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## **THE VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROJECT (VIP) SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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The VIP believes that it is unacceptable for a child, young person or adult at risk to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all with a clear commitment to implementing best practice which protects them.

The policy relates to trustees, staff, sessional workers, adult volunteers and young people directly employed/involved with The VIP.

### **The purpose of the policy:**

- To provide protection for the young people and adults at risk who are involved with The VIP.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm

### **What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of the children, young people, and adults at risk, who are involved with VIP and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children, young people, and adults at risk from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children and young peoples health or development
- ensuring children and young people grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children, young people, and adults at risk to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child or young person.

It also needs to be recognised that many of those involved with the VIP are deemed vulnerable, despite having attained the age of 18 and it is of equal importance that they are also protected and safeguarding policies are applied to them also.

### **The VIP strives to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk by:**

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them at all times.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with young people, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving young people (and parents/other agencies) appropriately.

- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training, and ensuring clear information is available for reporting concerns or complaints
- Ensuring that other delivery partner organisations supporting the delivery of our programme have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place.

### **The VIP recognises that:**

- The welfare of a young person is paramount and central to all our work. This means that taking action to safeguard and protect the best interests of the child or young person is more important than anything else.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19 states that every child should be protected from abuse.
- All children and adults at risk regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with young people, their parents (where appropriate), carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### Frameworks and Legislation that Underpin the Work of The VIP

There are many pieces of legislation, statutory guidance and good practice guidance that underpin the work of The VIP and which should be read and understood in conjunction with this policy. These include, but are not limited to:

Children Act 1989  
 Children Act 2004  
 Sexual Offences Act 2003  
 Data Protection Act 2018  
 Human Rights Act 1998

#### Approval:

This policy has been read and approved by:

Ashley McMahon Designated Safeguarding Lead (October 2021)

#### Review:

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by the Safeguarding Lead (Abi Ajibola) within the Trustees. In addition, following any Safeguarding incidents with a problematic outcome, a review will be carried out on any relevant policies. Policy & training requirements are reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with current statutory and regulatory provisions for safeguarding protocols as well as best practice within the charity.

### **Glossary and Definitions:**

Terminology in this area is complex, and changes as services are reshaped. This hyperlinked glossary sets out what is meant in the document by some key terms.

[Abuse](#)

[Children](#)

[Child Protection](#)

[Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

[Education, Health and Care Plan](#)

[Emotional Abuse](#)

[Neglect](#)

Parent Carer

Physical Abuse

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

Sexual Abuse

Young Carer

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child:

- has reached 16 years of age
- is living independently
- is in further education
- is looked after
- is a member of the armed forces
- is in hospital
- is in custody in a secure estate

does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection

## **Procedures**

Defining Abuse

The VIP understands that abuse of a child or young person can take many forms and can occur in many settings. It may include any act or failure to act that results in actual or potential harm to a child, and can occur in a child's home, or in the organisations, schools or communities the child or young person interacts with.

Abuse can manifest itself in many different ways as follows:

- Physical abuse – e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning.
- Sexual abuse – e.g. inappropriate physical contact and non-contact activities (including exposure to pornography).
- Emotional abuse – e.g. excessively criticising, withholding love.
- Neglect - e.g. persistent failure to provide for physical needs.
- Modern Slavery - e.g. forced, coerced into criminal activity, such as county lines
- Other - e.g. domestic abuse, parental drug and alcohol abuse, parental adult mental health concerns.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/>

## **Recruitment of Staff**

As part of The VIP's recruitment procedures, all staff who will be working with children, young people or adults at risk will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check – this was previously the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Currently, the DBS check will include a check of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (POCA) list.

Disclosure and Barring Service:

All recruitment information, including recruitment of volunteers, will include a statement that a DBS check will be required and state the level of the check to be undertaken. Prospective employees and sessional staff must give their consent to any checks to be made at any time, but they will normally be made after a conditional offer of appointment.

- The VIP reserves the right to ask any member of staff to undertake an Enhanced or Standard DBS check at any time and to update DBS checks when it seems appropriate to do so.
- Staff must also provide at least two references which must be taken up prior to their employment being confirmed. Standard application forms and reference forms are available.
- No member of staff should directly supervise or have unaccompanied access to young people until all of the necessary checks have been successfully completed.
- Staff undertaking work with children or regulated activity are required to disclose all convictions whether spent or not. Anyone convicted of an offence involving abuse or causing harm to any young person will be liable to instant dismissal and prohibited from operating directly for The VIP.
- If there is a change to a person's circumstances it is the duty of that person to inform the organisational safeguarding lead.

#### Training for Staff and Volunteers

It is the responsibility of the The VIP operational safeguarding lead to ensure that all staff and volunteers undertake appropriate training and development in safeguarding children, in line with their level of responsibility as identified through staff supervision and performance management review.

#### Employee's Rights

- An employee or volunteer has the right to be informed of any allegations that are made about them and a right to be kept up-to-date with any proceedings.
- The employee or volunteer has the right to expect complete confidentiality throughout any investigation and after if the allegations are proved to be unfounded.
- An employee or volunteer has a right to be heard and to have their views represented fairly and independently.

#### Staff (including volunteers) roles and responsibilities

The nature of the work carried out by The VIP involves staff and volunteers developing supportive relationships with children, young persons, adults at risk and their families. A duty of confidentiality applies to all information received. All records should conform with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998). The duty of confidentiality must be adhered to and information is not to be shared with any other agency or persons, save in very specific circumstances.

Staff and volunteers will be required to take part in therapeutic sessions within the VIP, for development and on these occasions information shared must be on a "need to know" basis.

There will also be instances where information must be shared with another agency in the public interest, which overrides the duty of confidentiality and is divided into two very specific categories:

- 1) Information about children/young people in need of protection and:
- 2) Information about life-threatening harm to an adult.

The VIP requires all staff and volunteers to be clear in their introductions to clients and their families, when outlining the duty of confidentiality, of these two specific exceptions.

## **DOs**

- ✓ Staff and volunteers are expected to treat young people with respect and to believe them when they make disclosures.
- ✓ Staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with safeguarding procedures and policy.
- ✓ Staff and volunteers are expected to act in accordance with all The VIP policies and procedures and to be positive role models through their behaviour, language and attitude.
- ✓ Staff are expected to create a supportive environment for young people so that they feel they can speak freely and trust that anything they say will be treated with absolute confidence with the following exception to this rule:
  - Child protection – if the young person tells you something and you believe them to be at risk of harm or another person is at risk then child protection reporting procedures must be followed - you need to make this clear to the young person.
- ✓ Staff and volunteers are expected to follow The VIP health and safety policies.
- ✓ Staff should follow The VIP case recording and records management policy when recording all work with young people.

## **DON'Ts**

- X Staff should never give out personal information including personal email addresses, home address, personal phone numbers. to a young person.
- X Staff should never meet with young people at the staff member's home address or in a non-professional setting.
- X Staff should never take part in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- X Staff should never allow or take part in any form of inappropriate touching.
- X Staff should never use or tolerate inappropriate language.
- X Staff should never make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun.
- X Staff should never reduce a young person to tears as a form of control.
- X Staff should never allow allegations made by a young person to go unrecorded or not acted upon.
- X Staff should never do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves.
- X Staff should never accept bullying.
- X Staff should never share a room with a young person
- X Staff should never interact with young people on social networking forums unless specifically work related and agreed by the safeguarding lead.

## **Whistle-blowing**

Whistle blowing is a way of letting us know, in confidence, that you are concerned about the welfare of a young person or the behaviour of any adult or young person involved with The VIP. It is important to bear the following in mind:

- Abuse of a young person may not always be obvious.
- While abuse of a young person may sometimes be carried out by a stranger it is much more common that the abuser is known to the young person and is in a position of trust and/or authority.

- It is not only adults that abuse young people. Young people can suffer abuse from other young people. This could be another young volunteer they are working with or someone they consider to be a friend.

See The VIP whistleblowing procedure for more details of how to make a whistleblowing complaint  
Reporting Procedures for Staff

All allegations/suspicions are to be treated as strictly confidential and must be referred immediately and directly to the relevant safeguarding lead.

Below are the steps to follow in the case that any of the following safeguarding issues should arise:

- You suspect a young person is being abused (possibly as a response to observations or third party information).
- A young person discloses to you (the young person informs you directly that they are concerned about someone's behaviour towards them).
- An allegation is made against another adult or yourself.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The VIP has designated Safeguarding Leads in the organisation. Frontline staff or volunteers who have a concern about the safety and well-being of a young person will follow the steps outlined in the Safeguarding Protocol (Appendix 2), the first step of which is to take concerns to the operational Safeguarding Lead, Ashley McMahon or Samaya Okuda.

Where an allegation is made against another member of staff or volunteer, the concerns should be immediately taken to the Board of Trustees Safeguarding Lead, Abi Ajibola.

Key contacts:

Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

- Ashley McMahon  
[Ash@vip.org.uk](mailto:Ash@vip.org.uk)
- Samaya Okuda  
[Samaya@vip.org.uk](mailto:Samaya@vip.org.uk)

Board of Trustees Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Abi Ajibola  
[Abi.ajibola@lloydsbanking.com](mailto:Abi.ajibola@lloydsbanking.com)

Staff dealing with a safeguarding issue should not investigate further, share confidential information with others, or take any further action unless authorised to do so by organisational Safeguarding Lead. The role of the Safeguarding Lead will be to give advice and assist in decision making around what to do with the concern.

A factual, written record of the concern should be typed up as soon as possible on the template safeguarding concern form, a copy of which is in Appendix 4, by the member of staff who receives the initial information.

This written record should include the facts as you know them on the day of the incident including:

- The nature of the allegations
- A description of any injuries
- The young person's account (if applicable)
- Witnesses, times, dates or other relevant information
- The young person's name, address and, where possible, information about a parent/guardian

A copy of this form should be password protected and emailed to the Safeguarding Lead and a copy of this along with other related documents should be placed in the section of the individual's case file marked 'strictly confidential' (this section should not be shared with the young person as it may contain compromising information).

If through consultation with the Safeguarding Lead it is decided that a referral will be made to the relevant Local Authority Children's Social Care team, a verbal referral via telephone should be made immediately (where feasible) and followed up in writing within 24 hours. The Local Authority referral form should be reviewed by the Operational Safeguarding Lead before being sent off.

The Operational Safeguarding Lead, with support from the Board of Trustees Safeguarding Lead, may also follow up referrals / actions should the member of staff not be available but will immediately hand it back when the member of staff returns.

Where concerns about a child/young person or vulnerable adult's safety arise outside of normal working hours, the above process should be followed.

If a member of staff or volunteer is alleged to have harmed a child/young person the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) must be contacted. The LADO should also be informed should The VIP become aware that a member of staff is unsuitable to work with children, or possibly have committed an offence against a child. Contact details for LADOs are given on each Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) website or on the safeguarding page of the relevant local authority website.

The VIP Board of Trustees will conduct quarterly reviews of all safeguarding referrals.

The Board of Trustees safeguarding lead will also record details of any incident or allegation in the risk register and report any serious incidents to the charity commission in line with legal requirements.

### **What to do if a young person discloses to you:**

If receiving the disclosure you should:

- Re-assure the young person but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments. You should always explain to a young person that you will have to share the information to ensure they can get the appropriate support.
- Control your emotions and react calmly so as not to frighten the young person.
- Inform the young person that s/he is not to blame and that s/he was right to tell.
- Take what the young person says seriously.
- If the young person needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue. Contact the safeguarding lead as soon as is feasible.
- Ensure the immediate safety of the young person.

- Avoid leading the young person and keep any questions to the absolute minimum. Ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.

#### Useful Websites/Sources of Support

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) - Offers children 24hour telephone help. Tel no 0800 1111

[www.child-safe.org.uk](http://www.child-safe.org.uk) - Initiated by Avon and Somerset Police

[www.get.to/kids-in-crisis](http://www.get.to/kids-in-crisis) - On-line service for children with problems

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk) - Helpline and child protection initiatives

The NSPCC provides a free 24-hour Child Protection Helpline, staffed by experienced social work counsellors, which provides confidential counselling, information and advice for those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The telephone number is 0808 800 5000. If using this service, please state at the outset that you are an adult seeking advice and information so that your call can be directed to an appropriate person.

#### Participation in professionals meetings:

**Staff and volunteers, where appropriate, should make every effort to participate in strategy discussions, meetings or discussions with Children's Services/Social Care Departments and/or the Police in order to plan further child protection inquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act.**

#### This could involve:

- **Attending informal meetings and discussions in order to plan how best to meet a child or young person's needs.**
- **Attendance at Strategy Meetings and/or Child Protection Conferences by staff and/volunteers or by sending a representative if they have relevant information about the child or their family. A decision about whether a member of staff/volunteer should attend a conference/meeting alone needs to be based in the first instance on their competence, confidence and whether they feel sufficiently comfortable to go unaccompanied. It should be noted that the full significance of particular knowledge will only become apparent through the process of sharing information at the Conference, so any information relating to the child's development, family functioning or wider environment should be shared.**
- **Written reports for the Conference should be prepared and sent to the Children's Services/Social Care Child Protection Conference Chairperson in advance. These should contain relevant known information about the child and family. The report should be signed off by the Operational Safeguarding Lead and shared with the child/family before the meeting (unless to do so would put the young person at further risk of harm or jeopardise any investigation, and it may be appropriate to check with the chair of the meeting before doing so.)**
- If the child/young person or another family member disagrees with something in the report, and a difference of opinion remains after further discussion, this should be brought to the attention of the conference, either verbally or through a written note to the Chair.
- Remember that the child/young person could/would be present for all or part of the Conference, as could their parent(s) or guardian(s). Reports should thus be clear as to the evidence on which details and opinion is based.

- This should not however detract staff or volunteers from giving a full and accurate account to the Conference.
- Where it is not possible for a representative to attend a Conference, a written report should be sent.
  - **Staff may agree to be designated members of the Core Group, (convened following an Initial Child Protection Conference) in which case they share responsibility for the implementation of the Child Protection Plan. However, they must not accept key worker responsibility for a case.**
- Staff and volunteers who are already working alongside other child welfare professionals to assess or implement a child protection plan will need to share information with those colleagues on a regular agreed basis and this should be made explicit to the child/young person (age appropriate) and their family.
  - **The VIP employees and volunteers should always\* consult with children and young people involved in the child protection process helping to ensure that they understand this process and are enabled to contribute according to their age and understanding. (\*unless to do so would endanger the child)**
- It is important to ensure that the children/young people with whom we work are helped to understand how the child protection process works and the contribution they can make to decisions being made.

## Recording

The importance of contemporaneous, clear, accurate, and detailed case notes is of vital importance when seeking to safeguard children/young people/adults at risk from abuse and harm. A guide can be found in Appendix 2 and The VIP's case recording & records management policy which all staff should read.

## Adults at Risk Guidance

### Incident and Accident procedures

When an incident/accident occurs follow the emergency contact procedures by immediately (where feasible) contacting the Operational Safeguarding Lead. If they are not available, contact the Board of Trustees Safeguarding Lead.

Any staff member or young person involved in, witnessing or becoming aware of an incident must promptly report the incident regardless of the level of severity of the incident.

Incident reports should be written up as soon as possible after the incident and emailed within 24 hours of the incident (48 hours over a weekend).

Incidents may include but are not restricted to:

- Illness or medical emergency
- Aggressive behaviour
- Violence
- Service user missing
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Injury
- Criminal activity including possession of illegal items
- Discrimination
- Child protection issue
- Accident

The relevant The VIP risk assessment protocols should be implemented prior to undertaking any sessions, activities or work with service users. If an accident/incident occurs, staff should follow the above procedures as well as adhering to any reactive measures detailed in the risk assessment.

In cases of medical incidents, where there is a trained first aid person contact them immediately for help.

## **Communication in an emergency**

Unforeseen emergencies happen. Remain calm and get the right help so that you are not dealing with the situation alone.

Some general things you can do to be prepared in case of an emergency are:

- Make sure you have read and work within the guidelines of The VIP policies and procedures; including health and safety, lone working and risk assessment protocols.
- Make sure you have the emergency contact details of the Young Person/Service User you are working with.
- You know how to contact your operational safeguarding lead, who are the designated 'on call' members of staff.
- You have the necessary contact details for other The VIP staff and trustees.
- You have your mobile phone with you.
- You have conducted a risk assessment and have identified the first aid(er) and emergency exits.

Contact details for Operational safeguarding lead:

Ashley McMahon, Head of Therapeutic Ops, The VIP: 07521 508407

## **APPENDIX 1:**

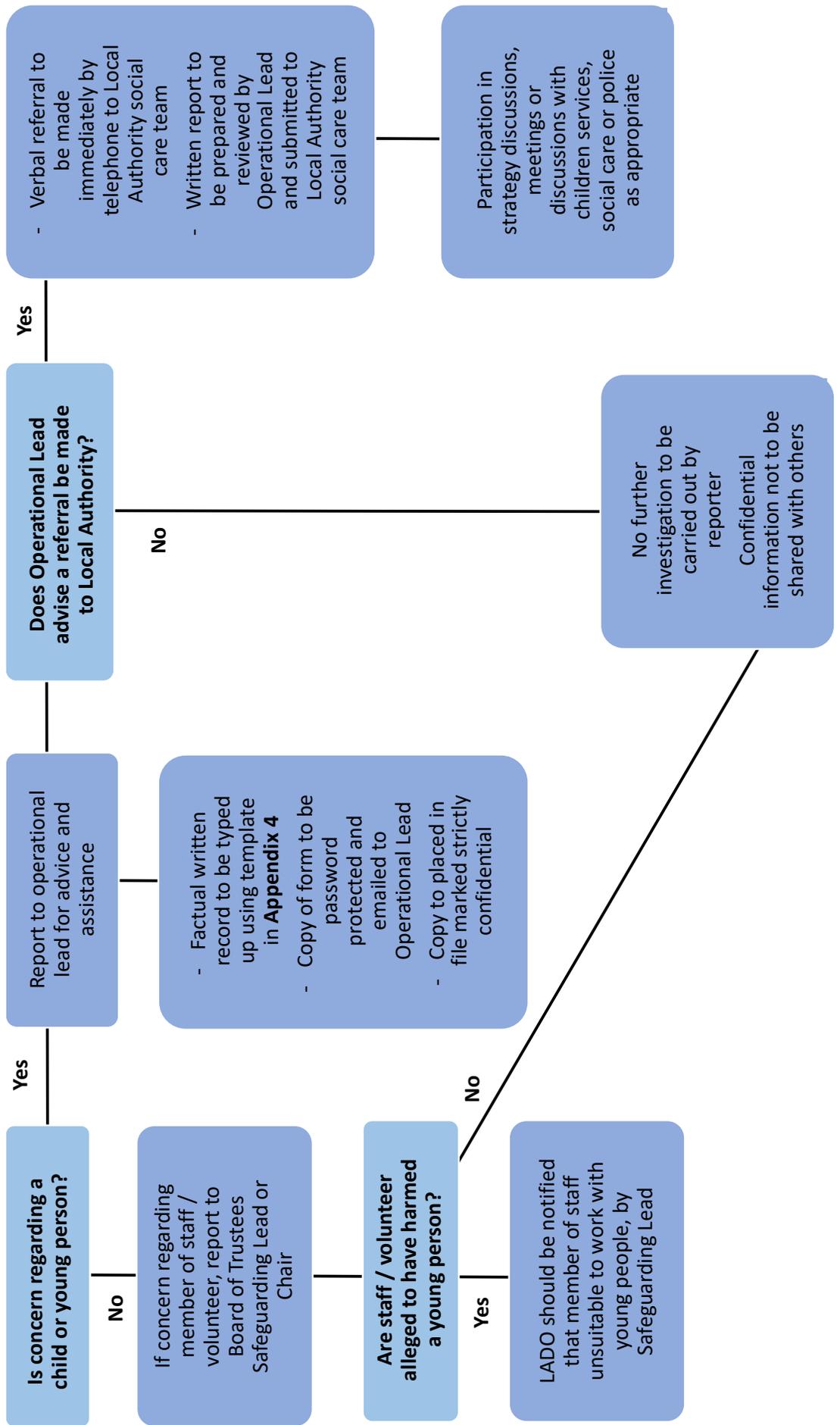
### **Recording: General Principles:**

The following are general principles to be followed to ensure accurate, detailed and clear records:

- **All concerns about a child or young person must be fully recorded in writing on the child/young person's file, in a separate section marked 'Strictly Confidential'. This section should not be made available to the child or young person, as it may contain compromising information.**
- Any entry made on a case file should be contemporaneous and should be signed and dated
- Case files should only contain information relevant to a particular child/family. The record should clearly state whether the information recorded is fact, third party information or professional opinion
- Those supervising staff and volunteers who are involved in child protection/safeguarding children work, should make regular and frequent checks to ensure that case recording is up to date
- Case file recordings should be signed off and dated by the line manager every three months (as set down by Lord Laming's recommendations in the death of Victoria Climbié)
- Where possible the case recording should be typed. Handwritten notes are often difficult and time consuming to read
- If it is decided not to make a referral to the Social Services/Social Care Department, this decision should be recorded with the reasons for not doing so and the names of those involved in the decision
- **All case files of children/young people and vulnerable adults, especially those on the child protection register, should be regularly read and signed by the manager following discussion in supervision**
- **All agreements about future steps must be recorded in writing and be specific about who is to do what by when**
- **All information relating to a child/family must be held securely in one place**
- All records should conform with the requirements of the Data Protection Act (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998). Information shared within The VIP must be "on a need to know" basis. Information disclosed to another agency must be in the public interest, and is divided into two categories:
  - 1) Information about children/young people in need of protection and:
  - 2) Information about life-threatening harm to an adult.

NB: In the event a referral being made to the LADO, it may follow that a case file may be accessed by a Court of Law in Care and/or Criminal Proceedings. In exceptional circumstances, Staff and volunteers could be called upon to give evidence in court and the importance of clear, accurate but detailed case notes cannot be overemphasised.

**APPENDIX 2:  
Safeguarding  
Flow Chart**



### APPENDIX 3:

#### Incident / Accident Form

Name of staff member reporting incident/accident:	
Date of incident / accident:	
Location of incident / accident:	

Names of staff, volunteers, service users etc involved in the incident / accident:
Names and contact details for any injured persons:
Nature of the incident / accident: [Including injuries sustained and the extent of injuries]
Further details of the incident / accident: [How and precisely where the incident took place]
Description of the activity taking place at the time: [e.g. workshop, 1:1, boxing session]
Full details of action taken: [Any first aid treatment, names of first aider(s), emergency services and/or parents & guardians contacted etc]
What happened to those involved after the incident / accident: [e.g. carried on with session, went home, went to hospital etc]

All the above facts are a true record of the incident / accident

Name:

Signature:

Date:

## APPENDIX 4:

### Safeguarding Concern Form

Personal Details:

Name of Young Person:			
Date of Birth:		Age:	
Address:		Contact Numbers:	
Name of Parent/Guardian:		Contact Numbers:	

Details of Safeguarding Concern:

Name of staff member/volunteer reporting safeguarding concern:	
Safeguarding Lead Consulted:	
Date of Concern:	
Safeguarding Concern: [Give details of whether this is as a result of a disclosure made by a young person, if this is third party information or observations. Include details of where this took place, what was happening at the time and who else was present. Be clear what is fact and what is opinion.]	
Signs of abuse: [Give details of any physical injuries, visual or other signs of abuse]	

Young Person's Views:  
 [If the young person is aware of your safeguarding concerns e.g. they have made a disclosure, what would they like to happen next? Do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome as we may have to go against their wishes to ensure their safety and fulfil our safeguarding obligations]

Siblings or other young people at risk:  
 [Give details of any siblings or other young people that may be at risk, including ages and contact details if they differ to this young person]

Next Steps:  
 [Defensible decisions and actions agreed in consultation with line manager and Designated Safeguarding Officer]

Referral to Children's Services/ Social Care:	Y/N
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Referral to Police:	Y/N
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If No, defensible reason for why referral wasn't made:	
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Local Authority Referred to (if applicable):	
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Date of Referral:	
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Duty Social Worker spoken to:	
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Contact number/email:	
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Police team Referred to (if applicable):	
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Date of referral:	
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Police Officer spoken to:	
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Contact number/email:	
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Young person is aware of referral (if no why):	Y/N
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Parent/Guardian is aware of referral (if no why):	Y/N		
Actions Agreed	By When	By Whom	Follow up

Name:

Signature:

Date:

