



SMDSSG SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

SMDSSG intends that this policy and contained procedures should apply to all staff, the board of trustees, volunteers, sessional workers and anyone else deemed to be working on behalf of SMDSSG.

For the purpose of this policy children are defined as young people under the age of 18.

For the purpose of this policy a vulnerable adult is defined as a person over the age of 18.

“Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”. “Who Decides?” Lord Chancellor’s Department 1997

We want all SMDSSG events to be a safe, inviting, open, inclusive and professional for everyone.

What is Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Safeguarding?

Child and vulnerable adult protection is an important area of safeguarding and refers to the process of protecting specific individual children and vulnerable adults who may be identified as being at risk of suffering harm or who are suffering harm. The word “safeguarding” refers to the process of protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm. This harm may be from accidents, through abuse (see definitions) or from bullying and harassment. It may also cover areas of inclusion and access.

Policy Statement

SMDSSG recognises its responsibility and duty to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults, who take part in the activities and services that it delivers and is committed to the provision of safe environments. SMDSSG believes strongly that all children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion and that this protection should be responsive to their needs and requirements.

SMDSSG is committed to the protection of vulnerable groups and will ensure that through good practice and by following the SMDSSG policy their welfare is paramount.

The aim of the SMDSSG Safeguarding Policy is:

- To provide protection for children and vulnerable adults at SMDSSG events.
- To ensure a systematic organisational approach to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- To provide guidance to staff and volunteers on the procedures that they should follow in the event that they suspect or have reason to believe that a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing harm or be at risk of harm.

This will be done by:

- Following NSPCC recruitment guidelines for THE APPOINTMENT OF all staff, freelance workers and volunteers.
- Whilst also ensuring that DBS checks are carried out.



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- Providing clear written and appropriate information for all staff, including the board of trustees, volunteers and anyone else deemed to be working on behalf of SMDSSG, so they understand the mechanics and practice of safeguarding and child protection.
- Ensuring that all staff, freelance workers, trustees and volunteers evidence that they have attended certified safeguarding training, or undergo safeguarding training, which must be reviewed every three years.
- Taking all reasonable steps, such as risk assessments, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults who participate in SMDSSG events or groups.
- Ensuring that any work that involves children and vulnerable adults is carefully planned, staffed and monitored and that all appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.
- Checking and monitoring equipment used by children and vulnerable adults and staff in accordance with health and safety guidance.
- Seeking parental consent for involvement in activities including online sessions and, where appropriate, the consent of the children and vulnerable adults.
- When appropriate, we will gather information about participants' medical and dietary needs, allergies and specific developmental requirements, as required to ensure safety and as outlined in each event's risk assessment.
- We are developing appropriate audience specific information about SMDSSG child protection and safeguarding policies to share with children, vulnerable adults and their families.
- Working and sharing information with relevant external agencies, families and carers when appropriate or necessary, once permission is gained from the parent/carer, young person.
- Reviewing this policy annually or as and when required by changes in the law.

Procedures on Responding to Disclosures & Concerns

SMDSSG intends that this policy and contained procedures should apply to all staff and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students and anyone else deemed to be working on behalf of SMDSSG.

SMDSSG aims to ensure that those children and vulnerable adults who connect with the organisation receive the necessary protection and support to keep them safe from harm

SMDSSG believes that an essential area of keeping children and vulnerable adults safe is knowing how to respond in the event of a disclosure or in situations where you have reasons to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult may be suffering harm or in danger of being harmed.

It is your duty to make yourself familiar with the following definitions and procedures and to ensure that you know the actions to be taken in the event of a concern.

Staff Code of Conduct

The following code of conduct must be followed by all staff, trustees, volunteers and anyone representing SMDSSG

- Staff* should treat everyone, including all children and vulnerable adults equally, with respect and dignity
- Staff should always put the physical and emotional welfare of each participant first, before achieving goals
- Staff should not misuse their power over children and vulnerable adults
- Physical contact should be minimal, time limited and age appropriate
- Staff should not offer to transport to children or vulnerable adults unaccompanied
- Staff should not engage in personal communication with children and vulnerable adults, such as email or telephone or through social networking sites
- Staff should aim to protect young people online, no staff must connect with children, or vulnerable adults on social media from their personal accounts. All social media activity for projects, events and exhibitions will be directed through official accounts
- Create a protective and safe environment both in person and remotely
- Staff should work in partnership with children, young people and vulnerable adults to empower them in appropriate decision-making –promoting the voice of the child/young person
- Staff should give CYP enthusiastic and constructive feedback, rather than negative criticism
- Staff will not be left alone with a single child/vulnerable adult including the use of remote means eg Zoom and will always maintain professional behaviour. Management arrangements should be designed to avoid this situation and all staff carry a responsibility for vigilance in this regard, other than in the case of an emergency
- Staff should provide an atmosphere that is conducive to positive experiences for our participants

*Throughout staff = staff and volunteers

Recognising Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children and vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children and vulnerable adults. These may include interactions that are beyond the



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person's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the person participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children, young people and vulnerable to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children and vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or adult, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children and vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children and vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and or psychological needs of a child or adult, likely to result in the impairment of the person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to the basic emotional needs of a child or adult.

Radicalisation

SMDSSG recognises the positive contribution it can make towards protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from radicalisation to violent extremism. SMDSSG will continue to empower children and vulnerable adults to create communities that are resilient to extremism and support the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults who may be vulnerable to being drawn into violent extremism or crime. It will also continue to promote the development of spaces for free debate where shared values can be reinforced. Radicalisation is the process by which individuals come to support terrorism or violent extremism. There is no typical profile for a person likely to become involved in extremism, or for a person who moves to adopt violence in support of their ideology. Although several possible behavioural indicators are listed below, staff should use their professional judgement and discuss with other colleagues if they have any concerns:

- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession of violent extremist literature including electronic material accessed via the internet and communication such as e-mail and text messages
- Behavioural changes
- The expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means



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- Association with known extremists
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology. If staff have any significant concerns about a person beginning to support terrorism and/or violent extremism, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Female genital mutilation

It is illegal in the UK to subject a child to female genital mutilation (FGM) or to take a child abroad or aid or abet someone to take a child out of the country to undergo the procedure – Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Despite the harm it causes, FGM practising communities consider it acceptable to protect their cultural identity. The age at which girls are subject to FGM varies greatly from shortly after birth to any time up to adulthood. The average age is thought to be 6 - 12 years but it is also thought that the age at which girls are mutilated is dropping. A child/young person may disclose that she is at risk of FGM, has suffered FGM or that she has a sister or family member who is at risk of mutilation. Staff should be alert to the following indicators:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practise FGM
- A child/young person may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
- A child/young person may confide that she or a sister or family member is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion
- A child/young person may request help from a teacher or another adult
- Any girl/young woman born to a woman who has suffered FGM or has a sister or relative who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at potential risk

Any information or concern about a child/young person or member of her family being at risk of FGM must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as matter of urgency. This may be treated as an immediate child protection referral to the child/young person's home borough.

(Developed from Working Together to Safeguard Children, young people and vulnerable adults 2016)

Responding to Disclosures

What is a Disclosure?

A disclosure is a circumstance in which a child or vulnerable adult may deliberately or inadvertently present information that indicates that themselves or another individual may be suffering from harm or may be in danger of suffering from harm.

What to Do If A Child or Vulnerable Adult Discloses Information

- Ensure that the child or vulnerable adult is given the opportunity to talk to you in a safe and confidential environment.
- Do make sure that another member of staff is aware of where you are and that you are in an area visible to others or, if possible, have another member of staff present.
- In the case of somebody inadvertently disclosing information that suggests that they are at risk of harm or are being harmed, or that somebody else may be at risk of harm or are being harmed then it is important to **ensure that the person disclosing is aware that this information will need to be passed on to the relevant authority or contact.**
- Listen to the child or vulnerable adult without interruption. You can nod or make verbal affirmation that you have heard what the person disclosing is saying.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation write down what was said using the child or vulnerable adult's own words. It is very important not to interpret what the person disclosing is saying. Note the date, time, and any names that were mentioned and who you have passed the information on to. Sign and date it.
- Write down the facts as you know them using the Concern Sheet (appendix 1)
- Make it clear that you can offer support BUT do not promise to keep it secret and make it clear that you must pass the information on. It is useful to do this as early in the conversation as possible so that the person disclosing is aware of the situation and does not feel that their trust has been broken.
- Accept at face value what you are told.

What Not to Do

- You must NEVER speak to other people/members of staff about the issue/disclosure/concern apart from the named Safeguarding lead (Tina Kirwin-McGinley -07427482168) or persons called on the above numbers (Childline and NSPCC). Speaking about the case to others is a breach of confidentiality and could also result in a case being dropped by court later, therefore putting the person at risk.
- Do not look shocked by what you are told. Disclosures can at times be unpleasant and emotionally upsetting but it is important that you do not convey this to the person disclosing.
- Do not ask leading questions, ensure that you go at the pace of the child, young person or vulnerable adult, and ask them to rephrase for further clarification.
- Do not pass judgement on what is said but reassure child or vulnerable adult that they 'have done the right thing'.
- You must not act on the disclosure yourself and should refer the information to the relevant person on the list below.
- Do not approach the suspected abuser yourself.



Allegations of Abuse

Allegations against Staff

Should a child or vulnerable adult accuse a member of staff or any other individual working with SMDSSG, including freelancers, volunteers and members of the Board of trustees of abuse or any other kind of threatening or harmful behaviour, it is imperative that you report this immediately to your named child protection/safeguarding officer who will then take the next appropriate action.

Allegations Against Another Child or Vulnerable Adult

In the event that a complaint is made against another child or vulnerable adult then you should report this to your named Safeguarding lead who will decide whether this is a child protection issue or constitutes bullying and will then decide the next action to be taken.

What to Do If a Child or Vulnerable Adult Makes an Allegation

- Ensure that the child or vulnerable adult is given the opportunity to talk to you in a safe and confidential environment with a parent/carer present if appropriate.
- Do make sure that another member of staff is aware of where you are and that you are in an area visible to others or if possible, have another member of staff present.
- It is important to ensure that the person making the allegation is aware that this information will need to be passed on to the relevant authority or contact.
- Listen to the child or vulnerable adult without interruption. You can nod or make verbal affirmation that you have heard what the person disclosing is saying.
- As soon as possible after the allegation has been made write down what was said using the child or vulnerable adult's own words. It is very important not to interpret what the person disclosing is saying. Note the date, time, and any names that were mentioned and who you have passed the information onto. Sign and date your record.
- Write down the facts as you know them using the **Concern Sheet (appendix 1)**
- Make it clear that you can offer support BUT do not promise to keep it secret and make it clear that you must pass the information on. It is useful to do this as early in the conversation as possible so that the person disclosing is aware of the situation and does not feel that their trust has been broken.
- Accept at face value what you are told.

What Not to Do

- You must NEVER speak to other people/members of staff about the issue or concern apart from the named Safeguarding lead, or persons called on the above numbers. Speaking about the case to others is a breach of confidentiality and could also result in a case being dropped by court later, therefore putting the child at risk.
- Do not look shocked by what you are told.
- Do not ask leading questions, ensure that you go at the pace of the child or vulnerable adult, and ask them to rephrase for further clarification.
- Do not pass judgement on what is said but reassure child, young person, or vulnerable adult that they 'have done the right thing' by telling you
- You must not act on the allegation yourself and should refer the information to the relevant person on the list below



Who to Contact In The Event of Any Concerns

- You **MUST** always refer any concern, **in confidence**, to SMDSSG child protection/safeguarding officer (**Tina Kirwin-McGinley, contact:07427482168**), if available.
- If the named officers are not contactable call the Manchester City Council Contact Service (0161 234 5001).
- You can also ring the NSPCC for advice if the GMAC Safeguarding lead are not contactable. Call 0808 800 5000 for the NSPCC.
- In an emergency, call 999 and ask to speak to the Police.
- You must **NEVER** investigate yourself.

Whistleblowing

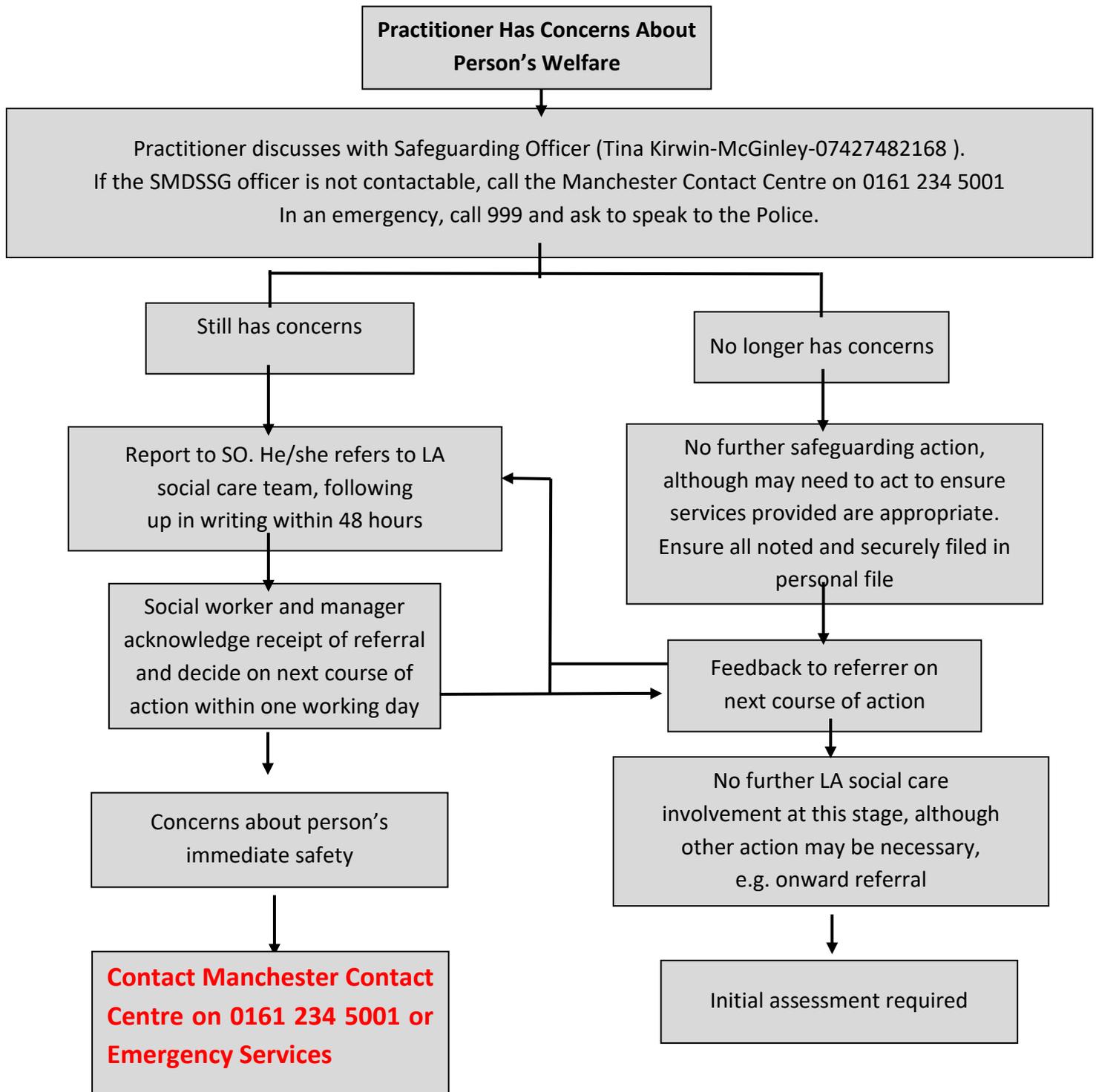
Should you have concerns about a colleague, or somebody associated with the activities of SMDSSG about safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults then this should be reported as soon as possible to the MCC below.

Any employee or volunteer raising concerns should do so with confidence and the full knowledge that they will not be victimised, discriminated against, or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

**Should you have any concerns then please contact Manchester Contact Centre on
0161 234 5001**



What to do if you are worried that a child/adult is being abused



Information on Completing the Safeguarding Concern Sheet

- To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:
- Completed concern sheet, (appendix 1)
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The individual's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- All records should be kept in a person's confidential file (if kept on public drives, files should be locked with a password) and accessible only to the relevant staff members and authorities.
- Information should only be shared on a need to know basis

Consent to share information should be sought although is not necessary when the welfare of the young person or adult is at risk.

Trustees Obligations in Reporting Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission

It is the trustees' responsibility to ensure that serious incidents are reported to the Commission in accordance with its guidance and that safeguarding allegations, complaints or incidents are reported to other agencies in accordance with the law and best practice. In the context of safeguarding concerns, The Commission considers the regulatory priority risk issues to be:

- concerns about serious harm to, and the abuse of, children or adults in connection with a charity
- the failure by a charity that works with or has regular contact with children or adults at risk to have adequate and effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place

We will give the highest priority to any case where there is a live risk of harm.

In practice, the Commission is likely to become involved in one-to-one engagement with charities:

- if there is a concern that someone who is currently acting as a trustee, employee or is otherwise involved in the charity, is unsuitable to hold that position
- when there are concerns or allegations that a child or adult at risk has been abused or mistreated, and this is in connection with the activities of a charity or someone closely involved in a charity
- when there is serious cause for concern because policies and procedures are not in place, or are inadequate, to protect children or adults at risk who may come into contact with the charity
- where there are serious concerns that a charity's safeguarding policies are not being complied with or its practices are placing children or adults at risk of harm

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Tina Kirwin-McGinley Contact 07427482168



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Appendix 1 SAFEGUARDING CONCERN SHEET

Name of young person/adult _____

Date of Birth _____ Age _____

Parent/ Guardian's name _____

Home address _____

Special circumstances (language barrier, context disclosure took place etc)

Today's date, time and location of disclosure _____

Information provided (include dates, times, names, any other details provided)

And description of evidence of any injury observed on the child or adult.

Action Taken (include if parents have been contacted, other persons consulted).

Name of staff who person disclosed information to: _____

Name of person who filled out form (should be the same as above)

Signed _____

Checklist:

- Have you clearly identified what happened, who was involved, where and when it happened?
- Have you spoken to the named person at SMDSSG – Tina Kirwin-McGinley – contact: 07427482168



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This Policy has been reviewed and revised by Bernadette Brooks and Tina Kirwin-McGinley and agreed by the SDMDSSG Board of trustees on September 1 2020

Date for next review September 2021.....