



Catholic Children's Society
Shrewsbury Diocese

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Policy and Procedures

May 2010



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Catholic Children's Society
Shrewsbury Diocese

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults POLICY STATEMENT

Revised: May 2010

This document sets out the Society's Policy on Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults. It is for all trustees, staff and volunteers. It is also available to others outside Catholic Children's Society who wish to know how the Society works in relation to safeguarding. The document is informed by statutory guidance as outlined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2006\)](#).¹

Catholic Children's Society recognises that all those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work, including practitioners who do not have a specific role in relation to safeguarding children, have a duty to **safeguard and promote** the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

In recognising these duties, Catholic Children's Society will work closely with local statutory authorities within their agreed safeguarding protocols.

Catholic Children's Society further recognises the personal dignity and rights of children and vulnerable adults towards whom it has a special responsibility and a duty of care and respect. All its staff and volunteers undertake to do all in their power to create a safe environment for children and to prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Catholic Children's Society is committed to acting at all times in the best interests of children, seeing these interests as paramount.

Catholic Children's Society ensured that all its staff and volunteers who may have direct contact with children or vulnerable adults hold a current Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.

Catholic Children's Society has in place other employment and organisational policies that complement this Policy and help ensure the safety of those with whom we work.

Catholic Children's Society will set up, implement and regularly monitor and review procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults (including recruitment and selection, induction, training and management protocols). We will adopt a code of behaviour for all staff and volunteers. We will deal properly and promptly with any allegations of abuse and harm and liaise always with the appropriate authority where required.

In all this, Catholic Children's Society (Shrewsbury Diocese) aims to be an example of best practice in prevention of abuse and in responding to it.

It is the policy of the Society to work collaboratively with the Local Authority Designated Officer with regard to any allegations made about its staff or volunteers in exercising their duties in a way that ensures the safety of children.

The Director of Catholic Children's Society² acts as the Safeguarding Officer for the organization. To support the Director, one of our trustees³ is nominated as a safeguarding champion.

GED FLYNN
Director
[Company Secretary]

¹ http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/_download/?id=1313

² Ged Flynn is available on 07824 329 330 or 0151 652 1281 ged@cathchildsoc.org.uk

³ Mrs Christine Smith (available through our Runcorn office, 01928 581459)



PROCEDURES

Safeguarding of Children & Vulnerable Adults

Principles

Catholic Children's Society believes that all trustees, staff and volunteers need to be aware of our policy and commitments in relation to Safeguarding of Children & Vulnerable Adults even if they may never have any unaccompanied contact with children or vulnerable adults through their work.

Catholic Children's Society is committed to the promotion of the well-being of children and vulnerable adults as well as ensuring safety for those with whom we work.

- In any Catholic Children's Society activity organised directly by Catholic Children's Society staff at which children are present, staff will do all they can to ensure their own safety and to provide an environment which best ensures the safety and protection of the children in their care
- Catholic Children's Society will also ensure that volunteers organising or involved in activities involving children are aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures
- In any Catholic Children's Society activity involving children or vulnerable adults, the Society expects all staff and volunteers to follow the code of behaviour detailed within this policy
- Catholic Children's Society's expectation is that contact with children and vulnerable should generally be supervised or accompanied by another adult, but the Society also recognises that situations may arise where this is not the case for urgent or practical reasons
- Catholic Children's Society expects staff and volunteers to minimise the likelihood of situations occurring in which they are lone adults working with one or more children and that where such situations are unavoidable, they should be anticipated and a related or responsible adult should be appropriately informed
- Catholic Children's Society is committed to integrated working and to utilizing Common Processes such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

GLOSSARY

For the purposes of this policy, Catholic Children's Society uses the following definitions:

- **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** are deemed to be those under the age of 18. The policy applies to all children with whom Catholic Children's Society has contact regardless of gender, ability or disability, history, family circumstances, faith or ethnicity.
- **VULNERABLE** There are some groups of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable; children with disabilities are among these, and children from ethnic minority communities who may be particularly vulnerable if their communities suffer from discrimination. Children who are refugees or asylum seeking, and children living in residential care are also among these groups. Abuse may also take place in families in which there is alcohol or drug abuse, domestic violence or mental health problems.
- A **VULNERABLE ADULT** is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. ([Who decides? 1997 Lord Chancellor's Department](#) and ['No Secrets' 2000](#) - on Department of Health web site: No secrets: guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse). Whether or not a person is vulnerable in these cases will depend upon surrounding circumstances, environment and each case must be judged on its own merits.
- **SIGNIFICANT HARM (ABUSE)** is that which results from the behaviour or actions of adults or other children towards others under one of these broad headings:
 - **Physical abuse** is actual or likely physical injury to a child, such as hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
 - **Emotional abuse** is harm done by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, not giving care and affection and bullying, resulting in adverse affects on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person.
 - **Neglect** occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, or when there is failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in serious impairment of a child's or young person's health or development.
 - **Sexual abuse** occurs if a child or young person is pressurised or forced to take part in any kind of sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of or consents to what is happening. Sexual abuse includes incest, rape and fondling. It may also include non contact activities such as showing pornography or internet based activity. Sexual abuse may involve siblings or other family members, or persons outside the family.
- **HARM (abuse)** may be current or recent, or in some cases, historical, i.e. an adult may disclose sexual abuse that took place when he/she was a child. Abuse may be carried out by adult men or women; or by siblings or other young people.



What all our staff will be aware of

All our staff and volunteers will:

- Be familiar with and follow our procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and always ensure that these are in keeping with LSCB protocols⁴
- Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so will not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse
- Know who to contact in police, health, education, school and children's social care to express concerns about a child's welfare⁵
- Consider and include any information we have on the child's developmental needs and their parents'/carers' capacity to respond to these needs within the context of their wider family and environment (this information may have been gathered during the completion or participation within the **Common Assessment Framework**)
- See the child and ascertain his or her wishes and feelings as part of considering what action to take in relation to concerns about the child's welfare (when referring a child to children's social care) but will always ensure that the safety of the child in deciding a course of action
- Communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preferred method of communication
- Record full information about the child at first point of contact, including name(s), address(es), gender, date of birth, name(s) of person(s) with parental responsibility (for consent purposes) and primary carer(s), if different, and keep this information up to date
- Record in writing all concerns, discussions about the child, decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions. The child's records should include an up-to-date chronology, and details of the lead worker in the relevant agency – for example, a social worker, GP, health visitor or teacher

⁴ See Appendix: List of CADT and Other Local Contact Details

⁵ See Appendix: List of CADT and Other Local Contact Details

If we have concerns about a child's welfare ⁶

Catholic Children's Society staff and volunteers will discuss such concerns with their line manager.⁷ Where they still have concerns, they or their manager may also, without necessarily identifying the child in question, discuss our concerns with senior colleagues in another agency in order to develop an understanding of the child's needs and circumstances. If, after such discussion, we still have concerns, and consider the child and/or their parents would benefit from further services, we will consider which agency, including another part of our own, we will make a referral to.

If we consider the child is or may be a 'child in need', we will refer the child and family to children's social care. (We will ordinarily inform the parent/carer of the child or young person unless there are proper reasons for not doing so. These would include where telling a parent/carer risks further harm to the child or where there is a disclosure which points to potential or actual sexual harm of the child or young person.)

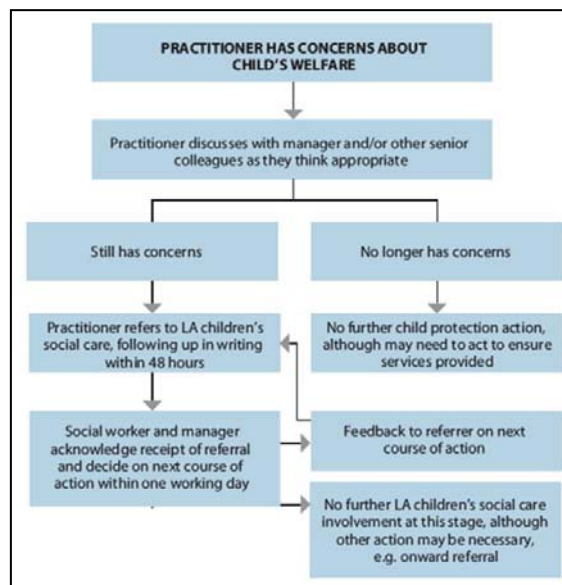
Our concern may be for a child whom we believe is, or may be at risk of, suffering significant harm. If our concerns are about a child who is already known to children's social care, the allocated social worker will be informed of our concerns. We acknowledge that, in addition to children's social care, the police and the NSPCC have powers to intervene in these circumstances.

Since much of our work is undertaken in schools, we will always acknowledge the role of the local safeguarding officer within a school or other agency with whom we are working. We will ordinarily work within the protocols used within the school or external establishment unless, in our judgement, these compromise the child's wellbeing. In such cases, excellent reporting and recording will underpin all that is done by our staff and volunteers to ensure a proper audit of care for the child's safety and wellbeing. We will always endeavour to include school staff in our reporting and action plans.

We would aim to discuss our concerns with the child, as appropriate to their age and understanding, and with their parents and seek their agreement to making a referral to children's social care unless we consider such a discussion would place the child at an increased risk of significant harm.

When we make our referral, we will agree with the recipient of the referral what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when. If we make our referral by telephone, we confirm it in writing within 48 hours. Children's social care should acknowledge our written referral within one working day of receiving it, so if we have not heard back within 3 working days, we will contact children's social care again.

FLOWCHART 1: Process for dealing with a concern⁸



⁶ See Flowchart 1

⁷ See Appendix: Management Structure

⁸ Refer to <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/FD21D51F594298457CF64BE9CDF6F179.pdf> for consequent processes



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Information Sharing

Once a referral has been made to the appropriate statutory authorities, the Society will provide relevant information to children's social care or the police about the child or family members; contribute to initial or core assessments and undertake specialist assessments, if requested, of the child or family members; provide support or specific services to the child or member of the family as part of an agreed plan, and contribute to the reviewing of the child's developmental progress.

The Society will explain to children, young people and families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement. The exception to this is where to do so would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

We always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration. The Society will, where possible, respect the wishes of children, young people or families who do not consent to share confidential information. We may still share information, if in our judgment on the facts of the case, there is sufficient need in the public interest to override that lack of consent.

We will seek advice where we are in doubt, especially where our doubt relates to a concern about possible significant harm to a child or serious harm to others. The Society will ensure that the information we share is accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which we are sharing it, shared only with those people who need to see it, and shared securely. We will always record the reasons for our decision – whether it is to share information or not.



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Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

Catholic Children's Society's normal recruitment and employment policies and procedures already provide the framework for good practice set out in 'Safe from Harm', the Home Office Code for voluntary organisations. Catholic Children's Society has reviewed and strengthened its policies in the light of guidance within *Every Child Matters* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006)*.

All paid staff within Catholic Children's Society will be deemed to hold posts in which direct or unsupervised contact with children or young people is possible or likely. The Society will ensure that extra care is taken in dealing with applications for such posts. This will happen with both internal and external candidates.

Candidates will be asked to describe their previous experience of working with children or young people, to provide **two referees** who can comment on their work with children or young people.

The **employment history** of all candidates is examined and scrutiny is made of any gaps in that record. Where necessary, we will enquire of relevant external agencies (e.g. previous employers) to validate what is presented as an historical record, notwithstanding our taking up of employment and character references.

Catholic Children's Society will undertake **identity checks** on all candidates wishing to fill paid and volunteer vacancies. Appointment to all posts and roles within the Society will be subject to satisfactory clearance from checking of statutory records and satisfactory verification of qualifications.

Adverts and job descriptions for all paid posts will include a reference to Catholic Children's Society's commitment to Safeguarding.

CRB Procedures

Catholic Children's Society ensured that all its staff and volunteers who may have direct contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults hold a current Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.

After the interview process, our preferred candidate will be asked to apply for and submit an Enhanced CRB Disclosure. Where the Disclosure is returned with anything other than NONE RECORDED in the list of previous convictions and this does not concur with what was declared at point of application, the candidate will not be appointed. Where a declared conviction does not debar a candidate's suitability for the post, the CRB will be used to cross-check the declared information. Upon receipt of a suitable Enhanced CRB Disclosure, the Director will instruct the Chair of the Interview Panel that an appointment can be made.

Enhanced CRBs remain valid for three years and are renewed at point of expiry. It is the responsibility of the Business Support Manager to prompt staff and volunteers to ensure that this procedure is followed at the time of renewal.



Ensuring Awareness and Prevention

- Catholic Children's Society's commitment to Safeguarding will be stated in appropriate corporate documents and on our website. Catholic Children's Society will make its policy and procedures available to anyone who requests them.
- Catholic Children's Society will ensure that all staff are aware of the Safeguarding Policy and have access to a copy. The induction programme for all staff will include an explanation of the policy, and all staff will be expected to complete a more detailed briefing on the policy.
- Since we work across a number of different local Children's Trusts, all our staff are given access to local LSCB practice guidelines by way of each web portal.⁹
- Catholic Children's Society expects all staff and volunteers to follow its Code of Behaviour. Staff and volunteers should make every effort to avoid situations in which they are lone adults working with one or more children. If urgent or practical circumstances result in such a situation occurring, staff and volunteers should resolve it as soon as possible and note it to their managers.
- All managers have the responsibility for ensuring that the staff they manage are aware of the Policy, and for reminding them of its provisions when the need arises. Managers will be expected to take part in child protection training. The training needs of staff will be assessed and relevant training provided.
- All staff are aware of the identity and contact details of the Child Protection Coordinator and have contact details for statutory authorities including the local Duty Team at Children's (Social) Services and the Police. The Director of Catholic Children's Society is designated as Child Protection Coordinator for Catholic Children's Society. He/she will maintain contact with Shrewsbury Diocese CPC where relevant. All staff will have access to local safeguarding procedures online and in paper form where the online versions are not available.
- Any staff planning events should ensure that safeguarding issues are considered as part of the risk assessment and/or health and safety arrangements. In planning or co-ordinating multi-agency or coalition or network organised events and activities, Catholic Children's Society will ensure that all necessary safeguarding considerations have been taken into account.

⁹ See Appendix: Local LSCB protocols for each CCS office



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Dealing with Disclosures and Suspicion

Catholic Children's Society recognises that **concerns about a child should always be acted upon appropriately**. When concern is expressed about harm to a child or vulnerable adult that may have taken place or be in prospect, the Society will always ensure that it is acted upon swiftly, making the welfare of children the paramount consideration.

Any information offered in confidence should be received on the basis that it will be shared with relevant people in authority where safeguarding demands this of us. It is usually the responsibility of the local children's services department to investigate and decide any action required following our report of a concern. Parents or carers of a child about whom we have a concern will also be informed if appropriate.

If a person tells one of us that they are being, or have been, abused, we will:

- Listen to and accept what the person says and take the allegation seriously
- Not investigate, and not question or confront the alleged abuser
- Reassure the disclosing party that they have done the right thing by making the disclosure
- Remind them that we may need to share this information with relevant others
- Let the person know what we are going to do next
- Record carefully what we have heard whilst it is still fresh and include the date and time of our conversation and any incident disclosed using our **Safeguarding Reporting Proforma**¹⁰
- Report this to the Director and Line Manager as appropriate

If any member of staff or volunteer suspects abuse, or if a child or young person makes a disclosure, or if a person external to Catholic Children's Society reports a suspicion or allegation relating to Catholic Children's Society staff, volunteers or activities, the following steps should be taken:

- The designated senior manager will ensure an assessment is made and a report given to the appropriate Social Services Department or (if necessary) Police Station
- Where urgent action is required to protect children or vulnerable adults, this should be done immediately
- If the suspicion or allegation relates to activities or persons working in a school or parish or diocesan setting, ensure that the relevant Child Protection Officer is also informed
- Report this to the Director

No staff member or volunteer will prejudice their own standing or position within Catholic Children's Society by responsibly reporting potential or suspected abuse of children or vulnerable adults.

¹⁰ See Appendix: Safeguarding Reporting Proforma



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Management Responsibilities and How We Will Act

Where staff and volunteers have a child concern, managers will be available to share these concerns and determine with that staff member or volunteer the appropriate course of action which needs to be taken. In the absence of the person's designated line manager, staff should contact the Director. In the absence of the Director, they should contact the trustee who is designated as Safeguarding Champion.

If a member of staff is the subject of an allegation that safeguarding has been compromised, then that staff member will be asked to take leave from their duties on full pay until an investigation has been completed and it will be made clear that suspension does not imply guilt but rather protects all parties whilst an investigation is undertaken.

If a volunteer is the subject of an allegation of child abuse, that volunteer will be asked to withdraw from their work until an investigation has been completed.

In both cases, the Society will undertake a risk assessment and then take appropriate action, which will always involve the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) relevant to the locality in which the alleged incident occurred.

Reviewing this policy

Catholic Children's Society will ensure that this policy is reviewed in May each year to maintain compliance with current legislation and best practice.¹¹

Staff and volunteers are free to make suggested amendments for consideration at regular management meetings. Changes in regulations are updated to meet statutory requirements.

Annual review of procedures is when the trustees formally adopt the changes.

¹¹ See Appendix: Annual Amendments Proforma



Code of Behaviour (Safeguarding)

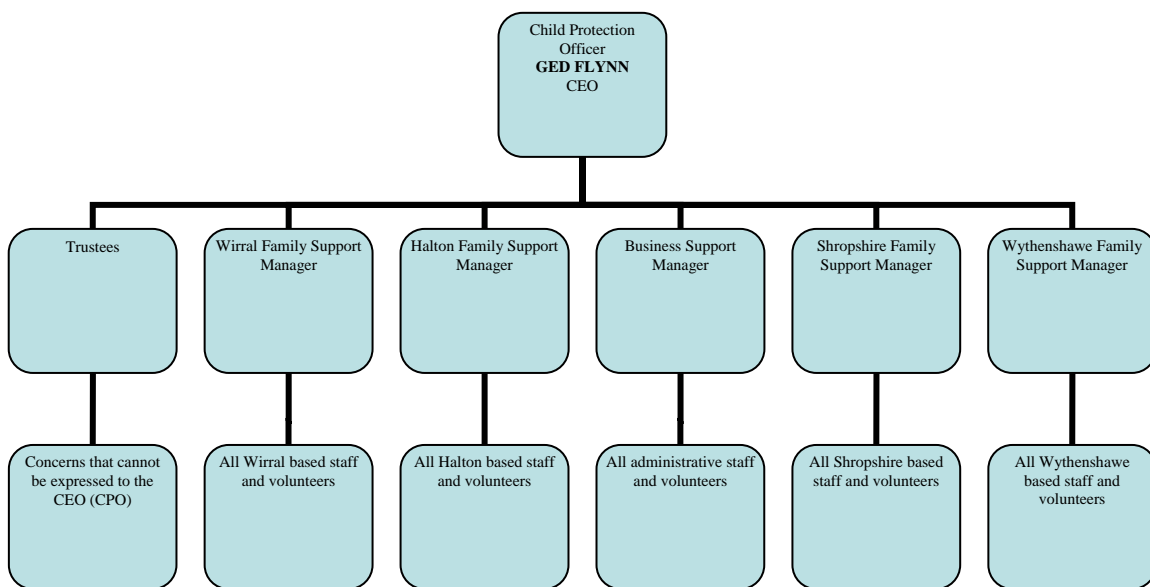
All staff and volunteers should be aware of the Society's expectations to behave in a manner consistent with its ethos and values as enshrined in its Employment Handbook.

Furthermore, there are some specific simple rules and procedures that will help us maintain our commitment to safeguarding in our practice. Most of these are common sense and will already be followed, but it is important that staff and volunteers specifically check that they are being implemented in any event which involves children or young people or vulnerable adults:

- Treat everyone with respect, recognising their right to personal privacy
- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- Plan and organise the event so that risks are minimised
- Recognise that caution is required in all one-to-one situations
- If it is a residential event, ensure that adults and children have separate sleeping accommodation unless parents are appropriately in the same room as their own children
- Provide access for children and young people to talk to others about any concerns they have
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like
- Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Do not spend time alone with children – plan activities so that more than one person is present or, at least, other people are within sight and hearing
- Do not take children alone in a car, even for short journeys, unless this is unavoidable for safety reasons. If this is unavoidable, make sure an adult carer or another member of staff is aware it is happening
- Avoid inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others
- Avoid being drawn in to inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- Avoid showing favouritism to any individual
- Never make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun
- Do not trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues
- Do not just rely on your good name to protect you
- Do not believe "It could never happen to me"



Appendix I: Management Structure for discussing concerns about a child's welfare





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Appendix 2: Local LSCB protocols for each CCS office

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. All staff are encouraged to be familiar with protocols and ensure that all our practice is consistent with local arrangements. Further information is available on these sites:

For staff based in **Wirral**, please refer to:

www.wirral.gov.uk/LGCL/100010/200017/266/content_0001818.html

CADT telephone:

For staff based in **Shropshire**, please refer to:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/childrenfamilies.nsf/open/76D9CBA219A132BD80256C7D004229BD>

CADT telephone:

For staff based in **Wythenshawe**, please refer to:

<http://www.manchesterscb.org.uk/>

CADT telephone:

For staff based in **Halton**, please refer to:

<http://www.haltonsafeguarding.co.uk/>

CADT telephone:

For staff based in **Telford & Wrekin**, please refer to:

<http://www.telfordsafeguardingboard.org.uk/>

CADT telephone:



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Appendix 3: Annual Amendments Proforma

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults AMENDMENTS PROFORMA

Amendment	Location	Approved by trustees	Shared with all stakeholders
<i>content + signed and dated by manager making suggested amendment</i>	<i>where in the document it applies</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>



Appendix 4 : Safeguarding Reporting Pro-Forma

Part One: About You	
Name Job / Role Your relationship to the person about whom you have a concern	
Part Two: About the Child/Young Person(s)	
Name(s)	
Male/female?	Age
Address	
School	
Who does the child or young person live with?	
Part Three: About Your Concern	
How did you come to have a concern: was abuse observed or suspected? Was an allegation made? Did a child disclose abuse?	
Date, time and place of any incident(s)	
Nature of concern/allegation	
Observations made by you (e.g. child's emotional state, any physical evidence)	
Write down exactly what the child said and what you said: continue on a separate sheet if necessary.	
Any other relevant information? (e.g. disability? Language issues?) Were other children involved or aware?	
Have you reported to parents or carers?	
Have you reported to other Child Protection Personnel or Agencies?	
Time and date of reporting	
Person(s) to whom report was made:	
Contact Details	
Advice received	
Action taken	
Signed	Date