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ISSUE DATE	Jul 2005
AUTHOR	D Hankey
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FORMS	0
REVIEWED	Sep 2026
REVIEWED BY	H Young
CHECK BY	Sep 2027

Quality Assurance Policies & Procedures

SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT POLICY CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION

Appendix B

Making a Safeguarding Referral

1. Purpose and content

The purpose of this appendix of the College Safeguarding Policy is to provide a clear set of guidelines to staff regarding making a referral to children's social care, adult services or the police.

2. Making a referral

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and staff must act immediately on any concern. Any member of staff may contact children's social care, adult social care or the police where there is an immediate risk of serious harm. Emergency action must not be delayed while waiting for internal consultation. Staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or Safeguarding Team as soon as possible and ensure that the concern, decision-making, rationale, advice received and actions taken are recorded promptly on ProMonitor.

Where the concern is not an immediate emergency, staff must report the matter to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team without delay. Staff must not investigate, promise confidentiality or wait for proof before sharing a concern. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, a referral must be made to local authority children's social care and/or the police as appropriate. Where a learner may benefit from Family Help or Early Help, this must be considered promptly and kept under active review.

Child-on-child Abuse, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence, including Online and AI-generated Abuse

Colleges and multi-agency partners should act as though sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening, even when there are no specific reports.

Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges June 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

The College will maintain a culture where sexual harassment, sexual violence, online sexual abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and child-on-child abuse are recognised, challenged and addressed. Staff must act on concerns even where there has been no direct disclosure, recognising that it could happen here. This includes concerns about image-based abuse, coercion, blackmail, sextortion, online grooming, misogyny, harmful digital behaviours and AI-generated or manipulated sexual images. Learners will be supported to report concerns, including anonymously where available, and the College's safeguarding procedures will be followed. All decisions must prioritise the safety and welfare of the learner and consider the needs of any alleged victim, alleged perpetrator and wider peer group.

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Prevent Referrals

Refer to 3.11 Annex G.

3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has responsibility for operational safeguarding and will ensure that:

- Advice and support are provided to staff on issues relating to safeguarding
- A record of any safeguarding referral, complaint, disclosure or concern is kept on ProMonitor, including where the concern does not lead to a referral.
- Where Family Help or Early Help is appropriate, the DSL or DDSL will support staff in liaising with relevant agencies and considering an inter-agency assessment. Cases receiving Family Help, Early Help or other support will be kept under review, and escalation to the appropriate safeguarding agency will be considered if risk increases or circumstances do not improve.
- The College's safeguarding policy is implemented consistently. Cases of suspected abuse, allegations, disclosures or safeguarding concerns are referred to the relevant agency in a timely way, and advice received is acted on and recorded effectively.
- Staff receive regular training in safeguarding issues and are aware of the College safeguarding procedures.
- Safer recruitment practices are in place.
- College works with appropriate partners to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk of harm.
- Data protection legislation and concerns about confidentiality must not prevent information being shared where this is necessary and proportionate to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child, young person, adult at risk or others.
- There is liaison with the nominated Governor and Principal as appropriate.
- The DSL and safeguarding staff update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, and at least annually, so they remain informed about local and national safeguarding developments relevant to their role.
- The DSL will ensure regular reports are provided to the College Leadership Team and Governors detailing how the College has discharged its safeguarding duties.
- Stay alert to and recognise welfare issues, being sure to challenge poor practice.
- Relevant safeguarding information is checked so the College is aware where learners are subject to a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan, Family Help/Early Help support or other statutory safeguarding arrangements.
- Sharing of appropriate information with relevant people takes place.
- Consultation with Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP) for additional information and guidance takes place if needed.
- All staff who have contact with children, young people, adults at risk and/or their families receive safeguarding induction, regular training and updates, including online safety, Family Help/Early Help, information sharing, child-on-child abuse, AI/deepfake risks, serious violence, cyber security and mental health escalation.

4. The Safeguarding Team will ensure that:

- Support is considered for learners who may benefit from Family Help or Early Help as soon as problems emerge.
- Family Help or Early Help needs are discussed with the DSL or DDSL.

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- Support is provided to other agencies and professionals where a Family Help or Early Help assessment is required. This includes identifying emerging concerns, liaising with the DSL or DDSL and sharing relevant information with professionals on a need-to-know basis.
- Parents, carers, employers and relevant partner agencies are able to access the College Safeguarding Policy and understand how to report safeguarding concerns.
- The Safeguarding Team supports the DSL and DDSL with operational safeguarding duties, learner support, agency liaison, recording, monitoring and follow-up.

5. General Advisory Principles

Some general principles which will apply (and which will be covered in training) follow. If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells you about possible abuse:

- Listen carefully, stay calm and take the concern seriously;
- Do not interview or investigate. Ask only open, necessary questions to clarify immediate safety and what has been said;
- Do not put words in his/her mouth, or “lead” the conversation;
- Reassure him/her that he/she has done the right thing by telling you;
- Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that you must pass the information to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team so that support and protection can be considered;
- Note the main points carefully, including date, time, place, what he/she said, your own questions, etc;
- Do not investigate the allegation yourself. Report the concern immediately to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team and record the concern factually on ProMonitor as soon as possible.

6. Safeguarding Procedures – Students Under 16

Students under the age of 16 are governed by the procedures laid down by their respective school. The college has quality assurance procedures outlined in QAP 3.11.1 Involving Learners aged 14-16 years old

However, should a member of staff be unable to gain clarification from the school the following procedure should be followed:

- Refer the matter **immediately** to the College DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team. Tell the student that this action will take place because of the disclosure or concern;
- The DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team will contact the school DSL to share the disclosure or concern and agree the next safeguarding action;
- In an emergency, staff must contact emergency services or children’s social care directly where delay would increase risk, and then inform the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team immediately.

7. Safeguarding Procedures – Students Aged Between 16 and 18 Years

Where a student is aged 16 or over and has capacity to understand the concern, the College will normally seek to involve them in decisions and, where appropriate, seek their agreement before making a referral. However, safeguarding concerns can and must be shared without agreement where there is risk of harm to the learner or others, where a crime may have been committed, where a child under 18 may be at risk, where an adult safeguarding duty may be engaged, or where delay would increase risk.

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The College will be open and transparent with the student wherever it is safe to do so. Staff must explain that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where safeguarding action is required. Decisions about consent, information sharing and referral will be recorded on ProMonitor, including the rationale for any decision to share information without consent.

When a student discloses abuse or alleges that abuse has taken place, the following steps must be taken:

- The member of staff must report the matter immediately to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team and record the concern factually on ProMonitor.
- The DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team will speak with the student only as necessary to clarify immediate risk, offer support and decide the appropriate safeguarding response. Staff must not conduct an investigation. Where specialist support is offered and declined, the College will continue to consider safeguarding risk, consent, capacity, information sharing duties and whether further action or referral is required.
- Staff must not investigate allegations. Their role is to listen, reassure, record factually, report immediately and follow safeguarding advice.
- Where other children under 16 are living at home with the student and felt to be at risk, the student will be informed that confidentiality cannot always be maintained.
- In line with the BACP Ethical Framework, counsellors must explain the limits of confidentiality. Where there are good grounds to believe that a student is at risk of abuse, is abusing others, or that others may be at risk, confidentiality may be broken following appropriate safeguarding consultation. Wherever safe and appropriate, the student will be involved in this decision.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities must be treated according to their chronological age while recognising that additional needs may affect understanding, communication, capacity, vulnerability and ability to protect themselves. Reasonable adjustments must be made to support disclosure and participation. Where risk of harm is identified, concerns must be shared with the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team and, where necessary, with children's social care, adult social care or the police without delay.
- **Safeguarding Procedures – Vulnerable Adults Procedures**

In the case of adults at risk, staff should:

- Report the matter to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team;
- The DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team will consider whether the adult has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves because of those needs;
- In an emergency, staff must contact emergency services or adult safeguarding services directly where delay would increase risk, and then inform the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team immediately;
- The DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team will contact Adult Social Care for advice or referral where the adult safeguarding criteria may be met;
- Appropriate action and communication will be taken in line with advice from Adult Social Care, the Safeguarding Adults Board, police or other relevant agencies. All decisions, advice and outcomes must be recorded on ProMonitor.

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8. Responses to outside agencies related to potential safeguarding issues

From time to time, the College receives enquiries from external agencies regarding potential safeguarding issues. These must be referred to the DSL, DDSL, Safeguarding Team or Principal. If they are unavailable, the Duty Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team must be contacted. The agency will be contacted to confirm the nature and urgency of the enquiry, and any information shared must be necessary, proportionate, recorded and in line with safeguarding information-sharing principles.

9. Documenting Safeguarding Incidents

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, decisions, referrals, agency contacts, actions and outcomes must be recorded promptly and accurately on ProMonitor. Records must be factual, dated, timed and written in the learner's words where possible. Professional judgement should be clearly identified as such. ProMonitor entries must include the concern, actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for decisions, advice received, referrals made, outcomes, whether the concern led to Family Help, Early Help, statutory referral, police contact, no further action or ongoing monitoring, and any review arrangements.

10. Safeguarding Incident Procedure for Sexual Imagery

Introduction

Hartlepool College of Further Education's mission is *to transform students' lives*, and a key part of this is ensuring a safe and inclusive environment. This procedure forms part of the College's safeguarding and online safety arrangements and makes clear that taking, making, sharing, possessing, viewing or distributing indecent images and pseudo-photographs of children under 18 is illegal. This includes images that are digitally altered, AI-generated or manipulated to appear sexual. Staff must treat all such concerns as safeguarding matters and report them immediately to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team.

- Looking at sexual images or videos of children and young people under 18 is illegal, even where the person appears older.
- These images involve real children and young people, or images made to appear real, and viewing, saving or sharing them can cause further harm.

Definitions

A pseudo-photograph is an image made by computer-graphics or otherwise which appears to be a photograph. This can include:

- photos
- videos
- tracings and derivatives of a photograph
- data that can be converted into a photograph
- AI-generated, digitally altered, manipulated or synthetic images that appear to show a child or young person in a sexual or indecent context.

Other key definitions include:

- **'Indecent'** is not defined in legislation but can include penetrative and non-penetrative sexual activity.
- **'Making'** can include opening, accessing, downloading, saving or storing online content, including content that appears through pop-ups or temporary files.
- **'Sharing'** includes sending, forwarding, uploading, offering on a file-sharing platform, making available to others, or possessing with a view to distribute.

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Reporting procedure

All incidents involving sharing nude or semi-nude images, sexual imagery, AI-generated sexual images, deepfakes, image-based abuse, coercion, blackmail, sextortion or online grooming must be reported immediately to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team and, where required, the Principal.

- Suspicions or concerns that a child or young person may be at risk must always be reported to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team immediately.
- The DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team will make and record the decision about police involvement, taking account of the age of the learners, evidence of coercion, exploitation, blackmail, grooming, threats, adult involvement, repeated behaviour or wider risk.
- Parents and carers of learners under 18 should be informed immediately regarding the report unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- Parents and carers will be invited to an initial review meeting, that will be held in college. The DSL, the Principal or an Executive member will attend this meeting. The police and multi-agency representatives will also be invited if appropriate
- Where further information is needed, the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team will speak with the learners involved only as necessary to clarify immediate safety, support needs and safeguarding next steps. Staff must not interview learners or investigate the incident.
- Employers should be informed at the discretion of the college following advice from the police or following the outcome of the initial review
- Once actions agreed at the initial review have been completed, a subsequent disciplinary or decision-making meeting will be held with the appropriate people attending, including the DSL and Principal or an Executive member of staff. A risk assessment may be completed to consider risk to the young person, other learners and the wider College community.
- Any suspension, disciplinary action or risk management decision must be considered alongside safeguarding advice, the learner's welfare, the needs of any alleged victim and alleged perpetrator, and the College Student Disciplinary Policy.
- If there is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent, for example due to a learning difficulty, agencies supporting the student will also be informed. This may include the SEND team, social services or virtual school.
- The College's safeguarding procedure QAP 3.11 will be followed. If there is concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral must be made to children's social care and/or the police. Where an adult has shared or is suspected of sharing nude or semi-nude images of a child, this must be treated as child sexual abuse and referred to the police as a matter of urgency.

Advice for Staff when Dealing with an Allegation

The sharing of nude or semi-nude images involving children is a safeguarding concern and may be illegal. This includes AI-generated, digitally altered, 'nudified' or deepfake images. Staff must not view, copy, download, print, forward, store, save, delete or ask learners to share imagery. The priority is to safeguard the learner, preserve information appropriately and escalate immediately to the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team. Any decision by the DSL to view imagery in exceptional circumstances must be based on professional judgement, be necessary to safeguard the child or young person, and be clearly recorded.

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- Never view, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g., if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it
- Do not ask the learner(s) involved to disclose further details about the imagery beyond what is necessary to establish immediate safety. This must be managed by the DSL, DDSL or Safeguarding Team.
- Do not share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved
- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL

11. Contacts for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

NAME	ROLE	ROOM NO.	EXTENSION NO.	PHONE NO.
Helen Young	Designated Safeguarding Lead	3.31	4207	01429 404207 07848972627 (outside office hours)
Beth Sinclair	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	G11	4187	01429 404187 07842398665
078Graeme Reynolds	Student Success Coach	G11	4009	01429 404009
Amy Harris	Student Success Coach	G11	4028	01429 404028
Gemma Robinson	Student Success Coach	G11	4023	01429 404023 TBC
Mary Kernan	Student Success Coach	G11	4014	01429 4041014

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If any safeguarding incident occurs outside normal working hours and the Safeguarding Team are unavailable, the Duty Officer must take immediate action to keep the learner safe. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services must be contacted without delay. The Duty Officer must then inform the DSL, DDSL, Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible. Any external agency contact, advice received, decisions made and actions taken must be recorded on ProMonitor at the earliest opportunity.

Child Safeguarding – contacts

Hartlepool

The Children's Hub - 01429 284284 | childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team (outside office hours) - 01642 524552

Durham County Council

First Contact / Emergency Duty Team - 03000 267979 | firstcontact@durham.gov.uk

Stockton-on -Tees Borough Council

Family Help Point - 01642 130080 familyhelppoint@stockton.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team (outside office hours) - 01642 524552

Middlesbrough Council

Middlesbrough Multi-Agency Children's Hub - 01642 726004 MiddlesbroughMACH@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team (outside office hours) - 01642 524552

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

Redcar & Cleveland Multi-Agency Children's Hub - 01642 130700 RedcarMACH@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team (outside office hours) - 01642 524552

Adult Safeguarding contacts

How to Report Abuse and Neglect

You can report very serious abuse and neglect to Cleveland Police by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency

Gateshead

0191 433 7033 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) adultsocialcaredirect@gateshead.gov.uk

Hartlepool

01429 523390 iSPA@hartlepool.gov.uk

Middlesbrough

01642 065070 adultaccesssteam@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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Redcar & Cleveland

01642 771500 AccessAdultsTeam@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

Stockton-on-Tees

01642 527764 firstcontactadults@stockton.gov.uk

Evenings and Weekends

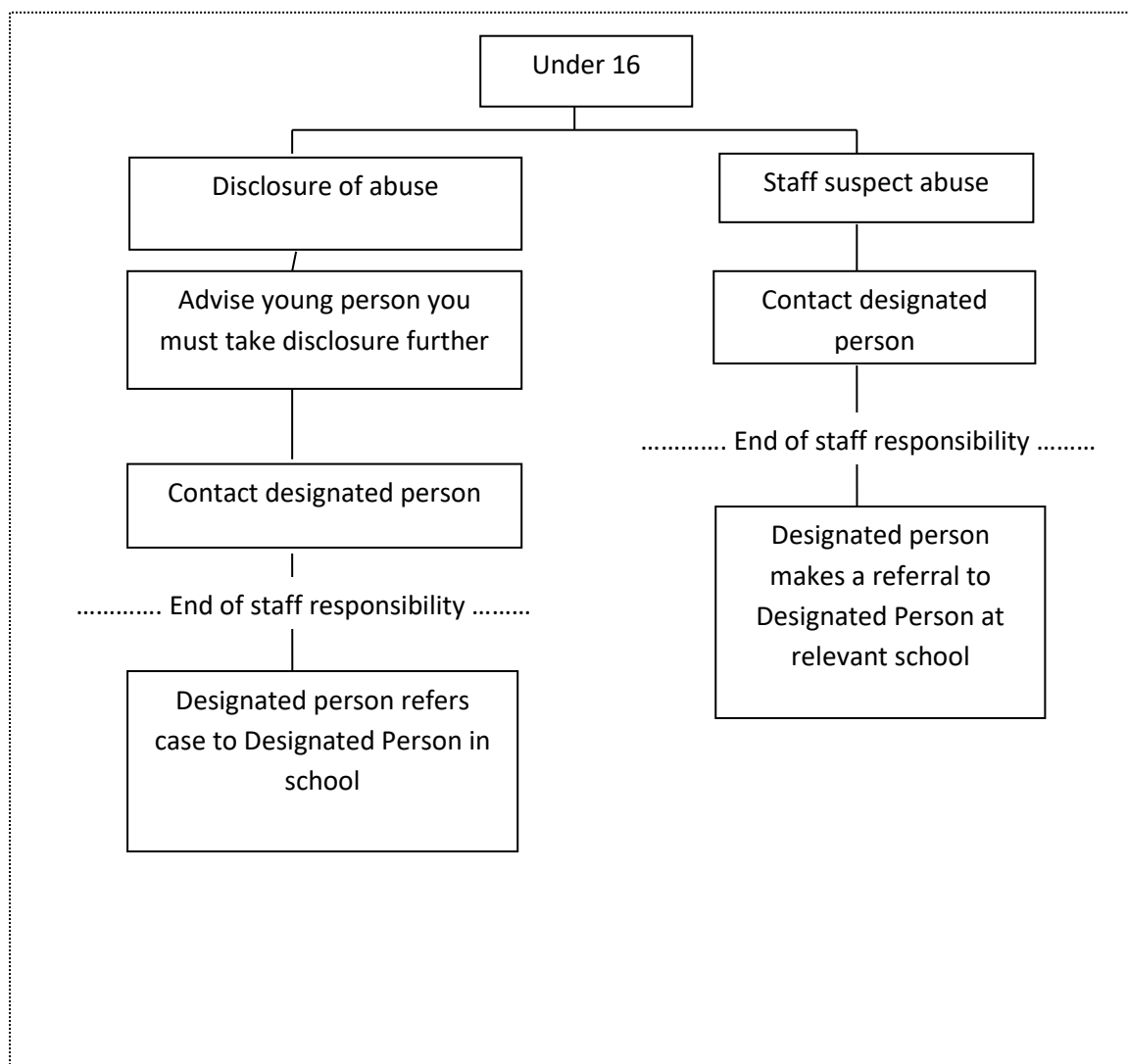
01642 524552

- HM Government March 2015: What to do if you are worried a child is being abused; advice for practitioners
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>
- Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers May 2024
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf

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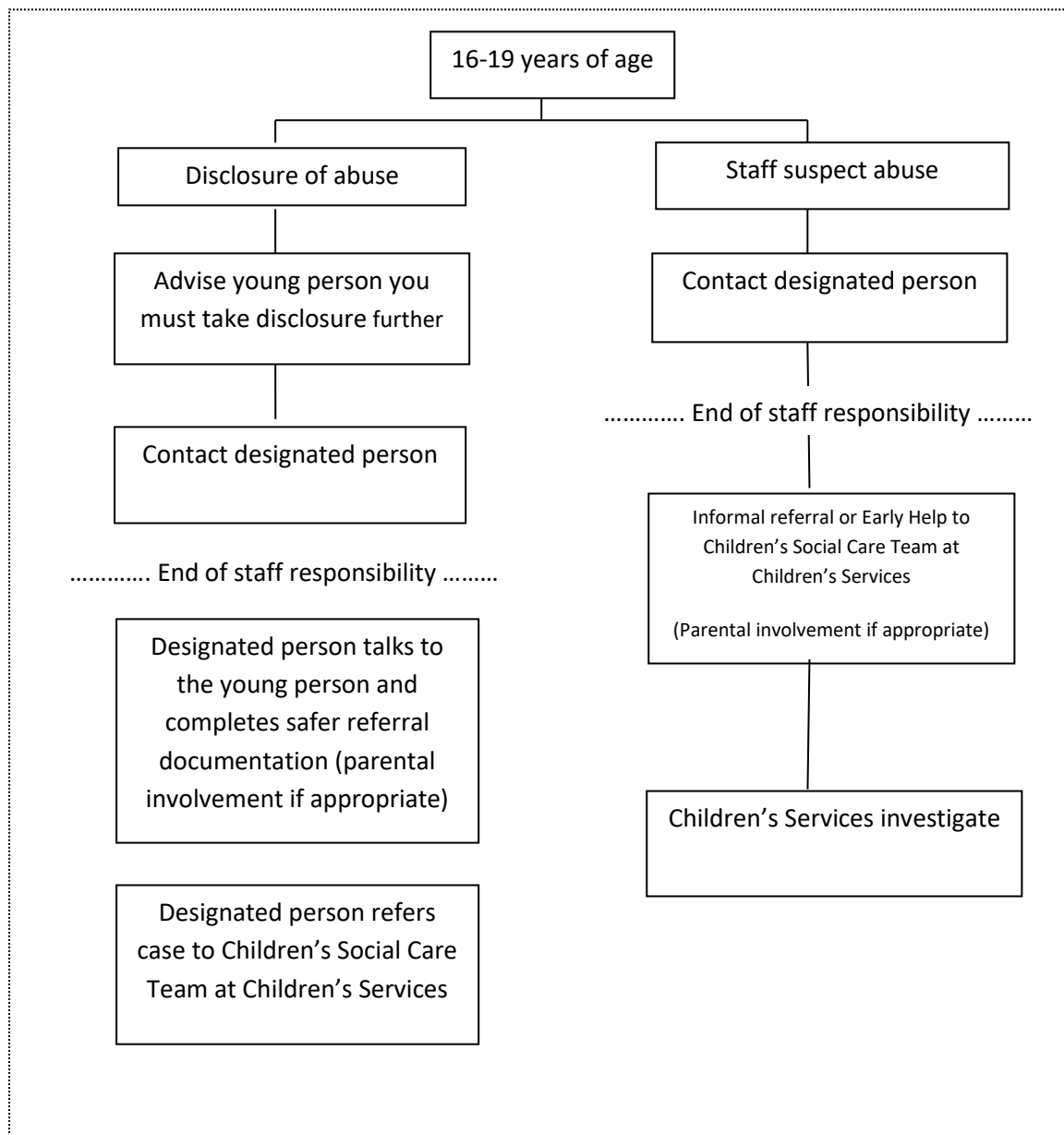
13. Referral flow charts

Referral of Young People Under 16 Years of Age



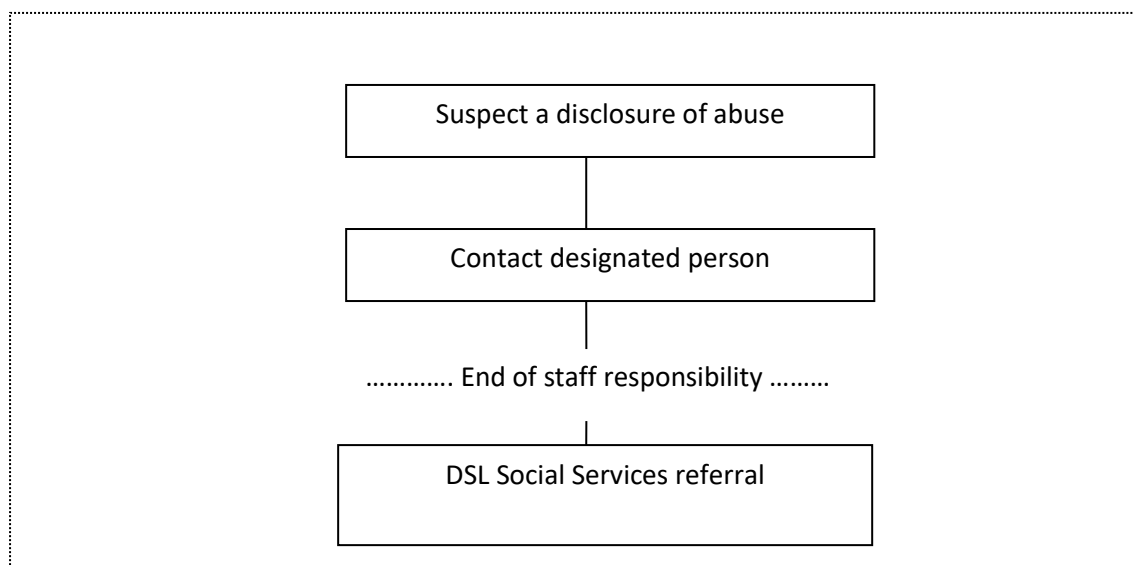
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Referral of Young People 16-19 Years of Age



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For Referral of Vulnerable Adults



14. Safeguarding process

The Three key stages of the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults process are as follow:

- **Stage One:** Safeguarding Concern
- **Stage Two:** Enquiry
- **Stage Three:** Safeguarding Review Meeting/ Making the Decision to Close a Case

Stage	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Stage One – Safeguarding Concern Raise concern via the relevant area of social care (Children's Safeguarding team/ Adult Safeguarding team)	Step A -Act to protect the student and deal with immediate risk -Report to Designated Safeguarding Lead, if applicable, who will then take any immediate management action in accordance with the colleges Safeguarding Policy and procedures Consider: - -What is the desired outcome for the student -Consent (consider the students age and their capacity)	All college staff reporting to Course tutor, Head of School, DSOs	Immediately, if emergency or within same working day

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	-Gather initial information to clarify facts -Consider reporting to police, if a crime -Record information -Raise Concern via Adult Social Care or the Children's Safeguarding team -If appropriate to the case parents/carers are to be contacted and informed of the referral Step B -Using the relevant documentation record details and pass concern onto the appropriate Safeguarding Team	DSL, DSOs In the absence of the DSL the Principal must approve the documentation	Immediately, if emergency or within same working day
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Stage	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Stage Two – Enquiry Decide whether to or not to progress If progressing, consider appropriate Referral Pathway	Step A Determine: -If the student is an Adult (over 18) -has care and support needs; and their capacity -is at risk or experiencing abuse or neglect and as a result is unable to protect themselves -Consider what is the desired outcome of the Adult? -Consider whether the adult requires an independent advocate to represent and support the Adult during the Enquiry	Safeguarding Adult Team, supported by the colleges safeguarding team and relevant support agencies	Within 5 working days where possible (recognising that it may take longer to determine what is the desired outcome for the student)

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	-Where there is insufficient information to undertake the above, gather initial information and clarify facts -If the student is under 18 follow the advice given by the Children's Safeguarding Team if they are at risk or experiencing abuse or neglect and as a result is unable to protect themselves Step B -Record decisions on ProMonitor, including the concern, actions taken, decisions made, rationale, advice received, learner wishes and feelings where appropriate, information shared, 'no further action', ongoing monitoring, Family Help/Early Help, statutory referral or police contact. -Contact the person who raised the concern to inform them of the decision Step C (if progressing) -Gather information and clarify facts -Assess the needs of the adult/child and action how those needs might be met -Protect from abuse and neglect -Check if police are investigating (where relevant)		
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Stage	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Stage Three – Safeguarding Review Meeting For all referrals	Step A -Review information from the Enquiry, and undertake further investigations if necessary -Review the outcome of the action taken and evaluate any further risk If further risk is identified: - -A Safeguarding Planning meeting will be required within five working days of the initial report -During the Safeguarding meeting devise an action plan with clear roles and responsibilities to manage risk -Continue to hold review meetings at least once every three months until all actions are completed, also an appropriate outcome is reached Step C -Discuss outcomes and closure of procedure with the student -Complete all Safeguarding documentation and close process if no further actions are required -Ensure all records are updated on ProMonitor with appropriate restricted access.	Safeguarding Team, Multi agency partner organisations DSL/Multi-agency partners	Safeguarding Planning meeting within 5 working days. Review meetings at least once every three months.

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15. Recording Safeguarding Procedures

A personalised safeguarding approach will be adopted in all safeguarding procedures. Where safe and appropriate, the learner will be involved in decision-making and parents, carers or guardians will be informed to support proportionate responses and improved outcomes. Information may be shared without consent where this is necessary to safeguard a child, young person, adult at risk or others. Procedures will include an agreed action plan focused on wellbeing, preventing harm and responding effectively to concerns. The plan will identify roles, responsibilities, timescales and review arrangements. All safeguarding records, including emergency action, assessments, referrals, multi-agency meetings, decisions, outcomes and ongoing communications, must be recorded and stored securely on ProMonitor with appropriate restricted access.

Information sharing and managing safeguarding records: The DSL is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding records are kept up to date, confidential and secure. Records should include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern; the learner's words where possible; details of how the concern was followed up; decisions reached; rationale for decisions; referrals made; agency advice received; actions taken; outcomes; review arrangements; and any ongoing monitoring. Data protection legislation does not prevent information sharing where this is necessary, proportionate and lawful to safeguard and promote welfare. Staff must share information promptly where delay may place a child, young person, adult at risk or others at risk of harm.