

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Published by Solutions Not Sides

Written by Sharon Booth 2018

Updated by Jessica Brandler 2022

This policy has been written by Solutions Not Sides using a template provided by Jessica Overlander-Kaye and with the assistance of Rebecca Varney and Rachel Lewis.

This document is for guidance only and professional advice should be obtained before acting on any information contained within it, as no responsibility can be accepted by Solutions Not Sides, the publisher or distributor as a result of action taken or refrained from in consequence of the contents.

Solutions Not Sides
Haskell House
152 West End Lane
London
NW6 1SD

www.solutionsnotsides.co.uk

Date ratified by board of trustees: 12 October 2018

Date reviewed: August 2022.

This policy will be reviewed annually in August of each year by the Director of Solutions Not Sides.

Important Phone Numbers and Contacts:

Solutions Not Sides Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Sharon Booth – Founder & Director, 07835 141010 / 0207 284 5941, sharon@solutionsnotsides.co.uk

Solutions Not Sides Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD): Jess Brandler
Managing Director
07900323676
jess@solutionsnotsides.co.uk

Solutions Not Sides Chairperson: Rachel Lewis
rachel@freshpagetherapy.com

The Children & Families Contact Team (Camden Council):

020 7974 3317. Out of hours: 020 7974 4444

LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk
LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk.cjism.net

The Chief Designated Officer (DO) and Principal social worker for children in Camden is Sophie Kershaw.

Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership:

020 7974 6658/1276

CSCP@camden.gov.uk

www.cscp.org.uk

Childline:

0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC:

0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk

Reporting Hate Crimes:

Community Security Trust - <https://cst.org.uk/report-incident>

Tell MAMA - <http://tellmamauk.org/submit-a-report-to-us/>

Stop Hate UK - <http://www.stophateuk.org/report-hate-crime/>

Police emergency number:

999

Police non-emergency number:

101

Our Safeguarding Policy shows that we believe that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount in everything we do.

Our Safeguarding Statement:

Solutions Not Sides (SNS) has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children and vulnerable adults that are involved in SNS activities.

A child is anyone under 18 years old and a vulnerable adult is described as a person aged 18 years or over who is in receipt of or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Children and vulnerable adults have a lot to gain from participating in SNS conflict resolution education and training. Their natural sense of inquiry and cultural identity can blossom in the positive environment created by the SNS discussion sessions, and any ingrained prejudices or misunderstandings about those of different backgrounds can be addressed. It provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills of interaction and new approaches to thinking about difficult conflict issues.

This policy focuses on prevention and how SNS should respond once risk of abuse is suspected or has been identified or disclosed. It must be recognised that all partners, affiliates and other organisations working with us or on behalf of SNS, have a responsibility to help reduce the risks of children/vulnerable adults being subject to abuse of any kind and promote best practice that a proactive approach is adopted.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publications: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2015, Revised Safeguarding Statutory Guidance 2 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' 2000, and 'What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused' 2015. The guidance reflects the principles in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2015, London Child Protection Procedures 2017, 'Keeping it Safe - Safeguarding Standards and Implementation Guidance, National Council for Voluntary Youth Services' 2014, and 'Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding' 2013, and 'Keeping Children Safe In Education' 2021.

Other documents that relate to this policy are: SNS Privacy Policy, SNS Complaints Policy, SNS Speaker Selection Policy, SNS Equal Opportunities Policy, SNS Health & Safety Policy, SNS Disciplinary Policy, SNS Harassment & Bullying Policy, SNS Partnership Policy, SNS Drugs & Alcohol Policy, SNS Smoking Policy.

SNS believes that:

⇒ Children should be included within the categories of people who are valued and should be protected. In accordance with the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child, children should have an equal right to protection as adults, and their particular vulnerability recognised and acknowledged.

⇒ Children and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind

⇒ The welfare of the child/vulnerable adult is paramount

⇒ All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse

- ⇒ All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- ⇒ All staff (paid/unpaid) working for SNS have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns

The Aim

The aim of the SNS Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice:

⇒ Providing children and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of SNS or its affiliates

⇒ Allowing all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

Good Practice Guidelines:

All SNS personnel both voluntary and paid will be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour when working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

SNS's Best Practice Guide:

⇒ We will always work in an open environment e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and not promising to keep secrets

⇒ We will treat all children/vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity

⇒ We will always listen to a child's concerns and disclosure and act on this information accordingly

⇒ We will always put the welfare of each child or vulnerable adult first, before achieving goals

⇒ We recognise that disabled children and those from minority ethnic backgrounds have additional needs with regards to safeguarding, particularly in their ability to communicate. We commit to helping them to overcome these barriers wherever possible.

⇒ We will promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the mental, emotional and physical well-being of children and vulnerable adults during group sessions and protect them from abuse from other participants

⇒ We will endeavour to involve parents/carers/teachers wherever possible (e.g. offering briefings about the content and activities in SNS sessions)

⇒ We will encourage our members of staff to be excellent role models – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people or using offensive language

⇒ We will give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism

⇒ We will respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children or vulnerable adults in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures

⇒ We will keep a written record of any safeguarding incident that occurs, along with the details of action taken to deal with the incident using the SNS Safeguarding Reporting Form

⇒ We will ensure that all our staff and volunteers have undergone pre-recruitment checks (detailed below), and have completed a Safeguarding Training Workshop, delivered internally by the DSL, and know the procedures for disclosure. In addition all SNS staff will hold up-to-date Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks

⇒ It is policy to ensure that confidentiality is adhered to at all times unless there are immediate concerns for the safety of a child or vulnerable adult

Types of abuse

The main categories of abuse are listed below, although this is not exhaustive.

Physical abuse – including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, inappropriate sanctions, and poor moving or handling techniques resulting in injury.

Sexual abuse – including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which a child or vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or consented to under pressure.

Emotional abuse – including psychological abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, bullying, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Principles of Intervention

Reasonable, informed and calculated risk-taking play an important part in contributing to the quality of life of both young and old; this is a matter of choice, demonstrating an individual's right of self-determination and autonomy. However, where the health, safety and wellbeing of children or vulnerable adults is seriously threatened as a result of self-neglect or abuse by others, there is a commitment to make every effort to identify, prevent or minimise such risks.

It is not the role of SNS to determine if an individual is at risk or experiencing abuse. The identification, assessment, protection and care of children and vulnerable adults is a multidisciplinary, inter-agency responsibility, which should involve anyone with relevant knowledge or involved in providing support to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals concerned. SNS will work in partnership with the schools and community organisations within which it operates. Where a person appears to be at risk, every reasonable effort will be made by SNS staff to identify the specific problems or dangers and report to the school or community organisation. Where a school or community organisation has signed a contract with SNS, then the responsibility for follow-up of a complaint lies with the school or community organisation once the initial report from SNS has been completed. SNS is committed to full transparency of disclosure and will abide by the 'no secrets' principle outlined in the UK Government's guidance on protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Practice that will be avoided

Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others will be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, whether in a school, community institution or during our Student Leadership Programme, they will only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge at SNS or the school or community group where SNS is conducting a session.

If any of the following occur, we will ensure that they are reported immediately to the DSL and the incident is recorded using the SNS Safeguarding Reporting Form. We will also ensure they are reported to the school or community safeguarding lead. If the incident occurs during our Student Leadership Programme, it will also be reported to the Council when deemed necessary by the DSL.

- ⇒ If we accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult
- ⇒ If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- ⇒ If a child or vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused
- ⇒ If a child or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

Practice Never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned:

- ⇒ Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- ⇒ Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- ⇒ Allow children and vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- ⇒ Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in jest
- ⇒ Reduce a child or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- ⇒ Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to be ignored, unrecorded or not acted upon

Breach of Trust

If a breach of “the position of trust” relationship by a member of Solutions Not Sides occurs (whether a staff member or a volunteer), e.g. usually through a romantic and/or sexual relationship with a child they are responsible for, Solutions Not Sides disciplinary procedure will be triggered, and the offence shall incur the highest level of disciplinary action against the offender.

Equipment at Events:

We will ensure that at all of our events there will be procedures and guidelines in place to ensure that inappropriate photography and filming does not take place. Mobile phones will not be used by staff or volunteers in sessions except for the taking of photographs when permission is given.

Responding to Suspicions or Allegations:

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in SNS in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

The SNS Designated Safeguarding Lead will be available to be contacted at all times during and immediately after a workshop is taking place and during our Student Leadership Programme.

All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for Child Protection and for safeguarding vulnerable adults. If there is any doubt, the incident will be reported by the SNS Designated Safeguarding Lead: it may be just one of a series of other incidents which together cause concern. **That person will then follow up with the school or community organisation's safeguarding lead to ensure that the necessary reports to professional agencies have been made.**

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children's Act 1989 to investigate all Child Protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

SNS will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against an SNS member of staff there may be three types of investigation

- ⇒ A criminal investigation
- ⇒ A Child Protection investigation
- ⇒ A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns

The following action should be taken if there are concerns:

Poor Practice

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, SNS's Designated Safeguarding Lead will deal with it as a misconduct issue
- If the allegation is about poor practice by an SNS member of staff, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to SNS's Designated Safeguarding Lead who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings. Please see SNS's Disciplinary Policy for more details.

Suspected Abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to SNS's Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will take such steps as are considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk and will report to the Chair of the SNS Board of Trustees

- SNS's Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police. If there is a serious breach that leads to an external inquiry, they will also inform the Charities Commission
- SNS will work in partnership with the school or community group safeguarding lead to ensure that the parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- If SNS's Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made directly to SNS's Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and not via the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, as directed by the DSL. This could include some or all of the following people:

- ⇒ SNS's and the school's/community organisation's Designated Safeguarding Leads
- ⇒ SNS's Chairperson
- ⇒ The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- ⇒ The person making the allegation
- ⇒ Social services/police
- ⇒ The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)*
- ⇒ **Seek social services advice on who should approach alleged abuser.*

Information such as the SNS Safeguarding Reporting Form will be stored in a secure place such as a secure server or locked filing cabinet with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure). Please refer to SNS' Privacy Policy for more details.

Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- The SNS Executive Director in consultation with the Chair of the SNS Board of Trustees will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, SNS will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. The welfare of children should always remain paramount
- SNS will consult with professional child protection services and the school about whether the incident should be reported to the Charities Commission, based on the seriousness of the allegation and/or whether or not an external inquiry is instigated
- Any dismissal due to concerns over safeguarding will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service

Support to Deal with the Aftermath of an Accusation or Inquiry

- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association of Counselling Directory may be a useful resource
- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse
- The SNS DSL will be the contact person within the organisation for continuing to liaise with all those involved and keeping them informed of actions being taken by SNS in relation to the situation.

Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, SNS will follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the school or community groups concerned, the social services or the police. This is because other children may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999. SNS will keep records pertaining to safeguarding issues for up to 30 years.

What to do if there are concerns

Responding to suspicion or an allegation of abuse

It is particularly important to respond appropriately if a young person says or indicates that they are being abused. In such incidences, SNS staff and volunteers will:

- ⇒ Stay calm so as not to frighten the young person

- ⇒ Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- ⇒ Listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- ⇒ Do not ask questions, simply record what is said/what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning.
- ⇒ Inform the child that you have to tell other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- ⇒ Safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention, call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a Child Protection issue.
- ⇒ Record all information as soon as possible after the disclosure using the SNS Safeguarding Reporting Form
- ⇒ Report the incident to SNS's Designated Safeguarding Lead
- ⇒ Report the incident to the school or community group concerned and follow up to ensure that the appropriate action has been taken
- ⇒ In the case of the Student Leadership Programme, report the incident to the parent/guardian of the child or professional child services, as deemed appropriate by the DSL

Pre-recruitment Checks for Staff

The following pre-recruitment checks should always be carried out:

Advertising

If any form of advertising is used to recruit staff, whether paid or voluntary, it should reflect the:

- ⇒ Aims of the organisation and where appropriate, the particular programme involved
- ⇒ Responsibilities of the role
- ⇒ Level of experience or qualifications required (e.g. experience of working with children and vulnerable adults is an advantage)

Pre-Application Information

Pre-application information sent to interested or potential applicants should contain;

- ⇒ Job description including roles and responsibilities

⇒ Person specification (e.g. stating qualifications or experience required)

Applications

All applicants for full or part-time positions should provide the following information:

⇒ Name, address and National Insurance Number (to confirm identity and right to work)

⇒ Relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken

⇒ Listing of past career or involvement in education or youth work (to confirm experience and identify any gaps)

Checks and References

Once an applicant has been successful, they will need to fill in an Enhanced DBS check before they can commence work as a staff member and provide two character references about their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults. They will also be required to complete a self-declaration form outlining any concerns they may have about working with children and vulnerable adults. This form will be stored confidentially and will be discussed with them by the DSL to follow up and manage any concerns as deemed appropriate by the DSL. Subsequent requests for an enhanced DBS check will be made every 3 years. If an applicant has no experience of working with children or vulnerable adults, training is strongly recommended.

Enhanced DBS checks are for positions involving certain activities such as teaching children or treating adults and can also be obtained for certain other professions.

In addition to the information provided on a Standard certificate (details of any convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings the applicant has received, that do not qualify for filtering) the Enhanced certificate involves an additional check with the police, who check if any other information is held on file that may be relevant (for instance, information that has not led to a criminal conviction but may indicate a danger to vulnerable groups). The police decide what (if any) additional information will be added to the certificate using the Quality Assurance Framework.

The SNS Contract and Company Handbook state that failure to disclose information or subsequent failure to conform to the Code of Ethics and Conduct will result in disciplinary action and possible exclusion from SNS.

Interview and Induction

It may or may not be appropriate to conduct a formal interview. If it is, it should be carried out according to acceptable protocol and recommendations.

All staff will undergo a formal induction in which:

- ⇒ The expectations, roles and responsibilities of the job are clarified (e.g. through a formal or informal work programme or goal-setting exercise)
- ⇒ Safeguarding procedures are explained and training & support needs established
- ⇒ Staff sign an acknowledgement of agreement with the policies and principles that are set out in the Staff Handbook

Training

Checks are only part of the process to protect children and vulnerable adults from possible abuse. Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice/concerns of possible abuse. All staff with access to vulnerable adults or children will be trained in accordance with this safeguarding policy in order that they are aware of what constitutes good practice, including relevant procedures to be undertaken in the event of incidents, concerns or allegations of abuse.

The SNS safeguarding lead will undertake certified safeguarding training as provided by the NSPCC.

With regards to activities run solely by SNS staff and volunteers, SNS will ensure at least one member of staff is trained in first aid.

Pre-recruitment Checks for Volunteers

Pre-Application Information

Pre-application information will be sent to interested or potential applicants, which should contain;

- Volunteer role description
- Self-declaration form for working with children and vulnerable adults
- Reference form

All applications by volunteers should provide two references confirming their suitability for working with children and vulnerable adults.

Checks and References

Volunteers who are not staff members and are volunteering with us for a short period of time (up to 3 months) will not be in posts of “regulated activity”, i.e. they will not be responsible for or have regular/intensive access to children as defined in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. Therefore, we do not deem it necessary for them to have a DBS check. Please see our Speaker Selection and Management Policy for more information on volunteers who are speakers from outside the UK

Training

Checks are only part of the process to protect children and vulnerable adults from possible abuse. Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own

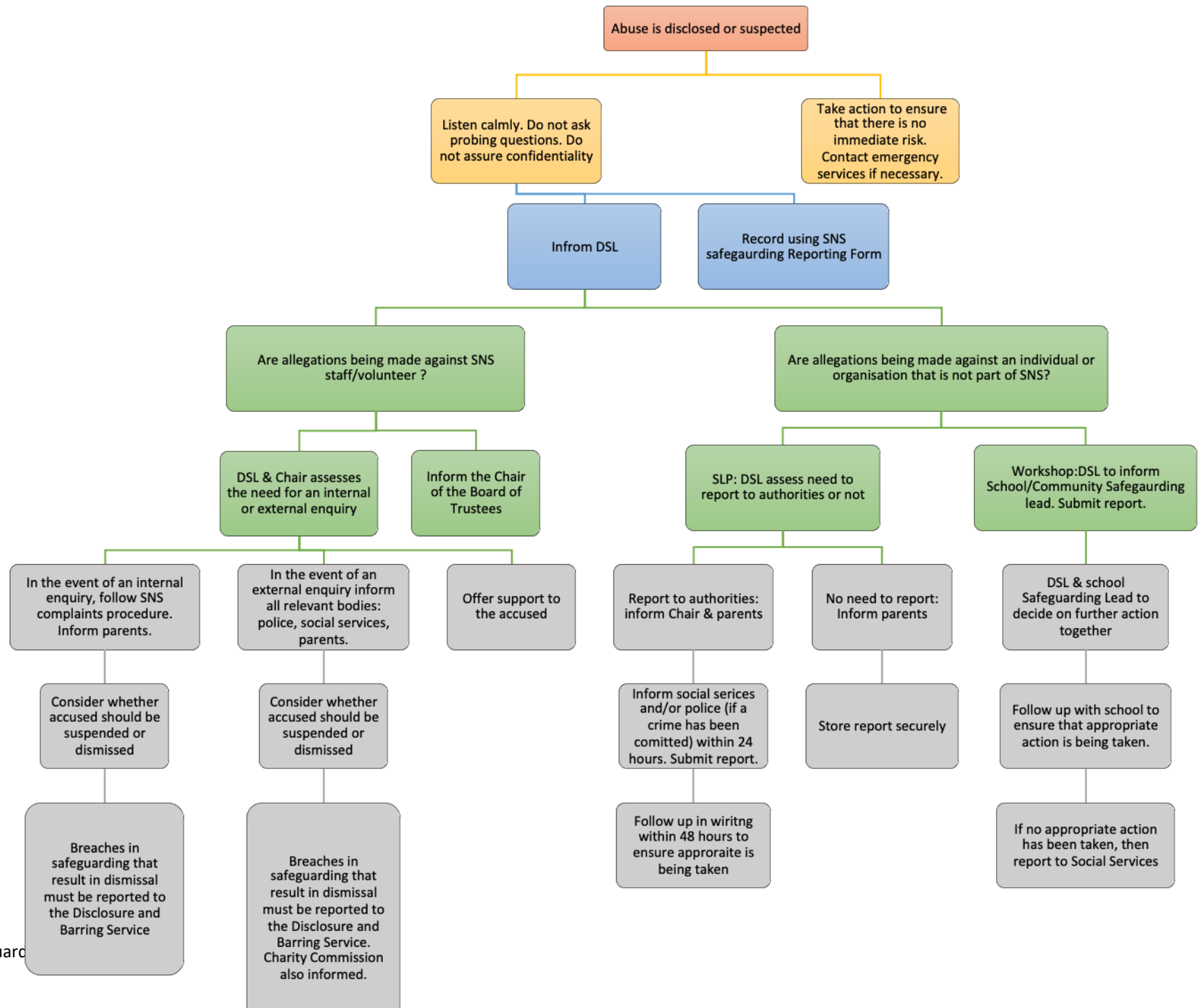
good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice/concerns of possible abuse. All volunteers with access to vulnerable adults or children will receive safeguarding training, delivered by SNS staff.

Appendix 1 – How to respond if you are concerned - Immediate Action

- ⇒ **Act on any concerns** – Tell the SNS Designated Safeguarding Lead and the school/community organisation safeguarding lead
- ⇒ **Make sure the person is not in immediate danger** and take any necessary action – e.g. dial 999.
- ⇒ **Listen** carefully and try not to show shock or disbelief – keep calm
- ⇒ **Remain calm and non-judgemental.**
- ⇒ **Record** the words the person uses.
- ⇒ **Assure** the person that their complaint or allegation will be taken seriously and clarify the bare facts. Summarise your note and repeat it to the person; avoid detailed questioning.
- ⇒ **Record** any bruising or injury, if they are apparent.
- ⇒ **Describe** the size and colour of any bruising and the exact location on the body, along with the dates and time it has been observed.
- ⇒ **Get consent** – explain that you have a duty to report what you have been told, or witnessed, to SNS's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- ⇒ **Inform** SNS's Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the school safeguarding lead immediately.
- ⇒ **Ensure** that the person concerned is not left in an unsafe or distressed state.

DO NOT:

- ⇒ **Do not promise** to keep complete confidentiality – you are legally obliged to pass this information to your Line Manager and/or another safeguarding professional.
- ⇒ **Do not ask probing questions.**
- ⇒ **Do not be judgemental** or jump to conclusions.
- ⇒ **Do not rush the person.**
- ⇒ **Do not start any investigation;** such as attempting to question the alleged perpetrator.
- ⇒ **Do not throw away any interim notes** that have been made.
- ⇒ **Do not contaminate or disturb any evidence.**



Appendix 2 SNS's Child Protection Flow Chart

