

## **SAFEGUARDING: a one-page guide**

**If someone asks “Is this confidential?” then make the following points:**

“Everything is confidential within Samaritans. There’s only one exception – if it turns out that you’re at risk of harm, or someone else is. In that one case we might have to try and get help.”

“But even then, we can’t do anything unless you choose to tell me who and where you are. Because this is anonymous - I can’t see your phone number and I don’t know where you are - and we never trace calls.”

**If it becomes clear that someone is at serious risk of harm (abuse or suicide):**

**Say or repeat:** “What you’re saying concerns me. It sounds like you are *[or someone is]* at risk of harm. We offer an anonymous service and we can talk about anything. But if you give us a way of identifying you, then we might have to use that information to get help.”

**Is the caller 13+ and apparently able to make clear decisions?** Then work with them, exploring options for taking action. They are free to decide for themselves to act or not to act. *If they don’t need our support to act, then this is not a safeguarding concern.* If they say they do need our support to act, we’ll need to get some identifying information (see below).

**Is the caller under 13 or struggling to make decisions?** Try to get some identifying information (see below). *If you don’t get it, then this is not a safeguarding situation, but you could offer a follow-up call.* If you DO get identifying information, then say “What you have said does worry me. It sounds as though you’re at risk, and you’re struggling to know what to do about it. You’ve told me who you are / where you are / how to contact you, and we may need to use that information to get help. I’m going to talk with a colleague, and we’ll decide what to do. At the moment I can’t promise that we won’t report this, but we’ll keep you fully informed.”

**If you do have a safeguarding concern (and you have identifying information) then call the Leader.** You can leave this until later if the situation is not urgent, but err on the side of caution. The Leader can contact the Safeguarding Officers on **0203 874 9192** for more help if needed.

Obviously, say everything with clarity, kindness and sensitivity, as part of the larger conversation. Afterwards, record your contact on eLog as a safeguarding concern if appropriate, and speak to the Leader for the debrief as usual.

**NB What is identifying information? More than a phone number!**

**In an urgent situation,** we need a **specific location** and preferably a name & number.

**In a non-urgent situation,** we need a **name and an address or other specific location** (for example the name of a school, care home, prison or university, plus the town) and preferably a phone number.

**In both cases, try to get as much background information as you can** – names, nature of the harm, frequency, agencies involved – and what the caller wishes.