

APPENDIX 16: HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

While statutory authorities generally prefer that concerns of abuse be reported by individuals designated with safeguarding responsibilities within an organisation, anybody can make a referral.

If you decide to make a referral you should do so as soon as possible with as much information as you can safely gather. Do not delay making a referral if you do not have all the information you might need.

Information you can gather:

- Relevant details of the person you're concerned about.
- Your involvement with the person(s) you're concerned about.
- The nature of the concern, expressed in a clear and concise way.
- If there is an alleged perpetrator (someone accused of being responsible for the abuse or harm), any identifiable information including their name, known location or employment details.
- Whether anyone has spoken to the person, family members or others about the concern.
- Details of other services that are already involved with the person (if known).

Once you have reported the concern, they will decide if the referral meets their criteria to act. You should be informed within 48 hours. You must follow up if you are not informed within 48 hours.

Where the concern is about a child and someone in connection with your organisation is accused of causing the harm or abuse, reporting will involve speaking to your local authority designated officer (LADO). Every local authority has either one person or a whole team in this role. They are expected to give advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisation, liaise with the police and other agencies, and monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible. They also have responsibilities to make sure the process is thorough and fair.

Not sure where to report concerns about a child? Visit the [gov.uk postcode finder](#) to find your local authority safeguarding team.

Concerned that a crime has been committed? Follow the this [guidance on criminal incidents](#) on how charities can report crimes to the police. (pdf from the Charity Commission). Concerns can be reported directly on the [Charity Commission](#) website.

Who may get involved?

Social services. Local authorities are the lead organisation for safeguarding children and adults. They have a legal duty to follow up on any complaint or concern about harm or abuse.

Police. The police will take the lead for investigations where criminal offences are suspected. In serious cases, the police can take a child away for 72 hours to keep the child safe. This is called police protection.

NHS bodies, mental health services or private hospitals. Health organisations take the lead when a person needs help or support connected to their physical or mental health, or if a person was harmed in a health setting.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). A local authority led organisation which brings these organisations together to manage concerns. This is the first point of contact for any referrals to the local authority. Contact details can be found on the designated local authority's website.