

Roxeth Community Church

Children & Young People (under 18 years) and Adults with Care and Support Needs SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Roxeth Community Church

Coles Crescent, South Harrow, HA2 0TN

Telephone: 020 8864 7037

E-mail: admin@roxeth.com

[website: www.roxeth.com](http://www.roxeth.com)

Charity Number 1173339

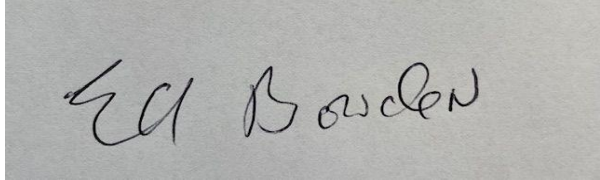
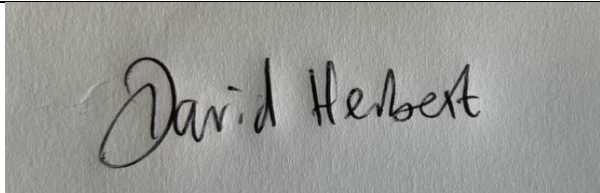
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1. Introduction

This policy outlines Roxeth Community Church's (RCC's) approach to safeguarding children and young people (aged under 18) and adults with care and support needs.

This Safeguarding Policy sets out the structure and arrangements for achieving this aim, including the detailed responsibilities for key staff and volunteers, and best practice guidelines.

Effective Date:	28 September 2023
Next Scheduled Review Date:	28 September 2024
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Donna John Mobile: 07545132191 Email: donna241@icloud.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: (DDSL)	David Herbert Mobile: 07960 156 543 Email: david@roxeth.com
Review Responsibility:	Donna John
Trustee Responsibility:	David Herbert
Signed by (on behalf of Trustees) Date: 28th September 2023	
Signed by (on behalf of CLT) Date: 28th September 2023	

Safeguarding Policy History

First produced and appointed: 17th July 1996
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Reviewed and reaffirmed : 2008
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2. Policy Statement – Our Commitment

The leadership of this church is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults.

We believe that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or adult to experience abuse or neglect of any kind and recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people, and adults (especially those with care and support needs) by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The leadership of this church commits to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Support, resource and train those who work with children, young people and adults with care and support needs at Roxeth Community Church, and to provide supervision.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are familiar with this policy and guidelines and that they are equipped to follow them; the success of RCC’s Safeguarding policy depends on the active support of all who work with children, young people and Adults with care and support needs.
- Ensure that RCC premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the DSL and DDSL in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.

This policy is to be reviewed at least annually, and made available publicly (e.g. on the church website).

3. Roles & Responsibilities

Trustees

The Charity Commission is clear that Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding in their charity. In fulfilling their duty of care to Roxeth Community Church, trustees must take steps to safeguard all children, young people and adults with care and support needs who come into contact with Roxeth Community Church.

This includes:

- Ensuring that suitable safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, and reviewed regularly;
- undertaking monitoring to ensure that these policies and procedures are being implemented and are effective; and
- responding appropriately to allegations of abuse.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

- Providing safeguarding advice to all areas of Roxeth Community Church
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and reporting any concerns about its effectiveness to the Trustees
- Reporting to the Core Leadership Team (and, where appropriate, the Trustees) any relevant matters relating to safeguarding including any allegations raised against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Responding in a timely manner to any suspected abuse allegations or concerns
- Keeping written records in line with our Data Protection Policy
- Referring a case on to other agencies or authorities where necessary

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

The DDSL is put in place for receiving and responding to suspected abuse allegations or concerns, where either: (i) the DSL is unavailable, or (ii) the DSL is implicated in those allegations or concerns.

In these situations, the DDSL is responsible for:

- Responding in a timely manner to any suspected abuse allegations or concerns
- Keeping written records in line with our General Data Protection Policy/Statement (which can be found in the church office).
- Referring a case on to other agencies or authorities where necessary
- Reporting to the Core Leadership Team (and, where appropriate, the Trustees) any relevant matters relating to safeguarding including any allegations raised against a member of staff or volunteer.

Designated Safeguarding Champions

Designated Safeguarding Champions are key to the success of this policy. They are accountable for the safeguarding standards within their appointed area of oversight. Specifically, they are responsible for:

- Ensuring (with support from the DSL) that the Safeguarding policy is communicated and implemented within their designated area.
- Making sure they and their teams understand the safeguarding arrangements within RCC.

Note: For the avoidance of doubt, the DSL may also undertake the role of a Safeguarding Champion if required.

RCC Workers (including staff and volunteers)

All workers (including volunteers) who participate in RCC activities involving children, young people or adults with care and support needs, must read, understand and follow the procedures set out in this policy. All workers (including volunteers) are responsible for:

- Making sure they understand the part they play regarding safeguarding children, young people and adults.
- Reading, understanding and following the arrangements set out in this safeguarding policy.
- Reporting any suspicions of abuse or neglect to the DSL (or DDSL).
- Reporting any concerns about the behaviour of any person towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs to the DSL (or DDSL).
- Sharing any information that has a bearing on a child or adult's welfare as soon as possible.

RCC Other Volunteers

Individuals that as part of their role do not have regular contact with children.

- All other volunteers must ensure they have a basic understanding of Safeguarding principles and how to report any suspicions of abuse or neglect to the DSL (or DDSL). Information on Safeguarding is displayed around the church and will be provided to other volunteers when they start.

4. Recruitment & Training

4.1 Procedure for Appointment of Staff and Volunteers – Safer Recruitment

We must ensure all people working with children, young people or adults with care and support needs are suitable for the role and are equipped to understand and follow our safeguarding policy and procedures. This applies to regular workers in groups and to occasional helpers (e.g. at Holiday Clubs).

To support this objective, the following procedures should be followed for those who work with children, young people or adults with care and support needs:

Requirements for ALL staff and workers (including occasional helpers):

All staff and workers who work with children, young people or adults with care and support needs are to:

1. Have the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information);
2. Be provided with RCC's safeguarding policy and procedures; and
3. Provide signed confirmation that they understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, will follow them, and know how to report concerns. These signed confirmations are to be stored safely in the church office.

Additional Requirements for RCC staff*:

Additionally, for all **staff** who work with children, young people or adults with care and support needs, it should be ensured that:

4. There is a written job description / person specification for the post.
5. An application form is completed and signed.
6. An interview is held, and safeguarding is discussed at interview.
7. Two references are obtained for each worker. If the applicant has no experience of working with children, one referee should be a reputable person who can comment on their character and relationships with others.

**Note: Where appropriate some of these additional measures for RCC staff should also be considered for volunteer leaders where their role warrants it.*

4.2 Safeguarding Training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our staff and 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 safeguarding matter.

5. Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct

The leadership of RCC are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers are to be issued with the following code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

Code of Conduct

- Do treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Do ensure that your own behaviour is appropriate at all times.

6. Good Practice Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs, we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships, protect all who attend and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers, **the specific good practice guidelines described below should be followed by all who work with children, young people or adults with care and support needs at RCC**, to promote a safe environment for all.

6.1 General Guidelines for Activities and Meetings

1. Ensure that a worker is **not alone** with any children, young people or adults with care and support needs **where they cannot be seen or heard by others nearby**. On church premises this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room. It may mean asking a child, young person or adult with care and support needs to wait outside if they arrive early for an activity and a worker has no other adults present. If an activity cannot be carried out in accordance with this guideline, then it should be cancelled.
2. **In a one-to-one situation** with a child, young person or adult with care and support needs (e.g. where privacy and confidentiality are important, such as in a counselling situation), make sure that:
 - Another relevant adult worker knows the meeting is taking place: including where, when and with whom.
 - If the meeting is not being held in a public place then another adult should be in the building / area and the young person should know they are there.
 - Details of the meeting should promptly be recorded in writing and stored in the church office.
3. **Adult-to-Child Ratios:** When working with groups of children and young people there must be enough suitable adults to provide the appropriate level of supervision. Supervision ratios can sometimes be difficult to judge, but you must make sure there are enough workers to ensure children are safe.

If you do not have enough workers to deliver a session safely then it **MUST NOT** go ahead.

Whilst every situation is different, the following commonly-used best-practice guidelines may be helpful:

Age (Years)	Recommended Maximum Number of Children per Adult (minimum 2 adults)*
Under 2	3
2-3	4
4-8	6
9-12	8
13-18	10

** For the purposes of these ratios, young people aged 16-18 may be considered as an adult if they are competent and responsible, and have received the appropriate safeguarding training*

4. Ensure that **arrangements for transporting children** are made with the knowledge of the team / leadership and have parental/carer approval. In no circumstances should a worker be alone with a child, young person in a car, unless express parental / carer permission has been provided; even with permission, this scenario should be avoided wherever possible.

Careful consideration should also be given to being alone in a car with adults with care needs.

5. Keep an accurate register for all events involving children, young people or adults with care and support needs where they are not accompanied by their parents/carers (e.g. Sunday teaching, youth/children's socials), detailing full name, address, telephone number and date of birth of each attendee. It should record the attendance of each attendee and of the workers for each session and be stored securely on the church premises, in a locked cabinet/room.
6. Be aware of which children are collected by a parent/carer and only hand them over to the agreed person. This applies especially to children under 6 years.
7. Ensure that all events held outside the church premises are approved by a member of the church leadership (e.g. CLT) and that parents/carers are given written details and complete a consent form (to be kept in the church office). A list of those attending the outing should be shared with another relevant adult worker (ideally not involved in the activity) at the start of the activity, and it should be ensured that emergency contact details are available for each person attending (in line with the RCC GDPR policy).
8. Ensure that access to the building is safe and well lit, and that the physical environment is welcoming to all.

6.2 Behavioural Guidelines

1. Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watch language, tone of voice and body language.

2. Do not invade the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting. If it is necessary to assist a young child with toileting or changing, ensure you leave the door open and assist the child in sight/hearing of another worker, and/or fetch the parent/carer if appropriate.
3. Do not engage in inappropriate or intrusive touching of any form (e.g. tickling, massaging, or unnecessary hugging); please note that physical contact should be avoided wherever possible, though it may occasionally be required (e.g. when providing reassurance for someone in distress, participating in certain sports, working with someone with a disability who requests assistance, administering first aid). Staff and volunteers should avoid doing things of a personal nature that the person can do themselves.
4. Do not engage in, or permit:
 - sexually provocative games;
 - sexually suggestive comments, even in 'fun'; or
 - any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting a child, young person or adult with care or support needs.
5. Control and discipline children **without** using physical punishment.
6. Do not show favouritism to any individual (especially a child, young person or adult with care and support needs). They should avoid situations where certain children are given special privileges or preferential treatment.
7. Do not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking (especially where it is overtly sexual or physical in nature).
8. Do not give a child, young person or vulnerable adult your personal contact details and ensure you communicate with them in accordance with RCC's Media and Communication Policy.
9. Be aware of RCC policy for media use and photography; do not take photographs or video (especially of children, young people or adults with care and support needs) unless required for a specific purpose, and when required, ensure you do so in accordance with RCC's Media and Communication Policy.

6.3 Guidelines for Residential Trips

Arrangements for residential trips need careful consideration and should be reviewed in advance with the DSL and approved by the church Leadership. Examples of items to consider include:

- Workers should ideally not share a bedroom with a child or young person, however, this may be necessary where the adult is the child or young person's carer.
- Bedrooms of only two young people should be avoided if possible.
- Bedrooms should not be mixed male and female. The exception to this may be where there are transgender young people.
- Adults and young people must use private shower facilities.

7. Recognising and Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect

7.1 Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Types of Abuse

Physical	where children's bodies are hurt or injured.
Emotional	where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibility beyond their years.
Sexual	where adults (and sometimes other children) use children to satisfy sexual desires.
Spiritual	an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves; perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed.
Neglect	where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.

Signs of Abuse

The following *may* indicate abuse. You should be diligent and responsive, but do not jump to conclusions; there could be other explanations.

Physical	unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention.
Emotional	reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, attention seeking.
Sexual	pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; being sexually provocative with adults; secretive relationships with adults or children.
Spiritual	for example, a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them, so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or, more seriously, God's) acceptance and approval.
Neglect	looking ill-cared for/unhappy/withdrawn or aggressive, having lingering injuries or health problems.

7.2 Responding to Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse or Neglect

Process for handling allegations made directly by a child, young person or adult with care and support needs

If a child, young person, or adult with care and support needs chooses to disclose allegations of abuse to you, you should follow these best practice guidelines:

- a. Listen carefully, be particularly sensitive and keep an open mind
- b. Do not lead the conversation or press for information (instead, listen).
- c. Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- d. Accept the child's word if they tell you that something has happened which has hurt them or put them in danger, whatever the circumstances.
- e. Do not show disapproval or disbelief.
- f. Tell the child he/she is not to blame.
- g. Reassure the child he/she was right to tell.
- h. Let the child know what you are going to do next and why (e.g. tell the DSL).
- i. Make notes as soon as possible of exactly what the child said, and the date and location of the conversation. Keep written notes.
- j. Report your discussion as soon as possible to the DSL. If the latter is implicated (or unavailable) report to the DDSL.

How to respond to any allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Always follow the procedures below:

1. Report the concern

The person in receipt of the allegations or suspicions of abuse should **report concerns as soon as possible to the DSL** (see *Appendix 2*); contact details are provided in an earlier section of this policy.

The DSL is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the DSL or, if the suspicions in any way involve the DSL, then the report should be made to the **DDSL**; contact details are provided in earlier section.

If the suspicions implicate both the DSL and the DDSL, then the report should be made in the first instance to the designated safeguarding trustee. The trustee responsible for Safeguarding is David Herbert.

2. Actions for DSL including contact with outside agencies

The DSL should promptly contact the appropriate agency / agencies as and where required (further details provided below under, "Detailed Reporting Requirements"), or they may first ring the **thirtyone:eight helpline** for advice (Tel: 0303 003 1111).

3. Inform other relevant parties

The DSL may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern; including:

- The chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding, who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.

- The designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18).

Additional Procedures for handling allegations or suspicions of abuse

- Suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above, or (where appropriate) other relevant external agencies. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- If someone suspects that abuse may be taking place but the child has not said anything, more detailed discussion and discreet observation may need to take place, but the DSL (or DDSL) should still be informed without delay. They will make the appropriate decision regarding referral and next steps.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the DSL (or DDSL), in the absence of the DSL or the DDSL the report should be made to another member of the senior leadership or core leadership team. There should be no delay in making the report (where necessary) to Social Services or the Police, or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.
- The Leadership will support the DSL / DDSL 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.
- 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 RCC will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the DSL/ DDSL has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DSL/DDSLS 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.
- The role of the DSL/DDSLS is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed Requirements for Specific Scenarios

Allegations or suspicions of Sexual Abuse towards a child or young person (under 18)

In the event of allegations (whether from a child, parent/carer or other person) or suspicions of sexual abuse, the DSL/DDSLS will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or the Police Child Protection Team directly. They will **NOT** speak to the parent/carer or anyone else. *The police should be contacted particularly urgently if the abuse is alleged to have occurred within the last week.*
- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Allegations or suspicions of Physical Injury, neglect or emotional abuse towards a child or young person (under 18)

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the DSL/DDSL will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services or thirtyone:eight.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct (or thirtyone:eight) for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm to an adult in need of protection, including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, the DSL /DDSL 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 the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury, contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

Suspicious or allegations of spiritual abuse

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the DSL / DDSL will:

- If applicable, Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against an RCC worker (including volunteers)

If allegation relates to working with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a RCC worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) in relation to a child / young person then, in addition to following the procedures outlined above, the DSL, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children’s Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO
- If any doubt, seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing).
- If advised by the LADO, or if considered appropriate by church leadership then the accused worker will be suspended from working with children until the investigation is complete.

If allegation relates to working with adults with care and support needs

If an accusation is made against an RCC worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) in relation to an adult with care and support needs then, in addition to following the procedures outlined above, the DSL/ DDSL will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services
- If any doubt, seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing).

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers, or no further action if the ‘victim’ chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide, not the church.

8. Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The leadership of RCC is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending RCC 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, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, will set boundaries for that

person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Appendix 1 - Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Other External Agencies

Children and Family Services at London Borough of Harrow

Telephone: 020 8901 2690

Email: Duty.Assess@harrow.gov.uk

Safeguarding Adults Services at London Borough of Harrow

Telephone: 020 8420 9453

Email: safeguardingadults@harrow.gov.uk

A Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for the management and oversight of cases when there is an allegation or concern made against a person who works with children in connection with their employment or voluntary activities.

Contact the LADO immediately for advice and guidance when dealing with an allegation.

LADO: Janice Miller

Janice.Miller@harrow.gov.uk

Tel: 020 8736 6435 Monday – Friday

External Agencies who can offer support

thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ Tel: 0303 003 1111

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

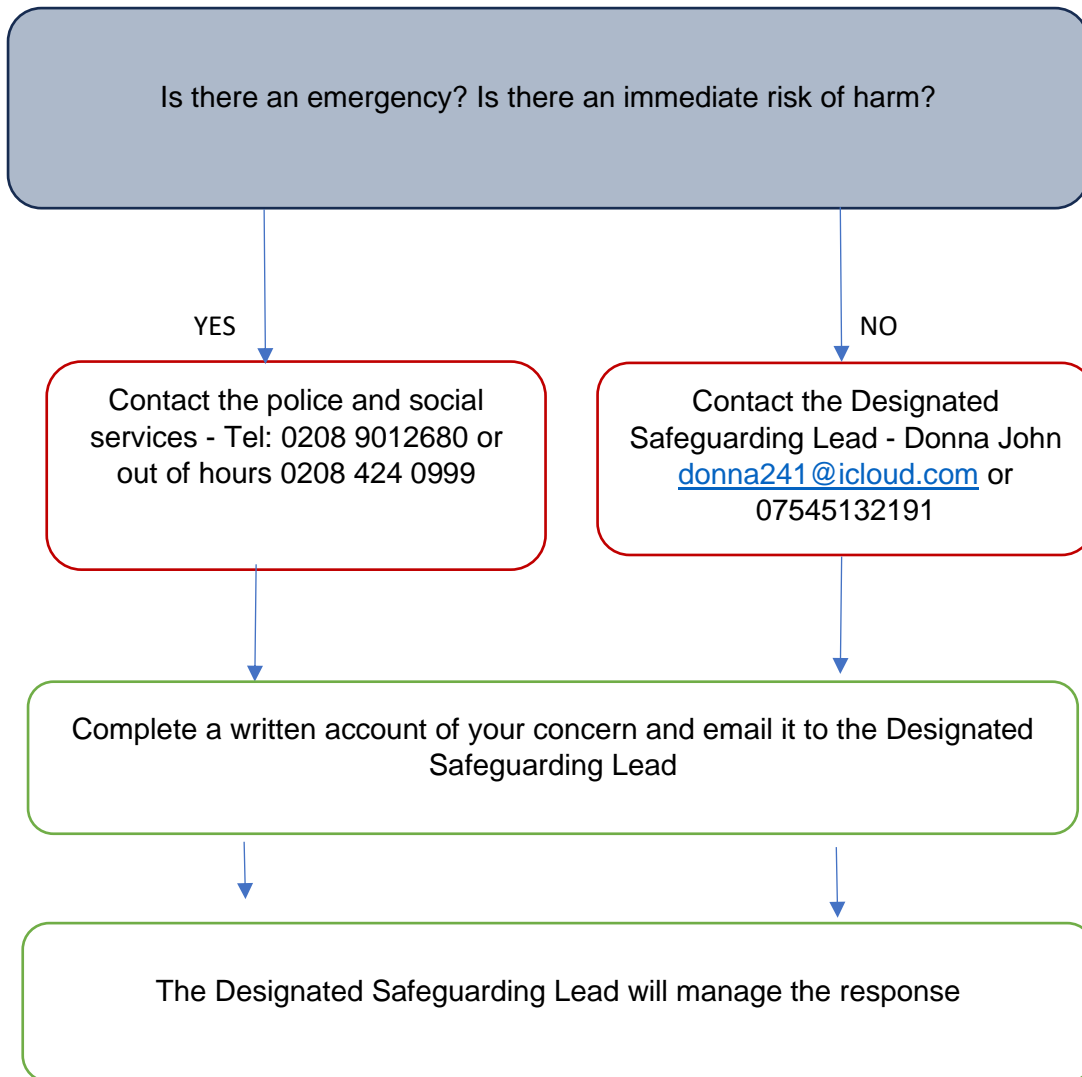
The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

NSPCC Tel: 0844 892 1026

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (24 hours): To report or discuss concerns about a child's welfare. Tel: 0808 800 5000 or textphone: 0800 056 0566 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If you have any safeguarding concerns, these must be immediately reported.



Important contact numbers:

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Donna John, 07545132191 or donna241@icloud.com or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: David Herbert, 07960 156 543 or david@roxeth.com

Further advice:

thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ Tel: 0303 003 1111

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>