

3. Dealing with Disclosures

Purpose: This is to support and give guidance to AFCCT members of staff when dealing with any disclosures and describes the responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children and young people. How to make sure the disclosure is dealt with, and all relevant information is passed to the relevant people to support the care and protection of children and young people.

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1. Why children & young people reveal abuse, neglect or harm

1.1 There are lots of reasons why a child or young person might disclose that they are being abused, neglected, or harmed, including:

- realising the abuse, neglect or harm is wrong
- not being able to cope any more
- the abuse, neglect or harm is getting worse
- wanting to protect other children
- wanting the abuser to be punished
- trusting someone enough to tell them
- someone asks them directly.

It can be very hard for children & young people to open up about what's happened to them. They might be worried about the consequences or that nobody will believe them. They might've told someone before, and nothing was done to help them. Sometimes they might not know what is happening to them is abuse, neglect or harm and struggle to share what they are feeling. Some children & young people do not reveal they are being abused for a long time; some never tell anyone.

2. Steps to follow when a child or young person is disclosing information.

2.1 Stay calm and listen to what is being said.

2.2 Everything needs to be written down and if that is not possible at that time, please make sure you do this as soon as possible after the conversation. This can be reported on a Record of Concern Form.

2.3 **If you feel a child is in immediate danger, call the police straight away on 999.**

2.4 **If a child is thought to require immediate medical assistance, this should be sought as a matter of urgency from the relevant health services.**

2.5 Below is the guidance from NSPCC and what to say and how to respond to the child.

Listen carefully to what they are saying

Be patient and focus on what you are being told. Try not to express your own views and feelings. If you appear shocked or as if you do not believe them, it could make them stop talking and take back what they have said.

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Give them the tools to talk

If they're struggling to talk to you, show them [Childline's letter builder tool](#). It uses simple prompts to help them share what is happening and how they are feeling.

Let them know they have done the right thing by telling you

Reassurance can make a big impact. If they have kept the abuse a secret it can have a big impact knowing they have shared what's happened.

Tell them it is not their fault

Abuse is never a child's fault. It is important they hear, and know, this.

Say you will take them seriously

They may have kept the abuse secret because they were scared, they would not be believed. Make sure they know they can trust you and you will listen and support them.

Do not confront the alleged abuser

Confronting the alleged abuser could make the situation worse for the child.

Explain what you will do next

For younger children, explain you are going to speak to someone who will be able to help. For older children, explain you will need to report the abuse to someone who can help.

Report what the child has told you as soon as possible

Report as soon after you've been told about the abuse so the details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly. It can be helpful to take notes as soon after you have spoken to the child. Try to keep these as accurate as possible.

3. Follow Up after Disclosure

- 3.1 Please see procedure [4. Recognising and Responding to Concerns](#).
- 3.2 If you feel the young person is in immediate danger, then call 999.
- 3.3 Report the disclosure to the AFCCT Safeguarding Officer – Richard Taylor immediately by calling (Mob: 07764261313).
- 3.4 Send the Record of Concern Form to Richard along with your Line Manager and key contact at the school/organisation (if applicable).
- 3.5 If the Safeguarding Officer is unavailable, then please contact your Line Manager or Operations Manager (07739002722) by telephone.
- 3.6 You must not try to investigate or decide whether there has been abuse taken place.

4. Disclosure received by other means.

- 4.1 This could include disclosure sent by letter, text, email or voice message. Any form of disclosure should be sent to the AFCCT Safeguarding Officer as a matter of urgency. All messages need to be sent to the Safeguarding officer unedited and you must not discard or delete any of the details.