

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Recognising, Responding, Recording and Reporting

Doorstep Library (DL) works in partnership with families and is committed to a practice which protects children (anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday) and adults at risk from harm. It seeks to create an environment where everybody, employees, volunteers, family members or supporters, feels free to be themselves in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

This trust, however, must never be allowed to compromise the overriding priority to protect the safety and welfare of children. All trustees, employees, volunteers and those involved in activities run by Doorstep Library must accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of issues which cause children or young people harm.

Principles on which Doorstep Library's policy for safeguarding is based

Safeguarding children means to:

- protect children from abuse and maltreatment
- prevent harm to children's health or development
- ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

Everyone has a duty to ensure that children and adults at risk are safeguarded and must observe the following principles:

- the welfare of the child is always the most important consideration
- active steps are taken to promote the wellbeing of children and to protect them from harmful experiences and influences
- the duty to protect children applies, without any exceptions, to all those involved in activities run by Doorstep Library: employees, trustees, volunteers and other stakeholders
- discrimination, prejudice or bullying in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views is always wholly unacceptable
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- everyone has a duty to report any concerns about children's or an adult at risk's safety

While DL activities are mainly child-focused we are also committed to safeguarding the needs of adults at risk as appropriate. Adults at risk are defined as:

Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (temporarily or permanently) for various reasons in different situations, including:

- a. Learning or physical disability
- b. Physical or mental illness
- c. Reduction in physical or mental capacity
- d. Receipt of any form of healthcare or community services
- e. Detention in custody
- f. Inability to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

If there are any indications of abuse the safeguarding policy will be followed and reporting duties carried out.

The purpose of this guidance is to set out clear requirements and procedures so that everyone understands what we mean by child abuse, how they can protect children from harm, and what they must do if they have concerns about the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult.

Recognising abuse and harm

How children may be harmed or abused

- Somebody may abuse or neglect a child on purpose or by not acting to prevent harm
- Abuse can be intentional or unintentional
- Children may be vulnerable to abuse in any setting – at home, in the community or online
- Abuse may be by someone the child knows – such as a family member or another adult – by another child, or more rarely, by a stranger
- Anyone can be a potential abuser whatever their age, status, gender, social class, race or culture

What we mean by child abuse

Abuse can take many forms. Children and adults may be affected by harm or abuse, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender or religion. If you suspect someone is being abused, please follow procedures in the Doorstep Library Safeguarding Policy.

Types of abuse:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Criminal exploitation and gangs
- Domestic abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Neglect
- Non-recent abuse
- Online abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation.

Abusive Harmful Practices include female genital mutilation (FGM) or breast flattening; and attempts to draw children into violent extremism must also be treated as a safeguarding issue. Some groups of children are particularly vulnerable, including disabled children.

Please read document 'Safeguarding Definitions and Signs' for expanded definitions of each type of abuse.

Children who abuse other children

Sometimes another child may abuse a child. It can be very difficult to tell the difference between normal childhood behaviour and sexual abuse. If there is any possibility that one child could have forced or taken advantage of the other, then normal procedures should be followed for reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Preventing harm to children

The following processes are in place in order to minimise any risks to children's safety and welfare:

- All those involved with the Doorstep Library, whether as employees or volunteers, who will have the opportunity for contact with children have a Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Disclosure check (DBS). Good professional and character references are obtained
- Volunteers respect the Doorstep Library rules of conduct at all time, as detailed in all policies and training. Volunteers receive a copy of all documents, and can request further copies at any time.
- Parents/ carers are responsible for their children at all times during Doorstep Library visits and are never to leave the children alone in the home with the volunteers, whether in-person or online. We will not visit if they or a designated responsible adult are not home
- Volunteers must not visit families on their own but with a designated partner
- Volunteers must not visit families outside of the Doorstep Library session or directly contact any member of a family without the organisation's permission
- Volunteers are to ensure that where a parent/ carer is not present in the same room during a Doorstep Library visit, that the parent/ carer is aware that the visit is taking place and that all doors are left open so that the parent/ carer can hear should an issue arise
- Staff and volunteers should not engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games. Where possible, without causing offence, physical contact should be avoided.

Responding to children

Children may hide abuse or be reluctant to tell someone about it. They may feel ashamed, afraid of the consequences or think that the abuse is their fault. They may have been threatened by the abuser not to tell anyone about it or feel that they have to protect another person (including, sometimes, the abuser).

Doorstep Library recognises that some children are more vulnerable to abuse – for instance, disabled children – and will ensure that workers and volunteers are especially aware of their needs.

Anyone who is confided in by a child must:

- take the child seriously
- be sensitive and listen carefully to what the child says
- reassure the child that he/she is doing the right thing
- explain clearly what they will do next, in a way that is suitable for the child's age and understanding

If a child confides in an adult, the adult must not:

- make promises he/she cannot keep, such as telling the child that what they say will be kept secret
- act surprised or angry
- ask leading questions or put words into the child's mouth
- force the child to explain the whole situation or pressure them for details
- draw conclusions or make accusations

If information about possible abuse has to be passed on to social services or the police, children will be told as much as possible about what is happening, by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if appropriate or directly by social services, and will be given any possible opportunities to discuss and influence the process.

Reporting your concerns

All employees, volunteers, trustees and other stakeholders who may have contact with families will be trained to recognise situations which put children at risk, and will have a clear understanding of the steps that should be taken to ensure their safety.

Any concerns about discovered or suspected abuse must be reported at the earliest opportunity to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or to the CEO or Safeguarding Trustee if the DSL is not available (*contact details are at the bottom of this document*).

It is the responsibility of the DSL to decide whether a concern reported to them is a safeguarding issue, and will escalate it as appropriate.

Becoming aware of possible child abuse

There are several ways that someone may become aware that a child is suffering abuse:

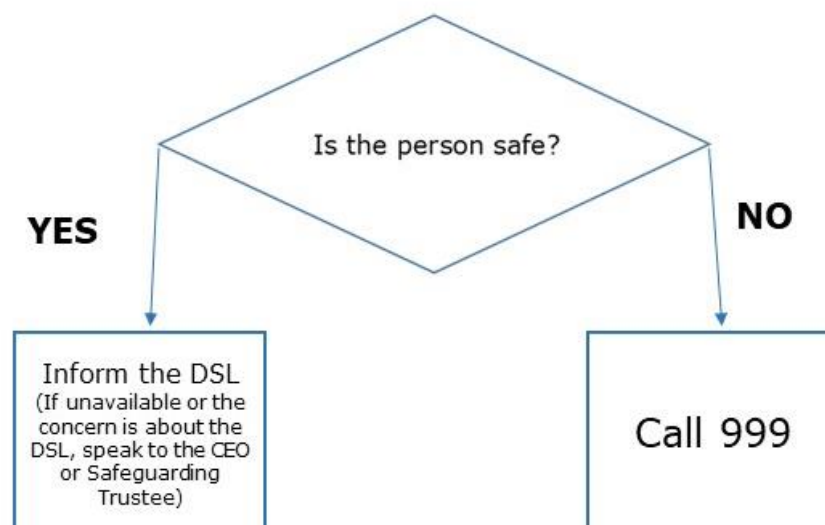
- A child may confide in someone that they are being abused (this is called disclosure)
- An adult may know, or suspect, that a child is being abused through their regular contact with the child or the family
- An adult or child may accuse a person involved in activities run by Doorstep Library of abusing a child
- An adult or child may confide that they know, or suspect, that a child is suffering abuse.

Contact a responsible person

- Inform the DSL as soon as you become aware that a child may be at risk of being harmed or abused
- If it is not possible to talk to the DSL for any reason, then talk to the CEO or the Safeguarding Trustee (*contact numbers at the bottom of this document*)
- If a child or adult is in immediate danger or seriously hurt, call 999

Reporting concerns

- Any report or discussion should focus on the reason for concern, how much immediate danger the child is in and the next steps to be taken.
- When discussing concerns anyone may ask to remain anonymous, but Doorstep Library cannot promise not to pass on any information if it suggests that others may be at risk of being harmed.



Recording the incident

Anyone who has concerns about a child's safety should take the following steps:

- Record what has happened using the Logging Form which will be made immediately available by the the DSL or person to whom the incident has been reported to. (Form must be available at each Doorstep Library base.)
- Write down what was said as soon as possible after talking to the child or anyone else. Include:
 - Name of child or young person
 - Age
 - Address
 - Name/s of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
 - Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else
 - What has prompted the concerns
 - Has the child or young person been spoken to; if so, what was said (using the actual words)
 - Has somebody been alleged to be the abuser; if so, record details
 - Who has this been passed on to and how, in order that appropriate action is taken e.g. the school, social services
 - Has anyone else been consulted; if so, record detail

All forms are to be kept as hard copy in a special file chronologically by date of entry and numbered in a safe locked cupboard in the office of the DSL. An electronic copy of each form is to be kept on the Doorstep Library network, as password protected documents that the CEO, DSL and the Safeguarding Trustee have access to.

Logging Forms must be dated and signed by the person(s) who reports the concerns.

USEFUL NUMBERS

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child, call the police on 999

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Katie Bareham, CEO

Tel: 07557 790925 (9am-6pm Mon-Fri) or 07836 250134 (if unavailable or outside of working hours)

Email: katie@doorsteplibrary.org.uk

Safeguarding Trustee

Liz Dawson

Tel: 07775591282

Email: safeguardingtrustee@doorsteplibrary.org.uk