

What to do if a concern or allegation is reported to you

If you work or volunteer with children, young people or adults at risk there may be a time when someone reports something to you that you are concerned about. Use the following guidance alongside the 'Safeguarding Reporting Form' to record information and share as appropriate.

More advice is available www.bhs.org.uk/safeguarding

Even the most experienced coach or volunteer may feel a sense of anxiety when receiving information about an incident or allegation that has occurred or is being reported; your Lead Safeguarding Officer is there to help.

You should make sure that you understand and work within the local safeguarding arrangements that are in place in your area. In doing so, you should be guided by the following key principles:

- Children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility
- It is better to help children as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging
- Children and families are best supported and protected when there is a co-ordinated response from all relevant agencies

You should not let other considerations, like fear of damaging relationships with adults; get in the way of protecting children from abuse and neglect. If you think that referral to children's social care is necessary, you should view it as the beginning of a process of inquiry, not an accusation."

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, March 2015

Occasionally you may receive a call from an agency e.g. Children's Social Care or the Police, asking you for information about an incident that has been reported to them. You should fill in the **Safeguarding Reporting Form**. This will help you to be clear about the details and you should follow the same procedures.

Actions to Take	Actions to Avoid
You should try to: • Stay calm • Find a quiet and discreet place to have the conversation • Use the Safeguarding Reporting Form to make brief notes about what is being said • Initially keep questions to the minimum • Read back to the person what you have written (if available) • Make and agree your next actions • Report the concern to your line manager/safeguarding officer	You should try not to: • Panic • Make promises or agree to keep confidentiality • Allow expressions of shock or distaste to show • Speculate or make assumption • Make negative comments about the alleged incident • Be judgmental • (Do not) ask leading questions

Remember you are not expected to be a Child Protection expert and it is not your responsibility to determine whether or not the abuse has taken place, rather to record the details; seek guidance if necessary.