

The Mix Stowmarket, Ltd

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Reporting Procedure

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1. INTRODUCTION - WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from harm and danger is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding and promoting the health and welfare of children and vulnerable adults 'means protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health (including mental health) or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children have the best outcomes.' *Working Together to Safeguard children - July 2018*

Safeguarding adults: is 'protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.' - Social care institute for excellence (SCIE).

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Policies and legislation

This policy is to be read in conjunction with other policies at The Mix:

- Staff and Volunteer Handbook
- Health & Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Other policies that may be relevant to your role include:

- Detached, Lone Worker, & Coaching Policy

This policy includes relevant information re: legislation and good practice from:

- The Children Act 2004 – Sections 10, 11, 12 and 13, 1989 – Sections 17 and 47
- Working Together to Safeguard children – December 2020
- Keeping children Safe in Education – statutory guidance for schools and colleges 2021
- The Education Act 2002
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Prevent Strategy April 2021
- Channel Duty Guidance April 2021
- Ofsted Inspection Framework 2015
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation
- The Munro Review 2011 and 2012 – a review of protection
- UK Council for Internet Safety: Online safety guidance for practitioners – February 2019
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation – July 2020
- NSPCC Safeguarding Standards and Guidance – 2019

2.2 Values at The Mix

We see a future in which children are change makers, with clear confident voices that are heard above the noise. A future in which any young person from any background can grow and flourish to become their best selves. In that future they exercise both their rights and responsibilities and invest their lives in building strong communities. We walk together with children as trusted partners who support, guide, inspire and empower them with that future in mind. We are The Mix.

2.3 Glossary

Child or Children - anyone under the age of 18 (children under the Children's Act)

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead - The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is the senior member of staff who is responsible for overseeing safeguarding and child protection within an organisation, such as a school, youth charity, or early years setting.

ASL – Alternate Safeguarding Lead – supports the DSL as above.

Radicalisation: the process by which a person comes to support terrorism or forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism: vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

3. SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCEDURES

3.1. Purpose

This procedure establishes the guidelines to be followed by The Mix staff, volunteers and the board of trustees, without exception, for the protection of service users from abuse. All service users have a right to protection and their welfare is paramount.

Annex A sets out some of the ways in which child abuse may be recognised and

Annex B shows how to respond in situations where disclosure has taken place.

The Mix undertakes to ensure that all staff (including volunteers) are appropriately trained in safeguarding and understand their safeguarding responsibilities and that of their colleagues. The Mix is a caring organisation and wishes to demonstrate its commitment to service users in the way it looks after those in its care.

3.2. Persons affected: This procedure affects all staff and volunteers.

3.3 Responsibilities

The responsibilities for dealing with safeguarding concerns lies with the following:

- All members of staff and volunteers are required to report any safeguarding concerns and be aware of the appropriate reporting and support procedure for safeguarding.
- The ASLs are responsible for supporting the DSL to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safe from harm and promotes their welfare. They are responsible for overseeing their areas and the tasks set out by the DSL.
- The DSL will discharge their safeguarding function in a way that ensures that children or vulnerable adults are safe from harm and promotes their welfare. They are responsible for following up any safeguarding concerns and for informing the appropriate external bodies.
- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for supervision of these activities.
- It is the Board of Trustees responsibility that the charity responds appropriately to all safeguarding concerns and to check that safeguarding procedures are being followed.
- The Safeguarding Advisory Group Purpose is to ensure that safeguarding is embedded in the organisation and to give strategic steer to all matters of safeguarding.

3.4 DBS & training requirements

DBS: As part of our safeguarding checks an Enhanced DBS check is required for all new employees and volunteers (including Trustees) of The Mix and 127 Trading Ltd (including non-youth work roles such as café). Subsequent Enhanced DBS checks are completed every 3 years as matter of good practice. Two references are also sought for both volunteers and employees. While waiting for a DBS check to arrive, a new volunteer is permitted to attend up to 3 taster sessions at the discretion of the Lead Practitioner but must not be left alone with children unsupervised during this time.

Training: All new employees and volunteers of The Mix and 127 Trading Ltd (including non-youth work roles such as café) are required to receive an induction by their line manager that includes a briefing on safeguarding procedures and to attend our in-house Introduction to Safeguarding Training within 2 months of starting (online training if in-person cannot be held). All staff and volunteers are required to re-attend this safeguarding every 3 years. Staff & Volunteers are expected to have a yearly update. Additional training relevant to the role is provided to compliment safeguarding training. Safeguarding Trainers will attend the annual Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Conference for their yearly update.

The Safeguarding Advisory Group is responsible for reviewing these activities and ensuring the training of The Mix team is appropriate and responsive to the needs of the children and families involved.

3.5 Recording and storing information

Recording and storing information applies to all staff and volunteers at The Mix and needs to comply with The Mix's GDPR policy. Keeping and maintaining accurate, appropriate records of the children and families we work with is important for several reasons:

- Information about children's care needs and contact details of parents/carers is a vital part of keeping children safe.
- Written/Online records are essential in the delivery of what *Working Together 2018* describes as "effective, evidenced-based services that involve "regular review" and can "demonstrate the impact they are having".
- They are a necessity if The Mix is in a position of having to make a referral to a child protection agency if we believe that someone may be at risk of abuse or in need.

What to record:

- Details of each contact that you have with a young person, parent or professional in relation to a young person or family you are working with
- Any safeguarding concerns you have about a young person, or vulnerable adult

How to record:

- Clearly distinguish between fact and opinion
- Where possible use the persons exact words if they disclosed the information to you
- Personal information about each person should be kept separate from information about other people
- Signed and dated by the person who makes the record
- Within 3 days of the contact that took place, unless it is in relation to a safeguarding concern which should be written up as soon as possible and at least within 24 hours
- All staff/volunteers are responsible for ensuring the children/vulnerable adults and families involved in their projects know that you keep records and why

Storing information:

- All hard copies of personal records should be kept securely in a locked file at The Mix; portable electronic equipment should be kept in a locked room at The Mix or if taken home should be kept securely
- Personal records on portable electronic equipment should be protected by at least 2 security measures i.e. a password to get into a laptop and a password or encryption for any personal documents
- Personal Records stored remotely (online, cloud based, sever) should be protected by at least 2 security measures. i.e password/ invite to gain access to the cloud and a password or encryption for any personal documents.
- Information is stored consistently and systematically, and needs to be readily available in an emergency
- Records of any concerns you have had and your response to them are placed in a young person's file

Passing on concerns:

- Safeguarding records are passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead by completion of a Safeguarding Recording Form – see Annex C for copy of form and guidance in completing and sharing

Retention period:

- As per The Mix's 'privacy notice for the public, service users and supporters of The Mix', service user records and communications and emails must not be kept for longer than 6 years after last contact.
- Any personal records should be disposed of securely i.e. through the use of a cross cut paper shredder

Schools Work

Recording for Thrive @ The Mix in liaison with referring schools:

- All safeguarding concerns will be raised with the DSL or ASL in the referring school.
- Any concern the Thrive team has during a Thrive day will be actioned following The Mix safeguarding procedure and be communicated to the referring school that working day. Copies of any paperwork completed will be stored securely and confidentially by the DSL and Head of Youth Work and Education at The Mix and also passed to the DSL at the referring school.

- The referring school is responsible for ensuring the Head of Youth Work and Education and DSL at The Mix is kept up-to-date with all safeguarding concerns for each specific student, including relevant risk assessments and professional's contact details.

Recording for 1:1 sessions in school with a mentor / coach from The Mix, including Together Project, Coaching team and Thrive, and Empower:

- As any student receiving 1:1 support in school from a member of The Mix staff team is on roll at the school, all safeguarding concerns will be raised with the DSL or ASL in the school. The relevant school safeguarding procedures will be followed as directed by the school's DSL.
- The Mix team member will also complete The Mix safeguarding paperwork regarding the concern and pass to The Mix DSL. Copies of any paperwork completed will be stored securely and confidentially by The Mix DSL at The Mix and also passed to the DSL at the school.
- The school is responsible for ensuring the relevant Mix team member is kept up to date with all safeguarding

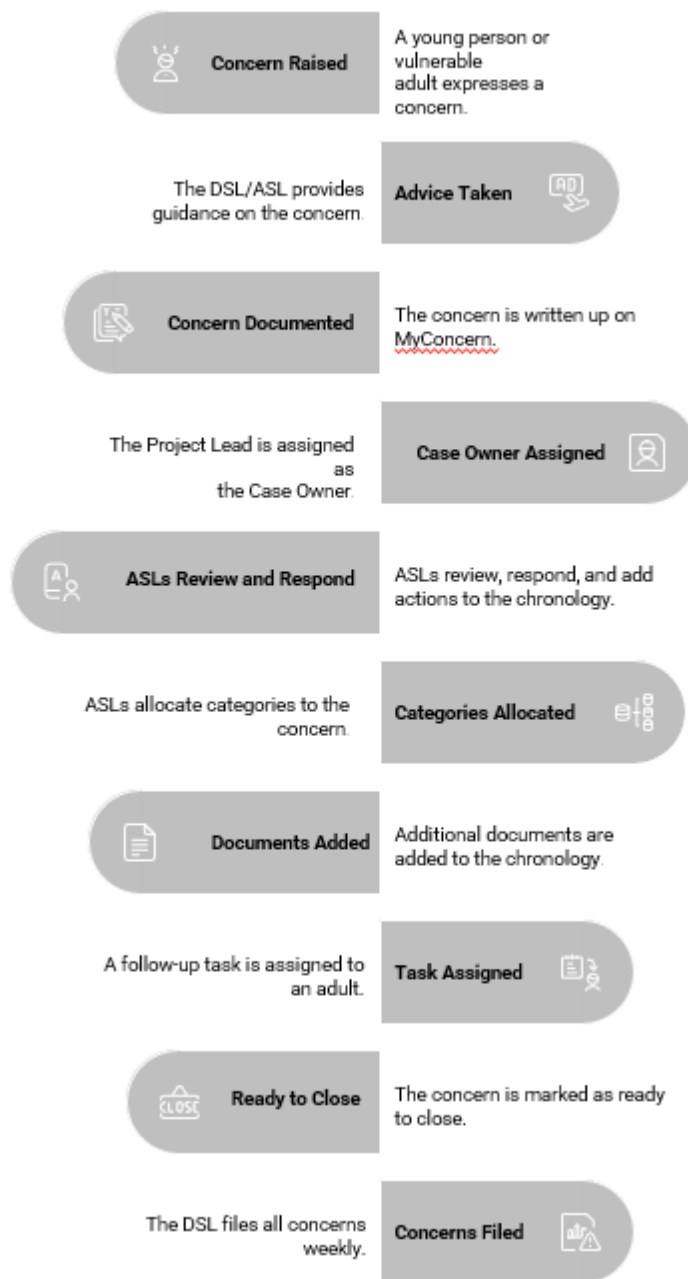
3.6 Reporting concerns

The following flowchart sets out the procedure for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns at The Mix. Project leads should take measures to make this as visible to team members as possible

My Concern Reporting Procedure

- Concern raised by YP/ vulnerable adult
- Advice taken from DSL/ASL
- Concern written up onto MyConcern by the adult that originally spoke to the YP/vulnerable adult
- The Project Lead of the specific project the YP/vulnerable adult is from to be allocated as The Case Owner
- All ASL's to read, review, respond to the concern. Add detail of actions onto the chronology of the concern
- All ASL's to allocate categories to the concern
- All additional documents (referrals /other external organisation correspondence) to be added onto chronology of original concern
- ASL to use the Task Feature to assign a follow up/further task originating from the concern to an adult
- ASL to add 'ready to close' in chronology of the concern when the initial concern has been dealt with
- DSL to file all concerns weekly. In the absence of the DSL due to AL or illness, an assigned ASL to do so

Concern Reporting Procedure



All safeguarding concerns must be reported in confidence to the DSL. Concerns must be reported where possible on the same day the concern arises or as soon as possible and must be followed up in writing within 24 hours.

Names & contact details of Safeguarding Co-ordinators and other agencies mentioned in this policy: Please do not give these numbers to other people without agreement.

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead – Caroline James** 0741573273
- / 01449 745130 or caroline@themixstowmarket.co.uk
- **The Mix Chair of Trustee – Andy Airey** contact via The Mix 01449 745130 or chair@themixstowmarket.co.uk
- **Customer First** – 0808 800 4005 or <https://earlyhelpportal.suffolk.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/marf#h1>
- **Suffolk Police** – 01473 613500 and ask for the Child Protection Team for the Stowmarket area, in an emergency dial 999

If you are worried about the **immediate** safety of a young person or vulnerable adult and cannot contact the Safeguarding Lead, call the police on 999.

Any safeguarding concerns can be referred to **Customer First** immediately, by any practitioner. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed to make this referral, where possible, and if not then any adult can and must call a concern through to Customer First. Where practicable, the DSL will inform the parents of the referral before it is made, or at least as soon as possible afterwards, if contact cannot be made with them quickly. The only circumstances in which a parent will not be informed of a referral are if it is considered the young person or vulnerable adult might be at greater risk of harm as a result and if the allegations are made against them.

The details of this telephone call to Customer First will be recorded on the **Safeguarding Recording Form** (Annex C) noting the name of the person spoken to, and date and time the telephone call was made. This will be followed up in writing on the 'Multi Agency Referral Form' (MARF) which will be copied for The Mix's own confidential records and emailed to **Customer First** within 24 hours.

For guidance on how to respond to a disclosure refer to Annex B.

Concerns about a staff member or volunteer (including Trustees)

It is important that all members of staff and volunteers are encouraged to voice any concerns about another member of staff or volunteer freely without fear of repercussions. This may include any significant changes in their colleague's behaviour, decision making or wellbeing.

As with all other safeguarding concerns, sensitivity should be shown in ensuring this information is only shared with the appropriate personnel. The process for reporting concerns about a staff member or volunteer is detailed in the safeguarding recording & reporting procedure above. This also goes for concerns that are raised by a third party about a staff member or volunteer.

Refer to Section 6 for more detail relating to allegations management.

4. SPECIFIC TYPES OF CONCERN

4.1 Domestic Incidents/Abuse

The Government defines domestic abuse as;

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”

The legal definition of “significant harm” is defined through The Children’s Act 1989, as the concept of Significant Harm being the threshold which justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the young person. 'Ill-treatment' includes Sexual Abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical.

A referral must be made direct to Customer First / Children’s Social Care if it seems reasonable to suspect that:

- a) a young person sees, hears, experiences or is otherwise aware of domestic abuse – i.e. that domestic abuse is part of their experience of family life. This applies regardless of whether they actually witness any particular event or are physically harmed, and
- b) the non-abusing parent will not be able – for whatever reason – to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their child without significant professional assistance and support.

It needs to be noted that the young person themselves may be the perpetrator of domestic violence resulting in their and other’s safety being in question.

Referrals should be made with the agreement of a parent unless the young person’s or vulnerable adults best interests are not served by seeking or obtaining consent. Non-consent should not be a barrier to referral if there is reasonable cause to suspect that the young person or vulnerable adult may suffer significant harm or otherwise not have significant needs met.

A disclosure or allegation by a victim is not a pre-requisite for referral of concerns regarding a young person or vulnerable adult. Concern about the effects of domestic abuse on a young person or vulnerable adult may be triggered in other ways – for example, by hidden or inadequately explained injuries to a parent or carer, or

damage to the home or personal property, or by the behaviour of parents, or concerns expressed by the young person, or vulnerable adult, or concerns about the their wellbeing.

Child protection referrals where the primary concern relates to a domestic abuse incident may include:

Verbal Altercation

- Young person not present but usually part of the household
- Young person in house but not witness to the incident
- Young person present
- Young person present and victim of abusive behaviour

Damage to Property

- Young person not present but usually in the household
- Young person present but not witness to the incident
- Young person present

Physical Assault

- Young person not present but usually part of the household
- Young person in house but not witness to the incident
- Young person present and witness the incident
- Young person present and a victim of assault

Sexual Assault

- Young person not present but usually part of the household
- Young person in house but not witness to the incident
- Young person present and witness to the incident
- Young person present and a victim of sexual abuse

Online Safety

- Exposure to Harmful Content including extremist ideology
- **Violent, sexual, extremist, or age-inappropriate material**
- **Misinformation**, grooming, or pro-suicide/self-harm forums
- Need for **filtering and monitoring** on organisational devices/networks
- Risks of **sexual exploitation (CSE)** and **criminal exploitation (CCE)**
- Use of **chat functions**, private messaging, and gaming platforms
- Adults masquerading as young people (catfishing)

- Harassment, shaming, exclusion, or threats online

- Use of **social media, group chats, or live streaming**
- Links to **mental health concerns and self-esteem**
- Children unknowingly sharing personal data (location, school, contact info)
- Unsafe use of webcams or microphones
- Ensure compliance with **GDPR** and **UK Data Protection Act**
- Pressure to share nude or explicit images ("self-generated images")
- **Legal consequences** for possession or distribution of indecent images under 18
- Importance of **education and supportive responses** (not criminalisation)

- Manisphere

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse act 2021 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents> overrides the Adoption and Child Act. Domestic Abuse also includes domestic violence in the shape of ritual abuse, witchcraft, and is not particular to any gender or family relation. Within this act revenge porn, and peer on peer abuse are also included.

4.2 Female Genital Mutilation

'Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act"). It is a form of abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.'

A range of support materials can be found at www.gov.uk/dh/fgm, and some of the risk factors and signs of potential FGM cases are included in Annex B.

Section 5B of the 2003 Act places a statutory duty upon regulated health and social care professionals and teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police.

Staff and volunteers at The Mix should follow the normal safeguarding procedures for any safeguarding concerns in relation to FGM and discuss the case with the DSL to agree an appropriate course of action.

4.3 Preventing Radicalisation

The Mix recognises its responsibility under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent children and young people from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent Duty. Prevent is part of our wider safeguarding duty and the protection of children from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

From 1st July 2015, professionals have a duty under the *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015* to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism - The Prevent duty. These requirements include;

- Settings are expected to assess the risk of children and vulnerable adults being drawn into terrorism, including the support of extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology.
- The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements.
- The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- Youth settings must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the Internet at the Mix.

Any concerns must be referred to DSL. Referrals are then made, when it is appropriate, to the **Channel** programme, which focuses on providing support, at an early stage, to people identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

The Department for Education has set up a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) to enable people to raise concerns directly. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gov.uk

4.4 On-line safety

Children can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones, online gaming and social networking sites.

Where it is suspected that a young person is at risk from abuse on the internet or cyber bullying, we will report our concerns via our normal safeguarding procedures.

Children and vulnerable adults must be supervised when accessing the computers on The Mix premises. Known high risk sites such as Reddit, Discord and Telegram must be blocked.

Online safety can and does include young person extortion and grooming (through online forums and via email).

Be aware that children may take or share photos of their private body parts; these photos would likely, in a legal context, be considered to be indecent images of children. If you are aware of indecent images of a young person, do not print, forward, save or share these images (this is illegal); report concerns immediately to your designated safeguarding lead.

The following agencies can provide advice and support in relation to on-line safety issues:

- Professionals Online Safety Helpline – Advice and support for professionals working with children with any online safety issues children in their care may face – 0344 381 4772 or helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

- NSPCC helpline – Advice and support for anyone who is worried about a young person or needs information about young person protection – 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk
- CEOP is a law enforcement agency and is here to keep children safe from sexual exploitation and abuse over the internet. You can report concerns or encourage others to report their concerns via the following link - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

1. County Lines (known as Child Criminal Exploitation)

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation. It is when criminals befriend young person, either online or offline, and then manipulate them into drug dealing. The 'lines' refer to mobile phones that are used to control a young person who is delivering drugs, often to towns outside their home county. *Gangs typically use vulnerable children to deliver drugs to customers and this can include deception, intimidation, violence, and/or grooming. The nature of this activity causes disputes with other gang members or local drug dealers for the custom and hence many violent incidents occur because of this. This can also be seen through Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation. More information on the potential signs of gang-related activity can be found in Annex A.*

Where it is suspected that a young person is involved or at risk from County Lines involvement, we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency via our safeguarding procedures. Professionals working with children and vulnerable adults can contact the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) consultation line on 0345 606 1499.

5. MINIMISING RISK

5.1.1 Procedures: Face to Face working with children and vulnerable adults

When working with children and vulnerable adults, if there are not enough leaders to run an event safely, **the event should not take place**. The following best practise procedures must be followed:

- Plan the work of each group so as to minimise situations where harm or abuse of children or vulnerable adults may occur.
- Arrange that staff and volunteers are not left alone with a child where there is no opportunity for the activity to be observed by others unless this is agreed in advance with the DSL/ASL. This may require group working within the same large room or working in an adjoining room with the door left open. This practice can be of as much benefit to the adult as to the young person. Where the role requires 1 to 1 working (i.e. coaching) specific training and guidance is required.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children do not meet one of the children outside designated The Mix premises without a parent or other adult being present without prior consultation with their line manager.
- Activities involving groups of children aged 9 – 18 must ensure there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 15 children. There should always be at least two adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on The Mix premises. In addition, we must always ensure appropriate ratios reflect the needs identified in the risk assessment for the activity, the experience and competence level of the leaders and the group of children involved. **It is best practise to have at least two adults when taking a group off the premises unless the risk assessment deems otherwise.**
- Consent forms including medical details should always be used for specific outings or activities outside The Mix premises.
- For all activities, a daily, accurate register should be kept with the parent/guardian contact details of every young person or vulnerable adult. These records are to be kept securely, in line with the Data Protection policy.
- When children are involved in activities in the same building, it is best practise that staff and volunteers use separate toilets to children. These are clearly marked on doorways. All children should use the accessible toilets throughout the building, and all adults (apart from those needing to use the accessible toilet) should use the male/female toilets.
- All staff and volunteers involved at The Mix in any capacity (including non-youth work roles) will be subject to a DBS enhanced check and safeguarding training. While waiting for a DBS check to arrive the person will never be left alone with young person or vulnerable adult unsupervised.

- Any photography or filming of children or vulnerable adults at The Mix activities will be subject to photography and filming permission granted for the young person(s) involved through the registration process via Upshot.

Refer to the Detached Youth Worker Policy for specific procedures regarding detached working and the Lone Worker Policy for specific procedures regarding lone working.

5.1.2 Procedures: Online working with children.

Online working can be used when adhering to the following best practice guidance. Online working is best used in conjunction with face to face sessions. Reasonable adjustments will be made for those Children or Vulnerable Adult with Special Educational Needs, these adjustments will be specific and tailored to the Young Person or Vulnerable Adult and their individual needs. Online only support is permissible under certain extenuating circumstances. For example, government enforced lockdown due to global pandemic. Should this happen, you will be contacted by a member of the SLT and provided with a contingency plan and further guidance.

- Online sessions should be conducted during the normal working hours of The Mix 9am till 5pm Monday to Friday, unless expressly authorised by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- All sessions to be conducted with Microsoft Teams software wherever possible. In the event of a young person/ children not being able to access this service, other software may be used following adequate risk assessment and DSL/ASL sign off.
- All sessions must be conducted via a work specific account using IT equipment provided The Mix. For example, if a member of staff has a Microsoft Teams account they use for personal correspondence, they must create a new, dedicated account for working with children. This applies to all software and apps used to communicate with children.
- All sessions must be put in online diaries (staff). Volunteers are to notify staff member responsible (line manager/ project lead) when a session has been arranged, times and dates, and Mix team member will log this in their online diary.
- Sessions must be conducted in a professional manner where The Mix team members maintain all professional boundaries as if working from The Mix building. See 5.1.1 Procedures: Face to Face working with children for further guidance.
- It is the Mix team members duty of care to ensure the children are ready for the session e.g. they need to be fully awake, dressed and in an environment conducive to the session.
- Where practicable, ensure your environment is quiet and distraction free. Special attention must be given to ensure confidentiality can be maintained. Headphones can be worn to limit the chance of confidential information being overheard. This applies to ALL participants.
- All children need to have their camera off during the sessions. However, you must ensure every young person in the session can be identified and you know who you are talking to. Send direct invites to email addresses or mobile phones, never post publicly or to a group. If you are not certain of the identity of a member of the session you must either remove them from the session or end the session to ensure the confidentiality and safety of all participants.
- Notes must be taken/ typed as normal following the guidance for recording and storage in this document.
- During online sessions the room used must be suitable for the purpose- 121 Room B to be used.

5.2 IT

All staff and volunteers need to take responsibility for ensuring a high level of security when processing personal information on electronic equipment. This should include logging off or locking computer screens, laptops, tablets and mobile phones when not in use, including when working in a secure office.

6. ALLEGATIONS MANAGEMENT

Allegations of abuse or malpractice against a member of staff or volunteer

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with a young person or vulnerable adult as a person in a position of trust, are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides

effective protection for the young person or vulnerable adult, fully encompasses the young person's and vulnerable adults view, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

The framework for managing cases set out in this procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a young person or vulnerable adult is suffering, or likely to suffer, harm, including significant harm. It also applies to cases of allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with young person or vulnerable adult in their present position, or in any capacity. This may be due to concerns about the persons conduct in their personal or professional life that might indicate their unsuitability to work with young person or vulnerable adult. It should be used in respect of all allegations that are consistent with the guidance in Working Together i.e. cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with young person or vulnerable adult has:

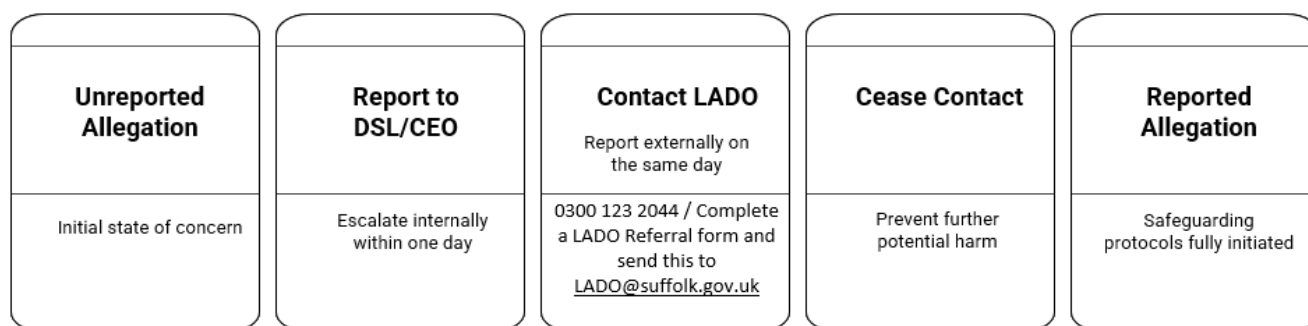
- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a young person or vulnerable adult
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a young person or vulnerable adult; or
- behaved in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with young person or vulnerable adult.

In compliance with the Local Safeguarding Board's Allegations Management guidance, the following procedures will be followed;

If an allegation is made against a The Mix member of staff, the allegation must be reported immediately, at least within one working day, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation is against the Designated Safeguarding Lead, then the allegation must be reported to the CEO or Chair of Trustees. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the CEO/Chair of Trustees) must then report the allegation to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) on the same day. The member of staff must have no contact with the young person or vulnerable adult or their family.

LADO's details – 0300 123 2044 / Complete a LADO Referral form and send this to LADO@suffolk.gov.uk.

Safeguarding Allegation Reporting (for reports made against a member of staff)



Initial consideration

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will discuss the matter with the The Mix Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the CEO/Chair of Trustees) and, where necessary, obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded. If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a young person or vulnerable adult is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm or significant harm, the LADO should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion should also involve The Mix. Signs of safety plus documents to be used to support this consideration stage.

Action following initial consideration

Where the initial evaluation decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, it is dealt with by the The Mix Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the CEO/Chair of Trustees). In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be instituted within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation,

the hearing should be held within 15 working days. Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the CEO/Chair of Trustees) will discuss who will undertake that investigation with the LADO. In some settings and circumstances, it may be appropriate for the disciplinary investigation to be conducted by a person who is independent of The Mix or the person's line manager to ensure objectivity. Trusted people independent of The Mix could include members of local councils or other VCFSE organisations. In any case, the investigating officer should aim to provide a report to The Mix within 10 working days. On receipt of the report of the disciplinary investigation, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the CEO/Chair of Trustees) should decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed within two working days, and if a hearing is needed it should be held within 15 working days. The member of staff is able to have representation in the sense of a 'McKenzie's Friend', or from their Union representative.

Flow chart to be added.

Suspension

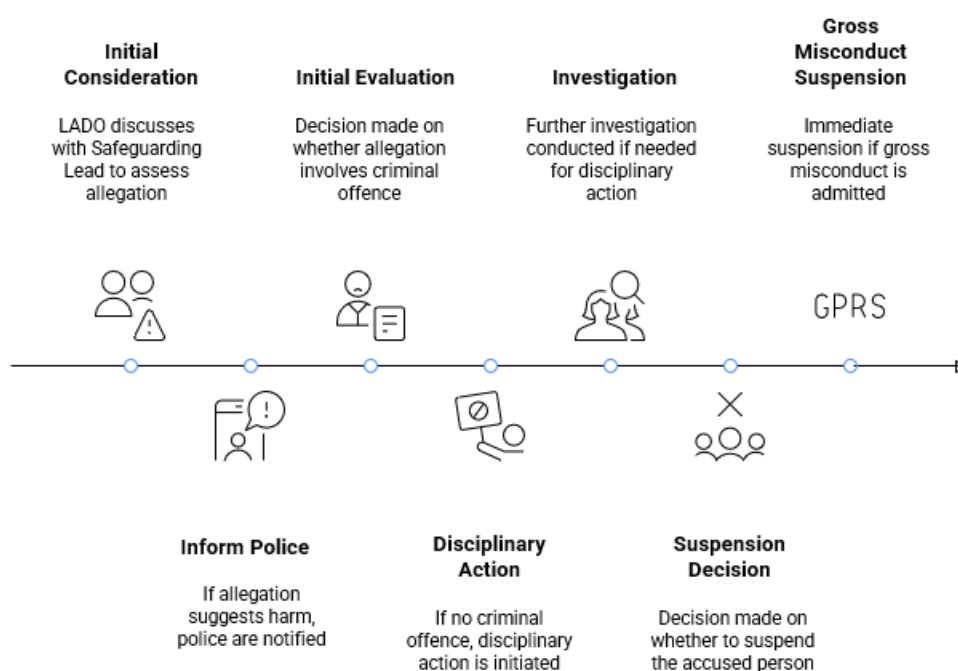
The possible risk of harm to a young person or vulnerable adult posed by an accused person needs to be managed and evaluated. The evaluation will be in respect of the young person or vulnerable adult involved in the allegation and any other children/ vulnerable adults in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases, it will require consideration to be given to the use of suspension for the person involved in the allegation. This may be until the matter is resolved. A member of staff or volunteer must not be automatically suspended without careful thought and consideration of the circumstances of the allegation. In making the decision, the Chair of Trustees must consider whether the person should be suspended from contact with the children or vulnerable adult for the duration of the investigation, or until resolution has been reached. In any case, alternatives to suspension should be explored and advice sought from the LADO. If the allegation has been referred and a strategy meeting is to be convened, it will be a task of the strategy meeting to consider the facts of the allegation, and although a senior manager of the organisation cannot be directed to suspend, they will be supported in making the decision. This should be done after the views of the designated senior named officer from the police and Area Safeguarding Manager have been canvassed.

If the allegation is reported to a The Mix staff member or volunteer against a member of staff or volunteer of another organisation or agency, then The Mix member of staff or volunteer should consult with The Mix Designated Safeguarding Lead and agree who should contact the LADO. However, if any delay in this procedure is likely to put a young person at risk of significant harm then The Mix member of staff or volunteer should contact the LADO directly.

Suspension – gross misconduct

If a member of staff admits to circumstances in which the safety of a young person or vulnerable adult was put at risk, they were potentially harmed or were the victim of a criminal offence, in line with The Mix's Disciplinary Procedure and national guidance such an admission of behaviour would be seen as 'gross misconduct'. In this situation, the Chair of Trustees (supported by the Board) would suspend the person with immediate effect. The suspension is not a disciplinary action, a separate disciplinary internal investigation would be initiated at a later stage. Nor should the suspension have an impact on any associated LADO or Police investigation.

Safeguarding Allegation Management Process



Whistleblowing

See Whistleblowing policy.

Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the event the LADO is called:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will discharge their safeguarding functions in a way that ensures that the young person or vulnerable adult is safeguarded from harm and promotes their welfare. In the case of allegations made against The Mix member of staff or volunteer, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with the LADO and must follow the organisations procedures as identified above.

In cases of actual or suspected abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead in consultation with the LADO will ensure the Police and/or other statutory bodies like Social Services are informed. The victim must be protected from further abuse while the Police / external agencies conduct their own investigation.

Any information held either electronically or in hard copy will be held securely in a password protected document or sealed envelope in a secure, locked cabinet/drawer, according to the retention schedule. Any electronic database used for recording and reporting abuse internally will protect the identity of the young person or vulnerable adult and use an identifying code rather than the name so as to ensure confidentiality.

If The Mix removes a member of staff or volunteer in regulated activity with children or vulnerable activities (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, The Mix must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service to consider whether to add the individual to the barred list.

More information can be found on the LSCB's 'Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work with Children or Those who are in a Position of Trust' Feb 2019 – 2022 and the Gov's 'Working Together to Safeguard Young Children' July 2018.

7. VERIFICATION

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will forward statistical data to the Safeguarding Advisory Group and Chief Executive Officer showing a breakdown of numbers of reported cases and where they have been referred quarterly.

The safeguarding trustee will undertake a safeguarding audit quarterly which will include a file dip of safeguarding records.

The Safeguarding Advisory Group will review this procedure annually or as and when there are changes in legislation.

ANNEX A: RECOGNISING POSSIBLE YOUNG PERSON ABUSE

The following behavioural signs *may* be indicators of young person/vulnerable abuse, but care should be taken in interpreting them in isolation. For more information and types of abuse, visit the NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is--abuse/types-of-abuse/>

Physical abuse signs

If a young person or vulnerable adult regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported. Physical abuse symptoms might include:

- Bruises
- Broken or fractured bones
- Burns or scalds
- Bite marks
- Scarring
- The effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- Breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning.

Emotional abuse signs

As children and vulnerable adults grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be difficult to tell if they're being emotionally abused. Emotional abuse symptoms might include:

- Use language you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- Act in a way or know about things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- Struggle to control their emotions
- Have extreme outbursts
- Seem isolated from their parents
- Lack social skills
- Have few or no friends.

Neglect signs

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a young person or vulnerable adult is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem. Neglect symptoms might include:

- Poor appearance and hygiene: being smelly or dirty; being hungry or not given money for food; having unwashed clothes; having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter.
- Health and development problems: anaemia; body issues, such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints; medical or dental issues; missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations; not given the correct medicines; poor language or social skills; regular illness or infections; thin or swollen tummy; tiredness; untreated injuries; weight or growth issues.
- Housing and family issues: living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating; being left alone for a long time; taking on the role of carer for other family members, hoarding.
- Change in behaviour: becoming clingy; becoming aggressive; being withdrawn, depressed or anxious; changes in eating habits
- displaying obsessive behaviour; finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities; missing school; showing signs of self-harm; using drugs or alcohol.

Sexual abuse signs

Sometimes children or vulnerable adults won't understand what's happening to them is wrong. Or they might be scared to speak out. Sexual abuse symptoms might include:

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know.
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.
- Self-harm.
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem.

Criminal Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE can happen in person or online. An abuser will gain a young person or vulnerable adult's trust or control them through coercive behaviour, violence or blackmail before moving onto sexually abusing them. This can happen in a short period of time. Sexual exploitation symptoms might include:

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations
- Being secretive
- Sharp changes in mood or character
- Having money or expensive items they can't or won't explain
- Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area
- Recurrent UTIs or STIs
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Staying out late or overnight
- Having a new group of friends
- Missing from home or care, or stopping going to school or college
- Hanging out with older people, other vulnerable people or in antisocial groups
- Involved in a gang or criminal activities like selling drugs or shoplifting

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) Signs

CCE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Signs of exploitation in this way could look like:

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations
- Being secretive
- Sharp changes in mood or character
- Having money or expensive items they can't or won't explain
- Physical signs of abuse such as bruising
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Staying out late or overnight
- Having a new group of friends
- Missing from home or care, or stopping going to school or college
- Hanging out with older people, other vulnerable people or in antisocial groups
- Involved in a gang or criminal activities like selling drugs or shoplifting

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

A young person or vulnerable adult who's at risk of FGM might ask you for help, but some might not know what's going to happen to them. FGM abuse symptoms might include:

- A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' visiting from abroad
- A special occasion or ceremony takes place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'

- A female relative, like a mother, sister or aunt has undergone FGM
- A family arranges a long holiday overseas or visits a family abroad during the summer holidays
- A girl has an unexpected or long absence from school
- A girl struggles to keep up in school
- A girl runs away – or plans to run away - from home

County Lines signs

Vulnerable adults and children are frequently used, and in some cases, criminals have taken over their properties to do the dealing from. This is known as 'cuckooing'. The vulnerable adult could be current drug users, addicts, children who maybe in care or missing from home, pupils absent from school or people with mental health issues. County Lines abuse symptoms might include:

- Truanting from school or poor results
- Going missing for long periods of time or staying out unusually late
- Suddenly have access to more money than usual – spent on items such as new trainers/mobile phone/clothes
- Showing signs of a change in behaviour/mood/absences
- Talking differently – new slang or language with an aggressive tone
- Unfamiliar names on mobile phones
- Getting involved in fights
- Substance or alcohol abuse
- Committing crimes such as shoplifting

ANNEX B: HOW TO REACT WHEN A YOUNG PERSON TALKS ABOUT ABUSE

It can be very hard for children or vulnerable adults to reveal abuse. Often, they fear there may be consequences. Some delay telling someone about abuse for a long time, while others never tell anyone, even if they want to. Children and vulnerable adults value being believed and, as the adult they have chosen to tell, it's vital that you act on what you've been told.

If you're in a situation where a young person discloses abuse to you, there are a number of steps you can take:

- **Listen carefully to the young person.** Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the young person to 'shut down', retract or stop talking.
- **Let them know they've done the right thing.** Reassurance can make a big impact to the young person who may have been keeping the abuse secret.
- **Tell them it's not their fault.** Abuse is never the young person's fault and they need to know this.
- **Say you will take them seriously.** A young person could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person who will listen to and support them.
- **Do not ask leading questions.** Use the words Tell. Explain. Describe.
- **Don't talk to the alleged abuser.** Confronting the alleged abuser about what the young person's told you could make the situation a lot worse for the young person.
- **Explain what you'll do next.** If age appropriate, explain to the young person you'll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help.
- **Don't delay reporting the abuse.** The sooner the abuse is reported after the young person discloses the better. Report as soon as possible so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

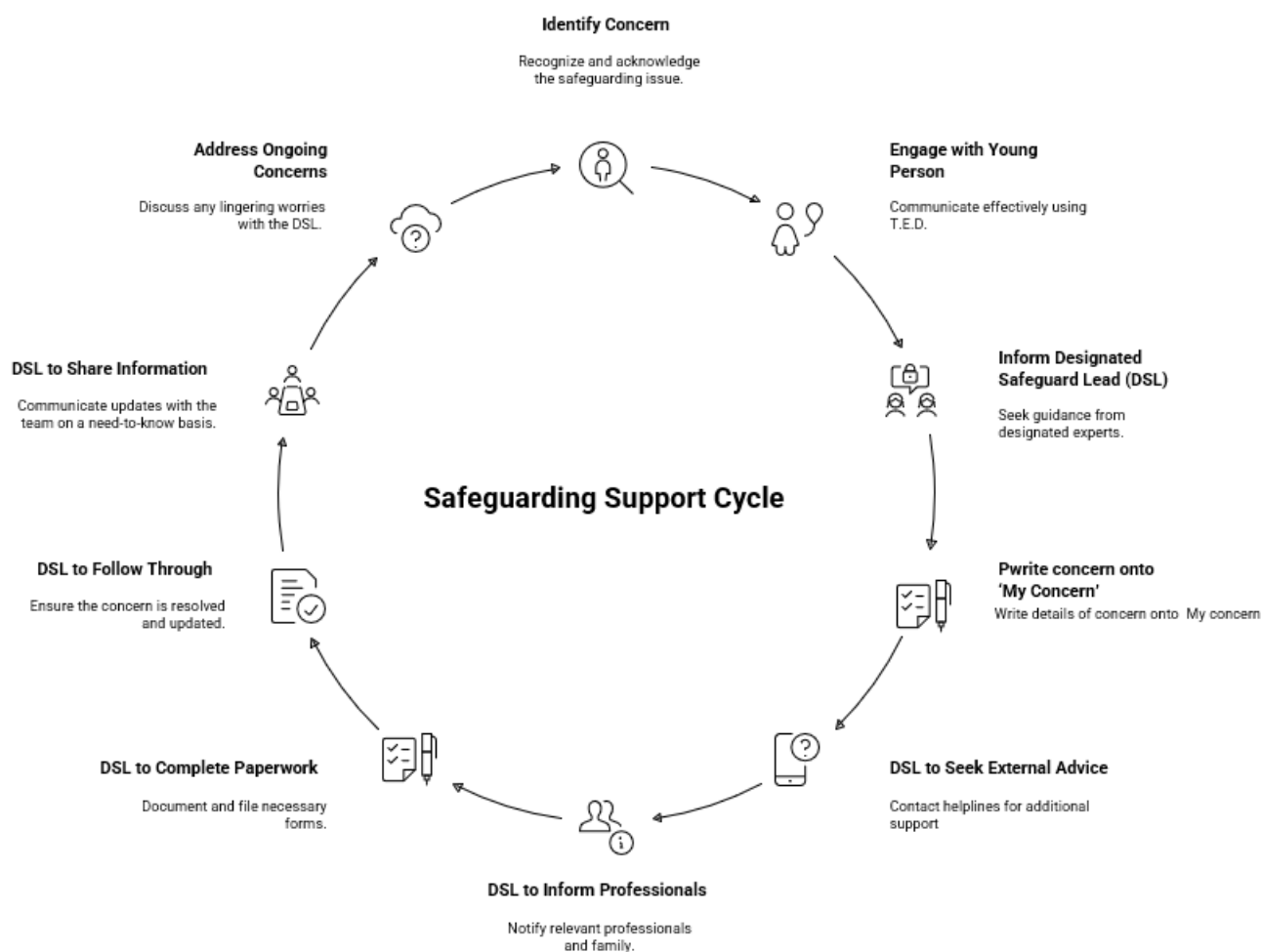
Guidance for reporting safeguarding concerns at The Mix

1. Young person presents with safeguarding concern.
2. Talk to them as appropriate. Focus on T.E.D. (tell me, explain, describe) - ensure no leading questions are asked. Ensure process of support is explained and no confidentiality is promised.
3. Discuss with Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Alternate Safeguarding Lead) if concern is significant or if support/advice is required.
4. Offer practical support as applicable. This may include calling 999 or 101 if needed.

5. Call Customer First Consultation Line on 0808 800 4005 if further advice is needed (note down name of contact, time of call and exact advice given).
6. Contact any known professionals for the young person (i.e. social worker, family support practitioner, youth offending) and family (unless advised not to).
7. Complete any necessary professional referral paperwork (i.e. MARf*).
8. Ensure concern is followed through to completion and any updates are added to paperwork and emailed/filed/deleted again.
9. Discuss with Designated Safeguarding Lead if any info re: concerns need to be shared with wider team at The Mix i.e. Youth team, Front of House team.
10. Please discuss case with Designated Safeguarding Lead if any you have any ongoing concerns or worries. Taking care of yourself is the first priority in caring for children.

For more information about how to react to a disclosure, visit the NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/what-to-do-child-speaks-out-about-abuse/>

If a young person or vulnerable adult that you come into contact within a professional capacity discloses abuse to you, you should follow The Mix's safeguarding reporting procedures.



ANNEX C: SAFEGUARDING RECORDING FORM & GUIDANCE

This form is to be used to record a Safeguarding incident, but it does not replace the need for reporting the incident to the Safeguarding Officer, or other appropriate person/organisation verbally, as per procedures.

Sign and submit this form within 24 hours of any incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead following the guidance steps below.

Please ensure a blank copy of this form is kept on the electronic device you are likely to be using in the event of needing to report a safeguarding concern.

Report a Concern

Name(s) of Person(s)

Please enter at least 3 characters to search



Add Person

Please add the Person(s) who are the subject of this concern and add any other Person(s) you want associated to it.

Concern Summary

e.g Andrew has exhibited signs of substance misuse.

Send Concern to

Please Select a Notification Group



Concern Date/Time

DD/MM/YYYY HH:MM

Origin of Concern

Find Out More

Please Select an Origin of Concern



Details of Concern

There is no need to repeat the Concern Summary.



Location of Incident

Not Applicable



Action Taken



Attachment

Select File

Submit Concern