

POLICY, PROCEDURE AND GUIDANCE FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

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1 POLICY STATEMENT

Definitions

In line with the Children Act 1989, we define a “**child**” or “children” as *anyone under the age of 18 years*.

In line with the Care Act 2014, we define an “**adult**” or “adults” as *anyone aged 18 years or older*.

The term “**young people**” refers to 16 to 25 year olds accessing akt’s services or contacting us for support.

Aim

The purpose of this policy statement and procedure is to enable the Albert Kennedy Trust (akt) to ensure to the best of its ability that the young people who access its services are safeguarded from abuse. AKT is committed to safeguarding all young people that come into contact with our work. We believe that all young people have an equal right to protection from abuse and neglect regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, language, background or sexual identity.

Although AKT does not have a responsibility and is not able to institute child protection proceedings, it does have a duty to record and report child protection concerns, to run its services safely, and to build and nurture a safe culture within the organisation.

Introduction

akt provides advocacy and support to LGBTQ+ young people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness or living in a hostile environment, often after coming out to their parents, care givers and/or peers.

At its four regional centres across England, akt provides online and face-to-face services. At a national level, it also provides a digital support service across the UK. akt has traditionally worked with the 16-25 age group, and this remains its primary audience. However, our live chat service is sometimes accessed by children aged below the age of 16 years and adults over the age of 25 years. AKT is aware that young people may hide their true age in order to access services, to protect their anonymity or for other reasons.

There may also be circumstances where concerns are raised for people outside of the 16 to 25 age group, for example through a disclosure about a young person's younger sibling or an adult family member who may have care and support needs.

1.1 The Legal Context of our Safeguarding Practice

akt takes account relevant guidance and legislation to safeguard children, and to support our staff and volunteers to work safely.

Most of akt's direct activities take place in England and the policy is written in accordance with relevant English legislation. Where our services extend beyond England into the rest of the UK, we ensure that we operate in accordance with the legislative framework of the nation in which we are operating.

1.2 Relevant Legislation in different UK nations

England

- **The Children Act 1989**, [Children Act 1989 \(Amendment\) \(Female Genital Mutilation\) Act 2019 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- The Children Act ^[OBJ] [Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

- **The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006** [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991** [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\): how legislation underpins implementation in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR** [Data Protection Act 2018 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The Human Rights Act 1998** [Human Rights Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The Sexual Offences Act 2003** [Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012** [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Serious Crime Act 2015 (particularly S67 – sexual communication with a child)**
- **The Equalities Act 2010** [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Working together to safeguarding children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2018** [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Wales

- **The Children Act 1989** [Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The Children Act 2004** [Children Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** [Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR](#)
- **The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011** [Rights of Children and Young Persons \(Wales\) Measure 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Northern Ireland

- **The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**
[The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**
[Safeguarding Board Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015**
[Children's Services Co-operation Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Scotland

- **The Children (Scotland) Act 1995**
[Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**
[Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill**
[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill – Bills \(proposed laws\) – Scottish Parliament | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

1.3 Safeguarding Children – Underlying Principles

This policy statement defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 and recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions regarding children and adults, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues

- Some groups of children, such as some with disabilities or some from minority ethnic backgrounds or experiencing poverty, can be excluded or suffer racism from mainstream services.
- Working in partnership with children, young adults, and, where appropriate, their parents, carers and other agencies, is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Many of the children and adults whom akt supports may be vulnerable due to homelessness or rejection by their families. They may also have care and support needs related to issues such as disability, illness, capacity, mental health, substance misuse and trauma.

We enable our staff, volunteers and those who work with us to make informed and confident decisions that safeguard the children and adults we work with. And we support them to take all suspicions and allegations of abuse, emotional abuse and neglect seriously. We expect everyone working with us (staff, trustees, volunteers, students on placement, and anyone working on behalf of akt) to have read, understood and adhere to this policy, guidance and related procedures.

1.4 How we implement and enact our policy statement

akt will endeavour to protect children in its care. In order to do this, akt staff and volunteers will:

1. Value, listen to and respect children, ensuring that we obtain their consent where possible unless there is a child protection issue which requires us by law to make a safeguarding referral;
2. Take leadership responsibility at senior board level and via a clear line of accountability for our safeguarding arrangements, including the appointment of a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), a Deputy DSO and Safeguarding Leads.

3. Adopt this policy and adhere to our associated procedures and code of conduct and good practice for staff, volunteers, students on placement, and anyone else working on our behalf;
4. Develop and implement effective social media, communications and IT policies and related procedures;
5. Ensure that in all our digitally based services, we adopt high standards of safeguarding, commensurate with the standards used in our face-to-face services
6. Operate a 'safer' recruitment policy and procedure when appointing trustees, staff, volunteers This includes the requirement for individuals to obtain criminal records checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service for eligible posts (renewable every two years) and the completion of all other elements of our recruitment procedure;
7. Record and store information promptly, professionally and securely, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018;
8. Share information about safeguarding and child protection with our workforce and trustees promptly, ensuring that staff are trained in safeguarding and supervised adequately, carry out their roles competently and that they work in an environment where they feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
9. Ensure that children are able to raise concerns where they exist and are aware of our policies on safeguarding and protecting children and adults;
10. Share concerns about children appropriately and without delay with agencies and individuals who need to know, in accordance with our procedures for sharing information;

11. Ensure that staff, trustees, volunteers, and others working on behalf of akt are fully informed about the processes for dealing with concerns about possible abuse;
12. Adopt a clear policy around the management of allegations against members of our workforce and trustees;
13. Ensure that all members of our workforce and our Board of Trustees, and anyone working on behalf of akt know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Officer, their Deputy and their role;
14. Ensure that all members of our workforce and our Board of Trustees, and anyone working on behalf of akt understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer;
15. Create and maintain an anti-bullying environment, and ensure that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise (See – Code of Conduct and Bullying and Harassment Policy);
16. Ensure that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place;
17. Ensure that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, adults, staff and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance;
18. Ensure that we provide a safe digital environment for children, within our centres, while using their own and/or akt devices. We do not currently use filtering controls on devices, as they prevent access to some helpful content for children.
19. Ensure that we are aware of our regulators' and funders' expectations around our safeguarding practice and that we adhere to these;

20. Seek and take account of the views of the child as much as feasibly possible, whilst also safeguarding their welfare and responding with appropriate haste to any situation where there is a serious, direct risk posed to a child or adult;
21. Work in a multi-agency context, to efficiently safeguard the child or adult;
22. Ensure that there are clear effective channels of communication between all staff, volunteers and service users;
23. Positively promote the rights of service users, volunteers, staff and trustees;
24. Support any person wishing to make an allegation;
25. Follow the law and statutory requirements that provides protection to akt service users, volunteers and staff.

This policy statement should be read alongside [our policies and procedures](#) on

- [Recruitment](#), induction and training, Safer recruitment
- [akt Complaints Procedure](#) against staff and volunteers
- Data Protection
- Privacy Policy
- Confidentiality
- Code of Conduct for [staff](#)
- Code of Conduct for [volunteers](#)
- Communications and Representation Policy
- [Anti-bullying](#) and Harassment (including cyber-bullying)
- [Whistleblowing and public interest disclosure](#)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone working policy and procedure
- Digital Safeguarding Policy
- Youth Engagement safeguarding Guidance

We are committed to reviewing this policy and procedures annually, and updating our processes as appropriate.

This policy was last reviewed on 22nd September 2023

Signed: *M Seal*

Date: 18/10/2023

2 akt Safeguarding team – roles and contact details

On a day-to-day basis Safeguarding Leads can be contacted at safeguarding@akt.org.uk.

Role	Main duties
Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)	Acting as akt's representative to oversee child and adult protection and safeguarding issues.
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO)	Deputising for the DSO, including overseeing child and adult protection and safeguarding issues.
Safeguarding Lead	Dealing with day-to-day safeguarding concerns.
Safeguarding Lead	Dealing with day-to-day safeguarding concerns.
Staff Safeguarding Lead	Dealing with welfare concerns related to staff and volunteers.
Senior Trustee Lead for Safeguarding	Overseeing safeguarding strategy and ensuring akt's compliance with policy and legislation.

2.1 akt Safeguarding team – roles and responsibilities

akt's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is the person assigned as akt's representative in child and adult protection and safeguarding issues.

The akt Designated Safeguarding Officer has responsibility for:

- Overseeing the preparation and implementation of the child protection and vulnerable adults policy (safeguarding policy), ensuring it is regularly reviewed;
- Reporting concerns of abuse to the statutory authorities (Children or Adult Social Care or the Police);
- Ensuring that all members of the workforce, trustees, and anyone working on behalf of akt (including volunteers) are aware of and

understand our policies and procedures and the relevant multi-agency procedures for working with children and adults and keeping them safe;

- Being a point of contact within akt members of the workforce, trustees, and anyone working on behalf of akt (including volunteers) in relation to safeguarding adults and child protection;
- Being aware of local statutory safeguarding procedures and networks, including reporting to the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer (LADO) when required;
- Keeping informed and up to date on relevant changes in the law and national safeguarding guidance;
- Making decisions about whether to refer potential safeguarding and child protection situations to an investigating agency;
- It is not the role of akt or its Designated Safeguarding Officer to decide whether abuse has taken place or not. It is, however, our role to ensure that concerns are shared with appropriate agencies and relevant action taken.

In the DSO's absence, the **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DDSO)** can be contacted.

The akt Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer has responsibility for:

- Providing support and guidance to staff dealing with safeguarding issues
- Providing the Secretariat function to the monthly safeguarding meeting
- Leading on quality assurance within the safeguarding team
- Making decisions on whether reported safeguarding incidents require escalation to the Local Authority
- Following up Safeguarding Alerts via Inform
- Developing safeguarding practice at akt, including devising and delivering training to staff and volunteers
- Ensuring the policies are up to date and reviewed accordingly
- Undergoing regular training and refresher training in safeguarding
- Deputising for the DSO and liaising with the LADO when required

On a day-to-day basis, **Safeguarding Leads** can be contacted.

The akt Safeguarding Leads have responsibility for:

- Providing support and guidance to staff dealing with safeguarding issues
- Making decisions on whether reported safeguarding incidents require escalation to the Local Authority
- Following up Safeguarding Alerts via Inform
- Developing Safeguarding practice at akt, including devising and delivering training to staff and volunteers
- Undergoing regular training and refresher training in Safeguarding

The akt staff Safeguarding Lead has responsibility for dealing with concerns for staff welfare.

The akt Senior Trustee Lead for Safeguarding has responsibility for overseeing safeguarding on a strategic level, ensuring akt's adherence to legislation, and approving changes and improvements to relevant safeguarding-related policies and procedures.

3 Policy and procedure guidance

The children with whom akt works may experience any of the forms of abuse listed in this guidance and in the guidance that relates to abuse. However, it is worth noting that some LGBTQ+ young people are at additional risk of a number of forms of harm, including serious bullying, self-harm and mental health issues.

In addition, children who face homelessness for whatever reason have already had their well-being compromised and are vulnerable to all the various risks that homeless people face in terms of health, poverty, becoming victims of crime, drug and alcohol misuse, and exploitation of various kinds. A number of children involved with akt have also become victims of CSE. In addition, we also support children who identify as Black,

Brown, a People of Colour or another minoritised ethnicity, and acknowledge that systemic racism continues to oppress, invalidate, and deeply affect their lives.

Our staff and volunteers must be particularly vigilant to these risks that so many of our children face, as well as to the various other forms of abuse and neglect to which any child or young adult may be subjected.

3.1 Understanding Child Abuse

Abuse and Neglect of children

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child under the age of 18. They may result in a child suffering or being likely to suffer significant harm. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm (commission), or by failing to act to prevent harm (omission).

Children can experience abuse in any environment, including within family, in an institutional or community setting and online. It may be perpetrated by those known to the child or by a stranger. In cases of online abuse, the absence of physical contact does not mean that the abuse has less of an impact on the child and should be responded to appropriately and in line with this safeguarding policy. Both online and offline, children may be abused by an adult, or another child or children.

The 2018 government guidance on 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>) defines various forms of abuse, including:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Abuse of a position of trust**
- **Child sexual exploitation**
- **Criminal exploitation and gang-related activity**

- **So-called 'honour' based abuse**
- **Forced marriage**
- **Female genital mutilation**
- **Extremism**
- **Harmful sexual behaviour**
- **Domestic abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 regards children as victims of domestic abuse within their own right if they witness it (see or hear it). The definition of domestic abuse is abuse between **two people aged 16 or over** if they are 'personally connected' (i.e. relatives, romantic partners, ex-partners, people with parental responsibility for the same child).

PLEASE NOTE that whilst children aged 16 and 17 will be eligible for domestic abuse services, a safeguarding referral to the relevant local authority's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will still need to be made in line with statutory and organisational requirements.

Only people over the age of 16 are eligible for a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) referral if they are a high risk victim of domestic abuse. In high risk cases a MARAC referral can be sent without consent. Please note that if the person is under the age of 18 a referral to MASH will need to be made alongside a MARAC referral.

Click on the link below to access information and advice on different types of child abuse, how to spot the signs and what you can do to help keep children safe:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>.

4 Procedure for dealing with safeguarding concerns

4.1 How concerns about abuse might arise

There are a number of ways in which a member of staff or volunteer might become concerned that a child is being abused or is at risk of harm:

- A child discloses in their referral or during the triage and assessment process that they are facing abuse;
- A child accessing akt's services may make an allegation against an akt staff member;
- An akt staff member or volunteer observes concerning behaviour by a young person;
- An adult accessing akt's services discloses that their younger sibling (under 18) is being abused;
- An akt staff member or volunteer witnesses an incident between two young people.

4.2 Responding to concerns about possible abuse (including **what to do in an emergency**)

In accordance with national child protection statutory guidance (Working Together 2018), and with multi-agency safeguarding procedures, **akt has a responsibility to report any potential safeguarding concerns and/or alleged abuse of a person under the age of 18 to a statutory agency.**

It is best practice to act in a child centred way to record the child wishes and to understand their lived experience, however in cases where there are child protection concerns these must be raised with relevant agencies, even without consent. The following procedure will be used:

1. Safety is the priority

If anyone acting for, or employed by, akt has reason to believe that a child or adult may be suffering abuse or is at risk of abuse, then the safety and welfare of that, and any other child/young person/adult likely to be affected, is the paramount consideration in deciding what action needs to be taken.

2. Direct disclosures

If the concerns take the form of a direct disclosure by a young person, whether they are an adult or child, the staff member or volunteer should:

- A. Listen carefully, giving the person undivided time and attention. Reassure the person that they have done nothing to deserve being abused and that reporting it demonstrates courage.
- B. Use supportive non-verbal behaviour such as attentiveness, empathy and an avoidance of any language or gestures that may demonstrate shock, impatience or disbelief.
- C. Aim to facilitate the disclosure in order to determine whether there is real cause for concern.
- D. DO NOT cross-examine the person or investigate the disclosure. **The responsibility for undertaking any investigation lies with the relevant local authority.**
- E. Inform the person that the concerns will need to be shared with the DSO.

3. Discussion with the Deputy DSO or Services Manager if required

The concerns should be discussed with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer if required. If the Deputy DSO is absent, or the disclosure is about a volunteer or staff member, then the Designated Safeguarding Officer should be contacted on the same day that the concerns emerge.

4. Making a record

Information concerning the disclosure, or any other child protection concerns or concerns about safeguarding children or adults should be recorded on the same day, using the Safeguarding Alert feature on Inform (see [this document](#) for an instructional guide or the standard Reporting Template included below for those who don't have access to Inform).

The Safeguarding Alert should specify:

- The date and time of the or disclosure or emergence of the concern
- The child's or adult's account (if available)
- Any physical or other signs of injuries noted, e.g. bruising
- Any relevant background information

- An assessment made by the staff member as to why the information given constitutes a child or adult protection concern (including risk to others as well as to the child or adult at the centre of the concern)
- What the child or adult would like to happen (if known)
- In the case of an adult, whether they have given consent to the information being shared outside the organisation

5. Sharing of record with DSO/DSL

The record should be completed on Inform and assigned to the Deputy/Designated Safeguarding Officer or Lead, also on the same day. If the Reporting Template is used it should be marked confidential and emailed to the Deputy/DSO.

Making referrals when there are concerns about possible abuse or risk of abuse

Using the child's or adult's current postcode, click this link to check which local authority you need to contact: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

6. In an emergency

If the personal safety of a child or adult is immediately threatened, it is vital that urgent action is taken as soon as possible on the same day. In the case of a child, this will mean contacting 999 or the local authority's Children and Families Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). In the case of an adult, it will mean contacting 999 or the local authority's Adults Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

7. Informing the person who is at possible risk and dealing with issues of consent

Whilst confidentiality is an important principle which enables people to feel safe when they share concerns, it is not an absolute right. The public interest in preventing abuse and neglect of children outweighs the public interest of confidentiality. akt will try to seek consent from the child or child's parent/carer if safe to do so, however if this may delay the safeguarding response or increase risk to the child it should not be sought. If the person

who is the subject of the concern is a child, they must be informed, whenever possible, about:

- any action being taken on their behalf;
- the reason for this;
- what is likely to happen.

All efforts should be made to acknowledge how hard this may be for the child and to help them understand the need to seek help. Where choices and options can safely be offered regarding the way in which information is passed on, this should happen. There are exceptional circumstances where we would not tell the child if it put them or someone else in more risk.

8. Making the referral

If the discussion with the DSO/DSL leads to a decision to make a referral to the local authority Children's Social Care team, then **this should be done within one working day of the decision being made.**

The referral should be made over the telephone and followed up in writing within the same working day. Some local authorities have a standard online or downloadable referral form, and, if so, this should be used.

If the concern relates to any allegations or concerns about risk presented by a staff member, volunteer or third party colleague, [the procedure for dealing with this should be followed.](#)

After referral

9. Multi-agency working

akt is committed to working in a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children and adults. akt will engage with relevant Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) proceedings and plans, as well as attend Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings and any other multi-agency response required to protect the children and adults we are working with.

akt will actively approach relevant external agencies to provide additional support to clients suspected of being the victim of abuse and seek to provide children and adults with independent advocates for additional support, where appropriate.

10. Escalation

If akt is not satisfied that a referral has been responded to appropriately or within the timescale set out in statutory guidance and multi-agency procedures, we will escalate our concerns using the processes set out in those multi-agency procedures. This normally means contacting senior management within the statutory agency to whom the referral has been made. In the case of referrals involving children (under the age of 18), akt may also consider using the NSPCC Helpline to support the referral and escalation process.

11. Logging and reviewing safeguarding alerts

All safeguarding for children will be kept within In-Form. Records of incidents, concerns and investigations related to akt staff will be stored securely on their staff file on Atlas. For concerns and information around people not on our In-Form system a shared folder within Sharepoint will be used to store information safely and will include:

- details of the incident/concern;
- action taken in response to the incident;
- the outcome.

Reviews of all reported safeguarding incidents take place at least annually and include services committee and board scrutiny. The findings of reviews inform our future safeguarding practice.

4.3 Dealing with allegations or concerns about possible risks of abuse presented by a staff member, volunteer or trustee

akt will not tolerate abuse by staff or volunteers in any form. Any allegation or concern that a member of staff or volunteer may present a possible risk of abuse, will be fully investigated in accordance with akt's procedure set out below.

akt will also report any safeguarding concerns about adults or children who are related to staff working with akt, where we have concerns that abuse may be taking place.

'Consent' by a child is not viewed by akt as either a defence or excuse for abuse.

Staff and volunteers should report and record concerns that relate to other staff members, volunteers or trustees

1. Any staff member, who receives an allegation or believes that a colleague may be behaving in way which presents a risk to children, or infringes the Code of Conduct, or may have presented a risk to children in the past, should immediately (i.e. within 24 hours) tell the DSO or, in their absence, the Deputy DSO.
2. Record the facts as you know them on the standard [Recording Template](#) and give a copy to the DSO. (Note: the DSO should also ensure that a copy is retained confidentially within the safeguarding incident log and on the individual's Atlas file).

Remember: if the behaviour of a staff colleague, trustee, partner, agency staff, volunteer or anyone working on behalf of akt causes you concern:

- Do not ignore your concerns
- Do not confront the person about whom you have concerns
- **Do** discuss your concerns with akt's Designated Safeguarding Officer or, in their absence, the Deputy DSO
- Do not delay in passing on concerns to someone who is in a position to take them forward
- Do not worry that you may have been mistaken. It is better to have discussed it with someone with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment, and you will not be penalised for any concern

raised in good faith, even if it turns out to be unsubstantiated

In the case of allegations against or concerns about a staff member, volunteer or trustee, an investigation may have three related strands:

1. If the allegation reaches the threshold of actual or potential abuse of a child, the matter should be referred to Children's or Adult Social Care who will coordinate an investigation and examine the risk to any child or young adults involved or potentially involved;
2. Where circumstances warrant it, there may be a police investigation into a possible crime; this may need to take precedence over an internal investigation;
3. If it appears that allegations may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, akt's [disciplinary procedures](#) should be invoked.

It is essential that the information about the alleged abuse or risk is dealt with appropriately under each of these strands of investigation. The fact that a prosecution is not possible does not mean that action to safeguard the child is not necessary or not feasible. For example, an allegation may relate to prohibited behaviours or a breach of akt's code of conduct. Even if these behaviours or concerns about risk may not lead to action on the part of Children's or Adults Social Care, they should, if they are an employee or volunteer of akt, still be investigated and managed under akt's disciplinary procedures.

The DSO, in consultation with the individual's manager and senior management in akt, should inform the Local Authority's Social Care officer or team responsible for managing allegations (can be known as the LADO) within one working day if there is a concern about possible risk or an allegation made against a member of staff, trustee, volunteer, or anyone else involved with akt. The discussion with the LADO (or similar officer) will, if necessary, initiate a multi-disciplinary approach to the concerns/allegations.

If an individual is removed from regulated activity with children (or would have been removed if they had not left) because the person is considered by akt to pose a risk of harm to vulnerable adults, akt is obliged to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Any member of staff who is charged or questioned in connection with a criminal offence against a child or adults receiving a service from akt, or another child or adult, may be suspended or removed from normal duties. Any volunteer will be withdrawn from duties. This may remain in place until the outcome of any criminal proceedings is known or until the police eliminate the person from their enquiries or drop the investigation.

Staff about whom there are concerns should be given information to help them understand the concerns expressed, the processes being invoked and be informed of the outcome of any internal investigation and the implications for disciplinary processes. The internal investigation should be completed as quickly as possible, consistent with its effective conduct. In any case involving a criminal investigation, the decision as to when to inform the suspect of the allegations should always be jointly agreed between the police and other relevant agencies.

Children or adults who have been allegedly harmed by a member of staff or volunteer should be offered support and kept informed about the progress of the investigation (subject to police requirements and the need to respect confidentiality in relation to the alleged perpetrator). Subject to consent where the concern is about risk to a children 16 and over or adults aged 18 and over, support should also be offered to parents and carers of any child or vulnerable adult who has allegedly been harmed by a member of staff or volunteer working for akt. They should be given information on any concerns, advised on the processes to be followed and informed of the outcomes, except in circumstances when the allegations involve the parent/carer directly. Professional advice should be sought as to what can be said to parents/carers.

All enquiries into allegations will be overseen by the DSO, Lead Trustee for Safeguarding, and CEO (they will agree the division of responsibility on a case-by-case basis). The lead person for the enquiry will liaise with police, Social Care, the Disclosure and Barring Service (if necessary), and other interested parties, and attend relevant meetings as required, keeping staff informed as appropriate.

4.4 Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

akt recognises that our most important asset in fulfilling our aims and objectives as an organisation is our workforce. We therefore aim to recruit the best people possible to work with young people and to build a safe organisational culture in which our staff and volunteers are well managed and feel supported in raising concerns.

Our search to recruit the best people possible includes taking all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people and those with an interest in harming children and/or adults are prevented from working with young people at akt.

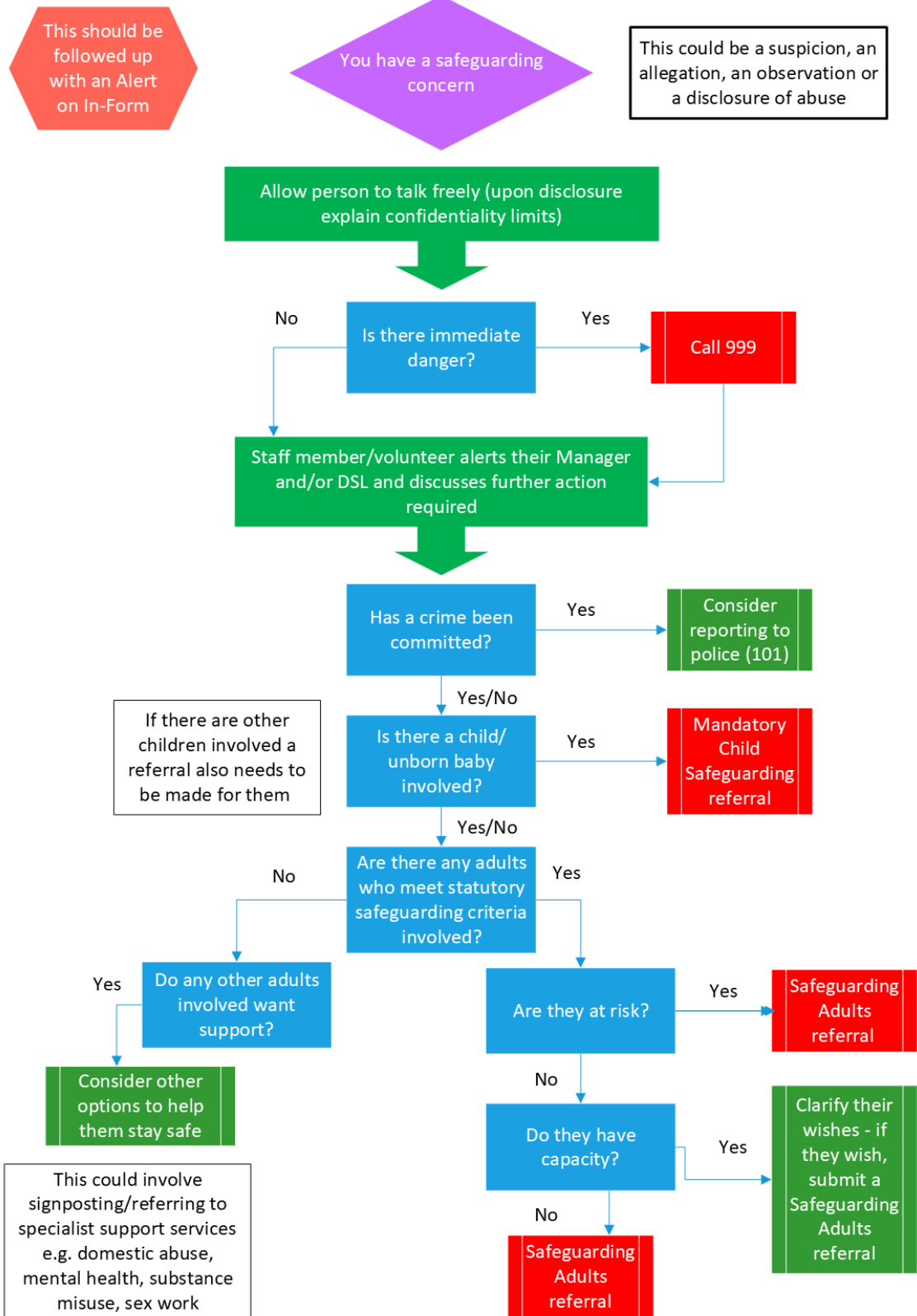
See akt's Recruitment Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy for more details.

All staff, and volunteers will undergo safeguarding training as part of their induction at a level consistent with their role; this will be refreshed every year for Services staff and Designated Safeguarding Officers/Leads and every two years for all other staff. All akt Services staff will complete the basic level training for safeguarding children and adults, offered by the relevant Local Safeguarding Board(s).

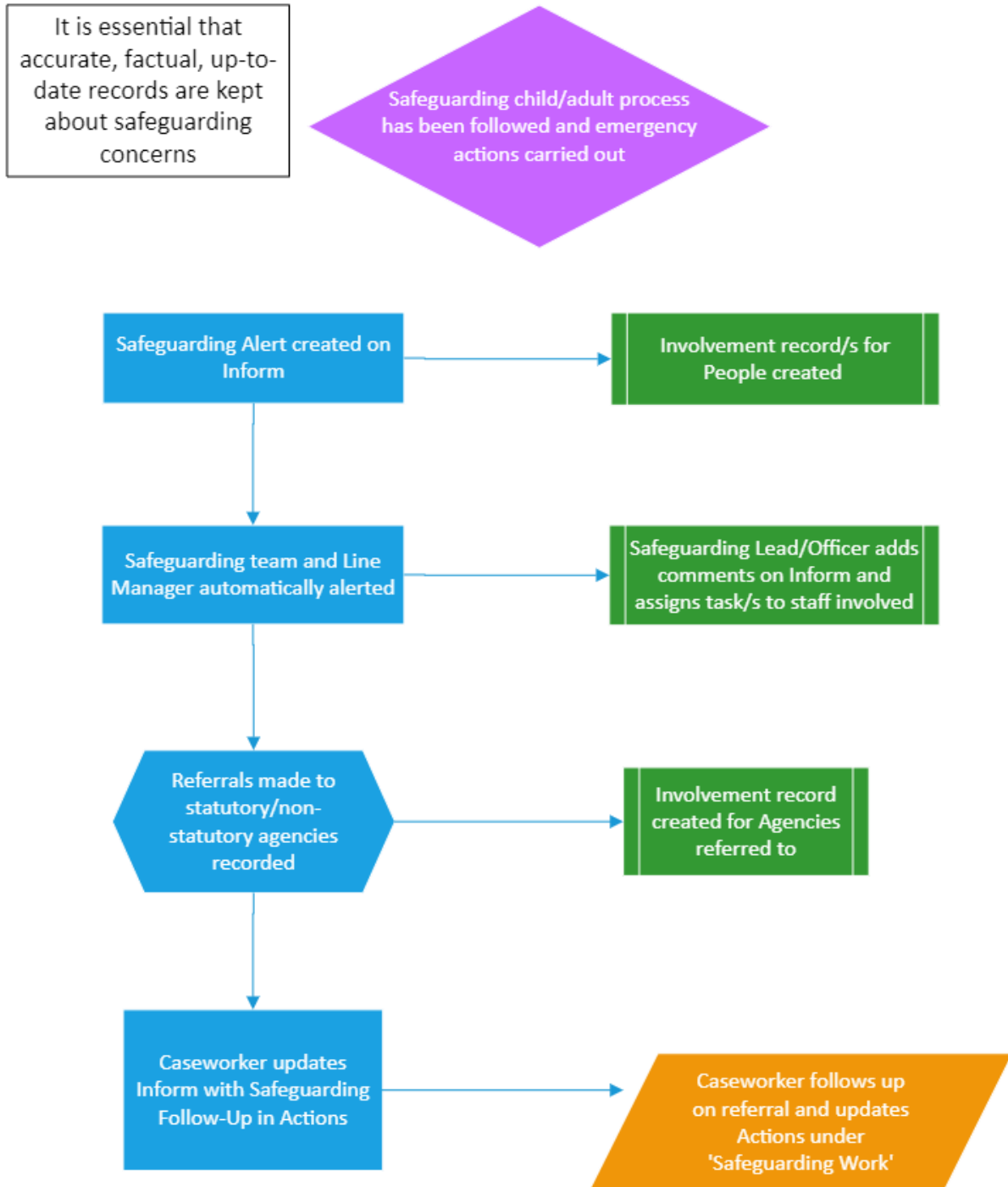
All staff and volunteers who will be working with children and adults should complete a DBS application form for a check at the highest level for which they are eligible.

Appendix 1 – Child Safeguarding flowchart including emergency actions

akt child safeguarding process



Appendix 2 – Safeguarding Reporting Procedure for Inform – [click here](#) to see how to create a Safeguarding Alert



Appendix 3 – Safeguarding Reporting Template for those without access to In-Form

Restricted Information

This form should only be completed by those who do not have access to In-Form whenever an issue or concern has arisen that needs reporting regarding a child or adult.

TRY AND FILL FORM OUT AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT WHERE POSSIBLE.

Date	
Time	
Name of person reporting	
Position at akt	
Contact details of person reporting	
Child's details	
Name	
Address	
Date of birth	
Contact details (phone number/email address)	
Details of child's parents/carer/guardians	
Name/s	
Address	

Contact details (phone number/email address)	
Reason(s) for report including names and details where known What are you worried about?	
Details of Alleged perpetrator(s)	
Name	
Address	
Are they also known to akt?	
Action(s) taken by person reporting	
Is the child aware of your concerns and action taken?	
Who else has been informed of these issues?	
Report received by akt DSO/Deputy DSO/Safeguarding Lead	Name: Signed: Date:
Action(s) taken by akt safeguarding team	

PLEASE ENSURE A COPY OF YOUR COMPLETED REPORT IS SENT TO THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER, DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER OR SAFEGUARDING LEAD (if you can't find their details you can email it to safeguarding@akt.org.uk).

Appendix 4 – Basic principles in reacting to suspicions, allegations and/or disclosures:

What To Do	What Not To Do
Stay Calm.	Don't panic. Don't over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the person is in immediate danger.
Listen, hear and believe.	Don't probe for more information. Questioning may affect how the disclosure is received at a later date.
<p>Give time to the person to say what they want.</p> <p>Re-assure and explain that they have done the right thing in telling. Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed.</p>	Don't make assumptions, don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations. Don't promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be ok (it might not).
Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this policy.	Don't try to deal with it yourself.
Record in writing as near as verbatim as possible what was said as soon as possible.	Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
Report to the lead member of staff.	Don't gossip with colleagues about what has been said to you.
Record your report.	Don't make a child repeat a story unnecessarily.

Appendix 5 – Responding to concerns about possible abuse: visual guidance

1. Safety is the priority!

The safety and welfare of children, young people and adults is the paramount consideration in deciding what action needs to be taken.

2. Direct disclosures

- A. Listen carefully
- B. Use supportive body language and don't act shocked
- C. Facilitate the disclosure to determine if there is real cause for concern
- D. DO NOT cross-examine or investigate
- E. Inform the person that the concerns will need to be shared with a DSO

3. Discussion with Deputy DSO or Services Manager

- Concerns should be discussed on the same day as the disclosure was received
- If the disclosure is about a volunteer this should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Officer

4. Making a record

- A Safeguarding Alert should be raised on Inform (see Appendix for flowchart of process)
- Reporting template in Appendix should be used by those without access to Inform
- The Alert/Report should contain all details of disclosure including who is involved, why it's a safeguarding concern, wishes of the YP and action already/to be taken

5. Sharing record with DSO

- The Safeguarding Alert on In-Form will automatically be sent to the DSO once saved
- The Safeguarding Report form should be email to the DSO/Deputy and marked as Confidential

6. In an emergency

If the personal safety of a child or adult is immediately threatened, it is vital that urgent action is taken as soon as possible on the same day.

This could mean calling 999 or making an urgent referral to the Local Authority's Child or Adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Use this link to check which Local Authority you need to contact:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

7. Informing the person at risk and asking for consent

- Where possible you should always ask the child, young person or adult for consent before making a referral
- You should also inform them of what is likely to happen once a referral is made
- If you believe that someone is at immediate risk of harm then you can breach confidentiality and make a referral without consent
- Where consent is needed this should be given in writing

8. Making the referral

- If a safeguarding referral is required this should be done within one working day of the decision being made
- The referral should be made over the phone and followed up in writing the same day
 - some LAs may ask you to complete a referral form
- If the concern relates to a staff member, volunteer or third party then the DSO will follow the procedure and may report the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

9. Multi-agency working

- AKT is committed to working in a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children and young people
- We will engage with relevant multi-agency proceedings and plans required to protect the children and young adults we are working with.
- We will actively connect children and young people with external specialist support and independent advocates where appropriate.

10. Escalation

- If AKT is not satisfied that a referral has been responded to appropriately or within the statutory timescale, we will escalate our concerns.
- In the case of referrals involving children and young people under the age of 18, AKT may also consider using the NSPCC Helpline to support the referral and escalation process.

11. Logging and reviewing Safeguarding Alerts

- Safeguarding concerns about young people are stored securely on In-Form
- Concerns about staff are stored securely on Atlas
- A secure folder on Sharepoint is used to store concerns about other parties
- Board reviews of all reported safeguarding incidents take place at least annually and inform future practice