



GRACE BAPTIST CHAPEL

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Safeguarding Policy, Procedures

& Code of Conduct

This document will be issued to each person in the church working with children and young people aged under 18, or anyone working with vulnerable adults. He/she will be required to sign stating his/her agreement with this policy, and provide the Safeguarding Officer, **Yasmin Small**, or her deputy **Lucia Symonds**, with the said signature found at the end of this document.

Introduction

1 As Christians, we endeavour to show the love of Christ to all people. We respect them and will do all we can to protect them from abuse of any kind. We believe in protecting and promoting the wellbeing of the most vulnerable in society. We believe in an all-powerful God who can heal trauma and mental suffering. This document reflects our endeavor to see that all people, but especially the children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care, are protected from harm.

Aim

2 Our aim in providing this document, and in requiring agreement with its guidelines from all who work with children and vulnerable adults, is to ensure a safe and secure environment whereby everyone can learn of and know the love of God. Jesus Christ said, concerning children, "of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14)

Commitment from the whole church

3 **We will seek as a church to welcome children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to encourage them. We will seek to pray for them, and to be concerned for their welfare as individuals. We will seek to follow the Code of Conduct (see sect 19) at all times.**

4 Types of Abuse (See Appendices)

- **Physical**, in which bodies are hurt or injured.
- **Emotional**, in which threats or taunts cause fear
- **Sexual**, in which adults, and sometimes other young people or teenagers, use children to satisfy their own desires.
- **Neglect**, in which adults fail to care for children, young people and vulnerable adults, leading to impaired health and development.

5. Signs of Abuse

Look out for the following possible signs of abuse. This is a very delicate area. The following *may suggest* abuse, though there may be perfectly adequate reasons for the behaviour listed. Please do not jump to conclusions, as this could be detrimental to the child or vulnerable adult and his/her family.

- **Physical:** unexplained or hidden injuries; evidence of self-harm, such as cuts and scars on arms and wrists; lack of medical attention. eg untreated wounds, sores etc.

- **Emotional:** reverting to younger behaviour; nervousness; sudden under-achievement; attention-seeking; running away; stealing; and lying.
- **Sexual:** preoccupation with sexual matters; evident in words, play, drawings etc.; sexually provocative or uninhibited and unusual behaviour towards adults; disturbed sleep, including nightmares and bedwetting; attempts to build secretive relationships with adults or children; stomach pains with no apparent cause.
- **Neglect:** looking unkempt, or unhappy; becoming increasingly withdrawn or aggressive; having lingering health problems.
- **Remember that very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.**

6. Procedures if Abuse is Suspected or Discovered

In cases of persons suspecting or knowing of the immoral behaviour of a fellow believer *in general*, it is right to follow Matthew 18:15-17 and approach them one-to-one first.

However, in cases of suspected abuse of any vulnerable person, a third party must be contacted immediately: in this case the Safeguarding Officer or their deputy. The allegation may come from within the church, from a child, carer or parent. It may even involve the Pastor, an Elder or Deacon. For the protection of the vulnerable, and the wider good, it is important that such allegations are investigated thoroughly.

It may be that a person has even caught someone in the act of abusing a child. Whoever has made the allegation that abuse has occurred, if the allegation concerns a church member or worker the Safeguarding Officer or their deputy should be contacted without delay. All allegations of this kind must be taken seriously, and investigated thoroughly. No one should keep such allegations ‘under their hat’, however improbable or bizarre they may seem.

7. If the allegation concerns the Safeguarding Officer, the deputy should be contacted, and vice versa.

If the allegation concerns both the Safeguarding Officer and the deputy then one of the elders should be contacted. Otherwise, *thirtyone:eight* (formally CCPAS) should be contacted without delay to seek their advice (see contact numbers at the end of this document).

8. If a child or vulnerable adult has brought allegations of abuse to the attention of a church worker, reassure them that he/she has done the right thing in speaking to you.

It can be very painful and frightening for them to talk about abuse. There are often conflicts of loyalty and secrecy which must be broken, but not without cost to them. Be careful not to interrogate them, or cause him/her undue stress and worry. Try to allow time for them to share as much as they wish, as they may not open up on another occasion.

- **Stay calm** and try not to show shock or disbelief;
- **Treat all information seriously;**
- **Remember your duty of care;**
- **Consider any immediate risks;**
- **Make a written account of the alert;**
- **Listen carefully** to what the person is saying;

- **Demonstrate empathy;**
- **Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence** may be needed; this may be done via Gp, A&E or police

9. Tell the person that:

- They did the right thing to tell you
- You are treating the information seriously
- It was not their fault
- You will inform the appropriate person
- You and the church leadership will take steps to protect and support them.

10. Do not:

- Do not launch into an investigation on your own, but, if immediate action is necessary, consult the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy without delay.
- Do not promise the child or vulnerable adult confidentiality, as information given may have to be disclosed later.
- Do not Press the person for more details, this will be done at a later date;
- Do not Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events, as they may not tell you again;
- Do not make promises you cannot keep;
- Do not contact the alleged abuser yourself
- Do not be judgmental;
- Do not ask leading questions;
- Do not pass on the information to anyone other than those with a legitimate 'need to know', such as the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy;
- Do not tamper with evidence; and
- Do not put yourself at risk.

11 Note: The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to: Yasmin Small or Lucia Symonds

If the child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm, the Safeguarding Officer or deputy should contact the police on 999. They will decide:

- How to proceed further;
- Whether to inform the parents at this stage; and
- Whether to involve other agencies.

12. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

- Although allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding

Coordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.

- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

13. At all times the interests of the child or vulnerable adult will be paramount. In the majority of cases, professionals should get consent from a parent/guardian before making a referral to MASH (Haringey Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: See below). The exception is when you believe that contacting the parent/carer could place a child or another adult at risk of harm. In these exceptional circumstances, or if consent is refused or cannot be obtained, you should still contact MASH via the consultation line for advice (taken directly from MASH website). I

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of Grace Chapel will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

14. External Agencies

Ideally these agencies should be contacted by the Safeguarding Officer or his/her deputy. However, in their absence agencies which may be contacted are as follows:

- **Thirtyone:Eight (formally Churches Child Protection Advisory Service)** on 0303 003 1111 . They are available 9am-5pm Monday-Friday. They will offer support and advice. They specialise in advising where circumstances of abuse are unclear.
- **Haringey Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** on 020 8489 4470
Website for referrals: <https://haringeyscp.org.uk/>
- **Haringey Social Services:** Phone: 020 8489 4533 - Monday to Thursday: 8.45am to 5pm; Friday: 8.45am to 4.45pm. Out of Hours Emergency duty team: 0208 489 0000.
- **Haringey Safeguarding Adults:** 020 8489 1400 Email: safeguardingadultduty@haringey.gov.uk.
- **Police:** 111 or in emergency 999.

15. Safer recruitment/DBS checks

- a. **All appointments to a post in the church, whether Elder, Deacon, Youth Worker, Sunday School teacher, Holiday Club Volunteer etc. will be subject to the approval of the church leadership.** The Safeguarding Officer will ensure that a DBS check has taken place and a person's result is either clear or has been approved before they can begin any role working with children or vulnerable adults. Evidence of DBS clearance should be recorded by the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy, and kept securely in the church safe. Our leadership will also take into account letters of recommendation from their last church.

b. **As a church we believe that God, in His grace, can forgive and cleanse the worst of sinners by His blood.** Those who have committed the worst of crimes can also be fully forgiven.

For this reason, a criminal record would not in itself debar a person from serving Christ in the church's outreach, once context and historical factors have been carefully considered.

c. **Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk**

Note: Anything that appears in someone's DBS that seems to pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults must be investigated and considered by the church officers, and a decision made in writing as to whether this prevents them from involvement with these groups. When someone attending Grace Chapel is known to have abused children, is under investigation or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs, the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. In its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, the Leadership will set boundaries for that person that they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Note: Thorough meeting minutes involving such decisions must be taken; and stored on record in the church safe.

16. Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate and supporting all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of Grace Baptist Chapel congregation.

17. Emergency procedures

- **In the event of a fire, or other emergency**, the alarm must be raised in every accessible part of the chapel. Everyone should exit the chapel in a swift but orderly manner, and gather in the church yard. Registers of children should be taken out by youth group leaders. If there is any danger in gathering in the church yard, people will be told of a safer location on the nearest pavement. No child should be allowed to return home, until a roll call is given and everyone accounted for. Otherwise it may be thought they are still in the building. The 999 emergency services must be contacted at once, and if appropriate church fire extinguishers should be used. Please be familiar with their location and use.
- **A list of contact names and telephone numbers of all those left in our care must be kept securely and be accessible in case of emergency.** This means keeping a register of children at church activities. Contact numbers for them in an emergency are especially important. At least one member of each team should have possession of the safe key if it is stored there.

18. Code of conduct

- a. **Our aim is** to approach our work with young people and vulnerable adults prayerfully and thoughtfully. We will work in co-operation with our fellow workers.
- b. **We will seek to be punctual**, and see to it personally that there are adequate staff should we be unable to attend for any reason.
- c. **We will attend prayer and planning meetings** where necessary.
- d. **We shall endeavour to staff all activities with children with the correct number of adults (see sect 34 in Appendices).**
- e. **We will undertake training** (eg First Aid, Fire Safety etc) where this is appropriate and available. The Leadership is committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to

help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

- f. **We will ensure that everyone knows what to do in an emergency**, including keeping up-to-date emergency contact information and ensuring that the church congregation is familiar with the Fire Drill.
- g. **In the case of any accident on the premises**, there is a First Aid Kit in the kitchen above the refrigerator. Its contents are inspected regularly, and kept up to date. A book to record any accidents on the premises is next to the First Aid Box. Please record any accident requiring assistance, however small it may seem to you. In the event of a serious accident ring 999 and ask for an Ambulance.
- h. **No adult shall be alone with a child in the church building at any time.**
- i. **No adult shall be with a child out of the earshot** or sight of another adult even if other adults are present in the same room as them. This is to protect both the child from potential abuse and the adult from misunderstandings or false accusations.
- j. **Workers must guard against** situations that could render them open to misunderstanding and wrongful accusation. In counselling situations, always leave a door open, and ensure another adult is within calling distance. Make sure that the young person is aware that there are others present.
- k. **Guard your own body language**, avoiding any actions that might be misunderstood, such as over-indulgent or inappropriate hugging or stroking etc.
- l. **Take special care if younger children need help with the toilet.** If the parent/carer is present, he/she should deal with soiling accidents. If not, ensure another adult is present when washing or changing, even if this means getting someone from a church service.
- m. **Ensure that both parents and their children have clear understanding of arrangements for returning home**; for example, whether they are to be collected whether they will go home alone. Children awaiting collection after meetings must be supervised and not left at risk.
- n. **Any children or vulnerable adults transported by car** should be told to sit on a back seat. Take a second adult if at all possible. Ensure seat belts are worn at all times. Make sure there is adequate staff cover at the Church building if any youth activity continues in your absence.
- o. **Bullying and verbal abuse must not be tolerated.** Be aware of aggressive language and 'play-fighting' between children. Persistently aggressive children should be excluded, at least for a period.
- p. **Always speak respectfully**, using appropriate language. Be good role-models in your use of everyday speech.
- q. **Be vigilant when children are playing together. Remember that it is not uncommon for teenagers and young people to abuse younger children.** They should not be left to play upstairs or in a separate room. Be aware of friendships which develop between children of widely differing ages.

r. **Technology used on the premises** should have Parental Controls and safeguards built in. This is to protect people from the more harmful aspects of the internet. No photographs or videos of children are to be taken without parental consent. No photos or videos are to be placed on social media or distributed in any form without the consent of parents and the church leadership.

s. **Alcohol, drug or solvent abuse, and the use of 'legal highs' must not be permitted.** Where appropriate, young people are to be warned of the destructiveness of substance abuse, and the importance of caring for the lives God has given us.

t. **We will report any suspected cases of abuse** to the Safeguarding Officer or his/her deputy.

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm, including physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse;

19. If there is concern about any of the above, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively, thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If an adult or child is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury, contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

20. Breaching the code of conduct

- **If you have behaved inappropriately** you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the Safeguarding Coordinator as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave Grace Baptist Chapel Membership and/or no longer take part in our church activities. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the Police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS.
- **If you become aware of a breach of this code**, you should escalate your concerns to the Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).

21 We will, in short, do all we can to ensure the well-being and safety of the children and vulnerable adults in our care.

The Safeguarding Officer is Yasmin Small: 07958 173 016.

The deputy is Lucia Symonds: 07947 897 704

22. In Conclusion

Let us pray hard for God's blessing upon the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we come into contact at our church. Let us pray for their welfare and safety, and that their experience of meeting with believers will always be a positive one as we seek to point them to Jesus and His love for them.

23. Evaluation and review

We shall endeavour to review this document every two years, or sooner if changes are required.

24. Declaration

I agree to abide by the expectations outlined in this document and confirm that I have read the relevant policies that assist my work with vulnerable groups.

Date: **Full Name:**

Address:

DOB:

25. Appendices

Q. How important is it that we safeguard children? Jesus said: “whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.” (Mark 9:42). To ‘stumble’ in the Amplified version, is to “sin, or to lose faith”. We must protect our children, and approach them always with the highest integrity.

26. What is abuse and neglect of a child?

- **Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child.** Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.
- **Important: They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Teenagers have been known to abuse children.**
- **Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.**
- **Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the Internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.**

27. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

28. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

- a. **It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include shouting, and verbal abuse of the child. It may involve not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may include the withdrawal of love and affection.**
- b. **It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.** These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- c. **It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.**
- d. **It may involve serious bullying** (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment.

29. Sexual abuse

- **Sexual abuse involves** forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- **Sadly, we need to list some of these things here:**
The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

30. Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

31. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

- a. **Neglect involves Failures: Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:**
- b. Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- c. Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- d. Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- e. Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- f. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

32. Mistreatment of Adults: Statutory definitions of abuse in relation to Adults

The following information relates to the Safeguarding of Adults as defined in **the Care Act 2014, Chapter 14**. Safeguarding, this replaces the previous guidelines produced in 'No Secrets' (Department of Health 2000).

The legislation is relevant across England and Wales but on occasions applies only to local authorities in England.

a. The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs);
 - Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
 - As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.
- b. **Organisations should always promote the adult's wellbeing** in their safeguarding arrangements. People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things they want for themselves. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how that can be best achieved.

33. The Care Act 2014: Section 1 of the Act: see

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted

a. Care and Support: Statutory Guidance under the Care Act 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>. This section considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances in which they may take place. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour that could give rise to a safeguarding concern. Sadly, here, as before, we need to spell out the forms of abuse. Here we are speaking of abuse towards adults.

- b. Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- c. Domestic violence** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so-called ‘honour’ based violence.
- d. Sexual abuse** – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- e. Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- f. Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, Internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- g. Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- h. Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- i. Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one-off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- j. Neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

34. Safe ratios of Adults to children:

The NSPCC recommend having at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. They recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers in helping to keep children safe:

- 0 – 2 years – one adult to three children
- 2 – 3 years – one adult to four children
- 4 – 8 years – one adult to six children
- 9 – 12 years – one adult to eight
- 13 – 18 years – one adult to ten children

We pray that the Lord will help us to honour Him in the way we treat others.

* * *

Safeguarding Document as agreed and reviewed Jan 2024.

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SIGNATURES TO CONFIRM SAFEGUARDING TRAINING COMPLETED

Child Protection

If a child needs immediate assistance from the police or ambulance services - please call 999.

- [Are you concerned about a child?](#)
- [Report your concerns](#)
- [The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#)
- [Further Information](#)

Are you concerned about a child?

If you have concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm or has already been harmed or abused then you should make immediate telephone contact with Haringey's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Please do not keep your worries to yourself. An example would be if a parent collected a child from school and was intoxicated or a parent was in the process of physically abusing a child.

Safeguarding is everybody's business and if you are worried about a child or young person, please tell us. All children and young people have the right to live in safety, without emotional cruelty, neglect, violence, or sexual abuse.

Report your concerns

If you have concerns for a child or young person's welfare and believe that they may require some help or additional support, please use the numbers below to contact staff for advice:

Office hours

- **Phone:** 020 8489 4470 - Monday to Thursday: 8.45am to 5pm; Friday: 8.45am to 4.45pm

Out of office hours (including weekends)

- **Phone:** 020 8489 0000

Calls to the emergency duty team will be logged by a call centre. An emergency duty social worker will ring you back.

If you are a professional or volunteer

Immediate risk of harm and professional consultations

If you are a professional or volunteer working with children this is a dedicated advice line for professional consultations and urgent safeguarding referrals:

- **Phone:** 020 8489 4533 - Monday to Thursday: 8.45am to 5pm; Friday: 8.45am to 4.45pm

Please ensure that you follow up any telephone contact with a [written referral via the online portal](#) within 24 hours.

NO immediate risk of harm

If you are a professional or volunteer working with a child or their family and there is no immediate risk of harm to the child, but the family would benefit from additional support, you should complete the online referral form via the link below:

Start referral now 

Getting consent before making a referral

Advice is always available from MASH. In the majority of cases, professionals should get consent before making a referral to MASH.

The exception is when you believe that contacting the parent/carer could place a child or another adult at risk of harm. In these exceptional circumstances, or if consent is refused or cannot be obtained, you should still contact MASH via the consultation line for advice.

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The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH is a collection of agencies who are co-located and share information in order to identify risks to children and young people and to carry out confidential screening, research and referral of vulnerable children. These co-located agencies are the police, health, housing, probation as well as children's social care.