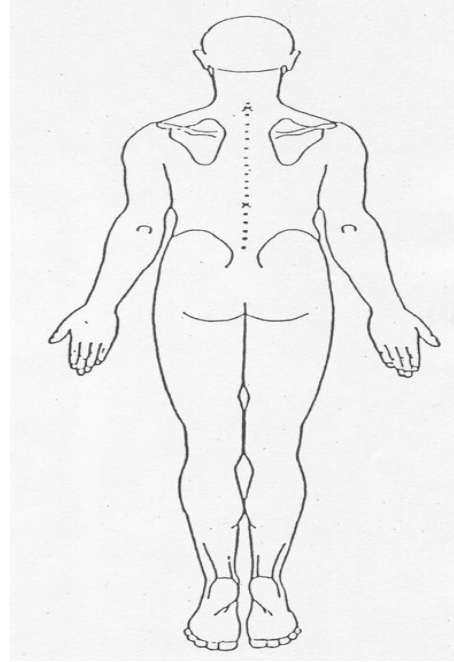
Name	Agency	Email	Contact Number

Body Map

If injuries are evident or disclosed please indicate and mark the location of these on the Body Map below.



Description:



Description:

Relationships

Details of any adults/children* that the adult cares for that may need support.	
Details of any friend or family member that the adult would like to be contacted to act as an advocate.	

Further information

Please supply any other information relevant to this referral.

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NOTE: If this concern is referred to the local authority, the initial referrer's details will be removed. However these will be shared in the future should this information be requested as part of a legal investigation.

Actions by Community Risk / Duty Group Commander

Name of CR staff / Duty Group Commander dealing with referral.	
Date & time received.	
Has decision to refer to adults/children's services been made? If 'no' summarise reason for decision.	
Details of contact made with adults/children's* services to include date and time:	
Name, contact number and email of adults/children's* services professional to with whom contact was made.	
Record of conversation with adults /children's* services.	
Any other referrals made?	
Date and Time completed.	

Duty Group Commander to inform SafeguardingAdults&ChildrenReferrals@hwfire.org.uk of decision made and action taken.