

# Supporting callers during a potential safeguarding contact



Record the call as a safeguarding contact in the eLog and debrief to your Leader

## Talking to the caller about safeguarding

At an appropriate time during the call, make the caller aware that what they are telling you concerns you any why. Be clear and honest and use sensitive language.

Make it clear to the caller that if they provide any **identifiable information** we may need to act on their behalf if they later tell us they or someone else is at risk of being harmed. Explain that when identifiable information has not been shared we offer a confidential service and that they can talk about anything.

### Support caller as usual.

Consider offering a call back but remember to flag **identifiable information** under our confidentiality guidelines.

Is this a **serious harm situation**?

No

Yes

Is the person at risk of serious harm a child or **vulnerable adult**?

No

Yes

This is now a safeguarding concern. Follow procedures below.

Vulnerable adult

Teenager (13-17)

Child (under 13)

Can they make their own decision? Assess using **four criteria**.

No

Yes

Do they want to take their own action?

No

Yes

Yes

If the caller is unable to make their own decisions about keeping themselves safe, either because they are too young (under 13), too immature (if teenager 13-17) or as a teenager or vulnerable adult they do not meet the **four criteria** check, we seek to actively encourage them to accept our help.

**A** Caller can make their own decision & does want to take their own action.

Explore with the caller in some detail what they would like to do and how they can best do this for themselves. For example, who they will contact and when?

**Debrief** to your Leader and record on eLog.

**B** Caller can make their own decision but needs support to take action.

Explore with the caller what they would like to do and explain that you will need to liaise with your shift Leader if they are asking for our help.

Continue to support the caller as usual. Consider offering follow up and remind caller about identifiable information. Remind caller that some identifiable information will be needed for us to take any action on their behalf.

**If urgent** raise concern with your Leader immediately and record on eLog including safeguarding concern form after agreed action has been taken.

**If non urgent** debrief your Leader and record on eLog including safeguarding concern form.

**C** Caller can make their own decision and does not want to take their own action.

Actively encourage the caller to consider different options available to them.

Continue to support the caller as usual.

**Debrief** to your Leader and record on eLog.

**D** Caller cannot make their own decision and does not want to take action.

Explain to the caller that you feel they/the person at risk is in a vulnerable situation and not able to make this decision and so you will need to raise your concerns internally.

If identifiable information is available, we may take action to prevent further harm.

A child under 13 may agree to us taking action to report a situation of harm relating to them. They can be part of the conversation and we can discuss their wishes but we cannot promise not to report the concerns or to keep the information within Samaritans.

**If urgent** raise concerns with your Leader immediately and record on eLog including safeguarding concern form after agreed action has been taken.

**If non urgent** debrief your Leader and record on eLog including safeguarding concern form.

## What is identifiable information?

In emergency situations, we need to be able to provide a specific location. A phone number is not sufficient.

A name and number (mobile or landline) may be sufficiently identifiable for non-urgent situations.

## What is a harm situation?

- A child or vulnerable adult disclosing that they have a definite plan to kill themselves.
- A child or vulnerable adult disclosing they are being abused or divulging historic abuse.
- A caller disclosing that they are abusing a child or vulnerable adult
- Information suggesting organisational abuse.
- Risk of serious harm, abuse or death cause by another person.

## Vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is someone with physical or mental health needs (disability or illness) who is currently or has recently been under the care of health or social services.

If in doubt, err on the side of caution. If the caller is not currently under the care of statutory services, but you feel they meet the criteria for the definition of vulnerable adult (physical or mental health needs), proceed under the safeguarding procedures.

## Four criteria

There are four criteria for assessing if a vulnerable adult or teenager is able to make their own decision:

- 1 Can they understand information given to them?
- 2 Can they retain that information long enough to make a decision?
- 3 Can they weigh up the information available to make the decision?
- 4 Can they communicate their decision?

Use your judgement based on how the caller is presenting in the 'here and now' and in the context of Samaritans' self-determination policy.

**SAMARITANS**

Leaders can contact Safeguarding Officers, who are available for additional support and guidance as needed.