Best Foot Forward – Safeguarding Adults Procedures

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Introduction

BEST FOOT FORWARD supports adults to participate safely in education and mentoring. These procedures apply to adults aged 18 and over in England across home, school, community and online delivery, and to employees, self-employed practitioners, contractors and volunteers. Read with the Safeguarding Adults Policy, Governance Summary, Professional Boundaries, Domestic Abuse, Whistleblowing, Data Protection/SAR and retention procedures. Under the Care Act 2014, safeguarding duties concern an adult with care and support needs who is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and, because of those needs, cannot protect themselves. Needs need not be eligible, funded or already assessed. The local authority decides whether a section 42 enquiry is required; BEST FOOT FORWARD raises concerns without waiting for proof. Adults outside that threshold still receive appropriate safety support and signposting.

Section 1 explains how anyone can report. Section 2 describes the safeguarding lead's response. Read the flowcharts with the detailed steps; record the adult's wishes and decisions throughout. For under-18s use child safeguarding procedures, coordinating transition before the eighteenth birthday where appropriate. Cross-border concerns require advice from the relevant authority; do not apply blanket assumptions about consent in other nations.

Glossary

Key terms for these England procedures are explained below. Support informed choices, accessible communication and appropriate advice; do not label all disabled adults or staff as lacking capacity.

Adult	**A person aged 18 or over.**
Adult at risk (England)	An adult with care and support needs, experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and unable to protect themselves because of those needs.
Abuse and neglect	May include physical, sexual, psychological, financial, domestic, discriminatory or organisational abuse; modern slavery, neglect and self-neglect. Consider context and risk.
Case-coordination group	A proportionate group convened where needed with competent, unimplicated participants and suitable independent advice; not a guaranteed standing BEST FOOT FORWARD board.

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Harm	Damage done to a person's well-being.
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs are used as a one point of contact/safeguarding referrals in some areas. Where they exist, a referral to MASH benefits from the information held by and the expertise of various agencies, e.g. Local Authority, Police and Health.
Mental capacity	Decision- and time-specific ability to understand, retain, use/weigh relevant information and communicate a decision. Presume capacity and provide support; apply the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
Safeguarding	Work to prevent and stop abuse and neglect.
Safeguarding Adult Team	A team set up to manage the safeguarding of adults at risk within an organisation, or more commonly across a Local Authority district.
Safeguarding Adults Board (England)	Statutory local partnership coordinating adult safeguarding; it is separate from BEST FOOT FORWARD's internal governance.
PiPoT	People in positions of trust: local procedures for allegations or risks linked to people working with adults with care and support needs.
Consent and autonomy	Seek informed wishes and consent where appropriate. A justified lawful basis may permit sharing without consent; record reasons and involve the adult where safe.

Section 1: Reporting Concerns (For everyone)

Reporting Concerns About Yourself

If there is immediate danger or urgent medical need, call 999. Contact Bethany Russell, DSL, or Andrew Russell, Deputy DSL, using the details in Further Information and Useful Contacts; another staff member can help you report.

For concerns about either CEO or their handling of concerns, use Chris Tapley only where independent and available, or contact local adult safeguarding/police directly. Their close relationship is not independent scrutiny of each other. You do not need permission or to tell the person concerned first.

Tell us what you want to happen and a safe way to contact you. You may choose a trusted supporter, provided their involvement is safe and appropriate. We can help you access advocacy; a relative is not automatically authorised to decide for you.

If BEST FOOT FORWARD's response is inadequate, contact the relevant local authority or use the Whistleblowing/Complaints route. Appendix 2 lists support services. We will explain actions, respect your choices where lawful and work with you to reduce risk.

Reporting Concerns About Others (Flowchart 1)

BEST FOOT FORWARD

Concern or disclosure
Take it seriously. You do not need to prove abuse.

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Immediate danger or urgent medical need?
YES: call 999 and take protective action. NO: report promptly; use 101 for non-emergency police advice where appropriate.

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Adult's wishes and safe communication
If safe, ask what they want. Explain sharing and confidentiality limits; do not investigate or confront.

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Tell an unimplicated safeguarding lead
Bethany: 07394 950803. Andrew: 07538 719783. Leadership concern: independent adviser if suitable, or adult safeguarding/police directly.

↓

Record and follow up
Learner: CPOMS. Workforce: restricted record route. Preserve necessary evidence; no child sexual imagery. Do not delay reporting to complete a form.

Reporting Concerns About Others

You may be concerned about harm to another person because of something you have seen or heard, information you have been told by others or because someone has confided in you about things that are happening or have happened to them.

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Report concerns promptly to the DSL/deputy, with necessary protective action. Do not wait for proof, a completed form or a scheduled meeting. If no lead is available and delay would risk harm, contact statutory services directly and document the action.
If either CEO is implicated or conflicted, use an independent external route: Chris Tapley where suitable and unconflicted, or adult safeguarding/police directly. If Chris is implicated, unavailable or not independent, use statutory services; no internal approval is required.
If you are concerned about harm being caused to someone else, please follow the guidance below.

- It is not your responsibility to prove or decide whether an adult has been harmed or abused. It is, however, everyone's responsibility to respond to and report concerns they have.
- If someone needs immediate medical attention, call an ambulance on 999.

Call 999 for immediate danger, a crime in progress or urgent medical need. For suspected non-emergency crime, discuss safe reporting and use 101 or the appropriate police online route; a past allegation does not automatically require an emergency call.
Where safe, ask the adult what they want and explain necessary sharing and its limits. Agree a safe contact method; avoid alerting someone who may cause harm. Do not confront them or investigate. Respect a capacitous refusal unless a justified legal or public-interest reason requires action, and record the reasons.
Remember not to confront the person thought to be causing the harm.

Responding to a Direct Disclosure

If an adult indicates that they are being harmed or abused, or information is received which gives rise to concern, the person receiving the information should:

- Take it seriously.
- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said, allowing the adult to continue at their own pace,
- Be sensitive.
- Keep questions to a minimum; only ask questions if you need to identify/ clarify what the person is telling you.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information.
- Ask them what they would like to happen next.
- Explain what you would like to do next.
- Explain who needs information, why, and what cannot be kept confidential; do not promise secrecy or automatic family notification.
- Seek informed consent for external sharing where appropriate. If consent is refused or capacity is uncertain, seek DSL/statutory advice; emergency action or justified sharing may still be necessary. Record consent, refusal and reasons.
- Arrange how you/the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, can contact them safely.
- Help them access appropriate advice, advocacy or support (Appendix 2); do not substitute counselling or a joint restorative meeting for safeguarding.
- Act swiftly to report and carry out any relevant actions.
- Record promptly in the adult's own words, including dates, context, wishes, actions and who was informed. Do not make factual findings from an untested allegation.

It is important not to:

- Dismiss or ignore the concern.
- Panic or allow shock or distaste to show.
- Make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Make assumptions or speculate.
- Come to your own conclusions.
- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Promise to keep the information secret.
- Make promises that cannot be kept.
- Investigate the case.
- Confront the person thought to be causing harm.
- Take sole responsibility.
- Tell everyone.

Record Keeping

Learner safeguarding concerns are recorded in CPOMS with appropriate access restrictions and prompt DSL contact. Staff/adult workforce concerns go through the designated restricted safeguarding/HR record route. Use Appendix 1 only where needed and transfer it securely to the authorised unimplicated handler. Do not send sensitive forms to a general inbox without an approved secure arrangement; lack of system access must not delay reporting.

Describe the circumstances in which the concern came about and what action you took/ advice you gave.

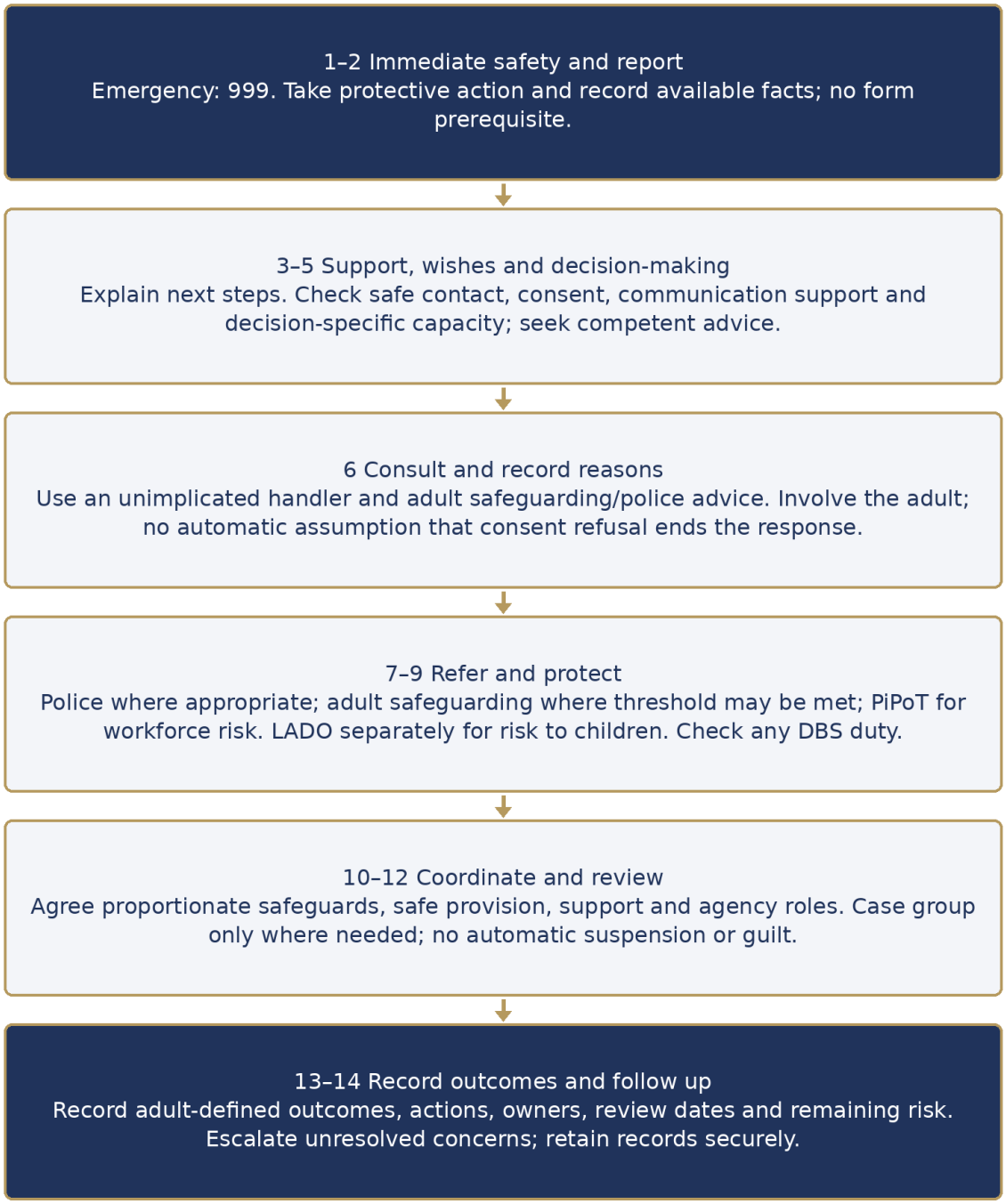
It is important to distinguish between things that are facts, things that have been observed or overheard and opinions, to ensure that information is as accurate as possible.

Record relevant non-image messages or documents through approved secure routes. Preserve potential evidence without investigating; no intimate photography, unauthorised copying or child sexual imagery in forms, email or CPOMS. Follow DSL/police advice on evidence.

Section 2: What happens next? (Safeguarding Lead and organisational response)
Procedure for Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Flowchart 2)

Steps 1–5: Immediate safety, record, support, wishes/capacity and information.
Steps 6–14: Consult, refer, protect, coordinate and review.

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The DSL/deputy or an authorised unimplicated handler records decisions, actions, adult-defined outcomes and review dates. Convene a proportionate case-coordination group only where needed, with suitable independent advice; do not assume a standing group exists. Consultation must not delay urgent referrals.

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Immediate Response

Take necessary immediate protective action, arrange medical help and follow emergency advice. For workforce concerns, use proportionate temporary safeguards under the relevant employment/contractual procedure. Do not automatically suspend, presume guilt or end supervision without a safe handover.

Record the report and clarify essential details. Help the adult or reporter complete Appendix 1 where useful, using accessible communication. Missing fields, inability to write or refusal to sign must not delay action; do not repeatedly question the adult to complete paperwork. Inform, reassure, and advise the person making the report, e.g. what to do/what not to do. Explain what will happen next. Reinforce the need for confidentiality.

Assess immediate risk, the adult's wishes, consent and possible care/support needs. Presume capacity; provide practicable help and accessible information. Capacity is decision- and time-specific, not inferred from diagnosis, disability, silence or an unwise choice. If an impairment/disturbance may affect the ability to understand, retain, use/weigh relevant information or communicate the decision, seek competent assessment/advice. If capacity is lacking, follow best interests and the least restrictive lawful option, including advocacy/legal advice where needed. BEST FOOT FORWARD staff must not invent powers to compel, restrain or deprive liberty.

Explain the process and agreed next steps accessibly, using only a safe contact route. Ask adult social care about advocacy where the adult has substantial difficulty participating and no appropriate supporter. Do not treat a possibly abusive relative or an unverified emergency contact as the adult's decision-maker.

Taking Action

In all situations, you should ensure those in your organisation who can act (within their remit) to prevent further harm have the information to do so. This includes supporting the person at risk. Depending on the situation, you may need to pass information to and work together with other organisations such as the Police and the Local Authority safeguarding team.

Consult adult safeguarding/police as needed, coordinating with an unimplicated internal case group where useful. Record why action is taken or not taken, responsibilities and review dates. The local authority leads statutory enquiries; BEST FOOT FORWARD assists within its competence and agreed role.

DBS: establish whether the activity meets the statutory definition of regulated activity; adult tutoring alone does not establish this. Where BEST FOOT FORWARD removes a person from regulated activity (or would have had they not left) and relevant conduct, the harm test or another statutory condition applies, make the required referral. Complete appropriate enquiries even after departure, coordinate with agencies and seek DBS/legal advice if uncertain; a police/LA referral does not replace a DBS duty.

Contact the police (where the crime took place)
If:

- Immediate danger, serious ongoing risk or a crime in progress: call 999.
- Suspected non-emergency crime: seek advice and use 101/online reporting as appropriate, considering consent, capacity, risk to others and applicable duties.
- Support the adult to report where they wish, or report on their behalf with appropriate authority. Record any justified decision to report without consent.

Raise a concern with the relevant local adult safeguarding service promptly where the Care Act criteria may be met. Do not impose the following as additional mandatory conditions: capacity, employment of the person causing harm or adult consent alone. The authority determines the response. Consider:

- The adult's wishes, informed consent, safety, care/support needs and ability to protect themselves.
- Risk from a person in a position of trust, including employees, self-employed practitioners or volunteers; use local PiPoT arrangements even where no named adult has yet been harmed.
- Risk to other adults or children, coercion, serious harm or crime, statutory duties and any justified public-interest basis for sharing.

If consent is refused, seek advice and document the balance of autonomy and safety. Share without consent only where justified and lawful, explaining this where safe.

If there is no justified basis to override a capacitous refusal, respect it, offer safe support and agree review. Consent to a safeguarding response and the data-protection basis for sharing are related but distinct decisions.

Assess risk to children separately and promptly refer under child safeguarding procedures where indicated, including children affected by domestic abuse. Adult consent is not a precondition for necessary child-protection sharing. LADO applies to concerns about suitability to work with children, not general adult cases.

If uncertain, seek local adult safeguarding advice promptly. An anonymised discussion may assist if no urgent protective disclosure is needed, but it must not delay a necessary referral. Record the advice, who gave it and follow-up.

Use policy and procedures to stop harm within the organisation

For harm linked to BEST FOOT FORWARD, inform an authorised unimplicated handler and use the independent leadership route where required. Consider risks across settings and other roles, without unverified assumptions about guilt.

Agree proportionate interim safeguards, continuity and safe handovers, respecting the rights and needs of the adult and person accused. Employees follow applicable employment procedures; contractors/self-employed practitioners follow their agreements. Do not impose reconciliation, an admission or an apology as a condition of support.

Coordinate with adult safeguarding and police before substantive internal enquiries so their work is not prejudiced. Use LADO separately where there is risk to children. Attend relevant strategy meetings. Police or safeguarding-agency no further action does not itself decide the outcome of BEST FOOT FORWARD's separate risk or contractual process; assess evidence fairly and record reasons.

Nominate an unimplicated contact to consult the adult, give accessible safe updates and review whether agreed safeguards and support are working. Follow agency advice on contact, record desired outcomes and next steps, and avoid unsafe family notification.

Convene a proportionate case-coordination meeting where needed, using competent unimplicated participants and independent advice where appropriate:

- Share information about what has happened with those within Best Foot Forward who have a role in safeguarding the adult.
- share the views of the adult.
- Share necessary statutory-agency advice, including any separate child-safeguarding/LADO action.
- agree on who will coordinate between Best Foot Forward and other agencies.
- decide what actions Best Foot Forward will take.
- Coordinate action by Best Foot Forward.
- Record decisions and actions promptly. Missing records are an evidence gap to address, not proof that an event did or did not occur.

Keep a dated decision/action log with reasons, adult wishes, lawful sharing, owners, deadlines and review. Preserve original evidence and track corrections transparently; restrict access and retain under the schedule, with holds for enquiries, complaints, SARs or litigation.

Review risks, adult-defined outcomes and feedback; record follow-up and escalate unresolved concerns. CEOs/DSL review annually and after significant change.

Further Information and Useful Contacts

Approved policies are available through BEST FOOT FORWARD's secure staff resources; management provides accessible copies as appropriate. Confidential case records are not available to anyone simply because they ask. Contacts below were checked on 14 October 2026; verify current referral routes without delaying urgent action.
Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Bethany Russell — beth@bestfootforward.org.uk / 07394 950803
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:
Andrew Russell — andrew@bestfootforward.org.uk / 07538 719783
Kathie Sweeney, Safeguarding Lead, supports the DSL through agreed delegated duties.
Chris Tapley, External Safeguarding Adviser, may advise where independent and available; use the staff directory or statutory services directly if contact/independence is uncertain.

Local Adult Safeguarding Services (England)
Hampshire: https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/safeguarding
Contact: 0300 555 1386
Out of hours: 0300 555 1373
Southampton: 023 8083 3003; out of hours 023 8023 3344.Southampton reporting form
Portsmouth: professionals must use the online adult safeguarding form.Portsmouth reporting form
BCP: 01202 123 654; out of hours 0300 123 9895.BCP reporting form
Wiltshire: 0300 456 0111; out of hours 0300 456 0100.Wiltshire reporting form
Police
Immediate danger/urgent medical help: 999. Non-emergency police: 101 or the relevant force's online reporting service.
The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is not an emergency, crime-reporting or safeguarding referral service.
Child-related Allegations / LADO
Website:
https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/allegations
Hampshire LADO uses current online forms. Adult workforce concerns use adult safeguarding/PiPoT; contact LADO additionally where suitability to work with children is at issue.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Best Foot Forward Safeguarding Adults Report Form – Manual Completion
Record available facts promptly; do not delay urgent safety action or a referral because a form is incomplete.

Where safe, explain concerns, ask the adult's wishes and explain sharing. Record consent/refusal, communication support, capacity concerns and any justified action without consent. Keep completed forms securely restricted and send only through the approved route.

Section 1 – Details of the adult (you have concerns about)	
Name of adult	
Address	
Date of Birth/ Age	
Contact number	
Emergency contact if known	
Consent to share information with the emergency contact?	
Section 2 – Details of the person completing this form/ Your details	
Name	
Contact phone number(s)	
Email address	
Line manager or alternative contact	
Name of organisation	
Your Role in organisation	
Section 3 – Details of concern	
Describe the concern: what you saw/heard or were told, dates, source, adult's words and immediate actions. Do not take intimate photographs, attach child sexual imagery or gather evidence yourself.	
Section 4 – Chronology: date/time and what happened	What happened
Section 5 – Details of the person thought to be causing harm (if known)	

Name	
Address	
Date of Birth/Age	
Relationship/connection to adult	
Role in organisation	
Do they have contact with other adults at risk in another capacity? E.g. in their work/family/as a volunteer	
Section 6 - Have you discussed your concerns with the adult? What are their views, What have they stated about what they want to happen and what outcomes they want?	
Section 6A – Reasons for not discussing with the adult	
Discussion would put the adult or others at risk. Please explain:	
Capacity concerns for this decision; support provided and advice needed (do not assume incapacity):	
Communication/accessibility needs and support attempted:	
Section 7 – Risk to others	
Are any other adults at risk Yes/No/Not known – delete as appropriate If yes please fill in another form answering questions 1-6	
Are children at risk? Yes / No / Unknown. Follow child safeguarding procedures promptly; do not wait to complete or attach another form.	
Section 8 – What action have you taken if any /agreed with the adult to reduce the risks?	
Actions to reduce risk and maintain safe provision, agreed with the adult where possible; record reasons and review date.	
Section 9: Other agencies contacted	**Who contacted/reference number/contact details/advice gained/action being taken**
Police	
Ambulance	

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Other – please state who and why:
Section 10: Contact with others within Best Foot Forward
Who else has been informed of this issue? – and what was the reason for information sharing

Consultation with Safeguarding Lead	Dates and times

Sent securely to authorised unimplicated handler: date/time, route and confirmation of receipt
Signed:
Date:
OFFICE USE ONLY
Section 11 – Sharing the concerns (To be completed by Safeguarding Lead)
Adult's wishes and outcomes; consent/refusal; capacity/communication support; any lawful reason for sharing without consent.
Adult safeguarding contact: authority, date/time, reference, advice, referral decision and follow-up. Anonymised advice must not delay a necessary protective referral.
Details of any other agencies contacted:
Outcome, remaining risks, adult feedback, action owners and review date; preserve evidence and decision reasons.

Appendix 2 – Sources of Information and Support

Hourglass (formerly Action on Elder Abuse)
Support and advice about the abuse of older people. Use emergency services for immediate danger.
Helpline: 0808 808 8141 (24/7)
https://wearehourglass.org
Ann Craft Trust (ACT)
Adult safeguarding advice and training for practitioners; this is not an emergency response service.
Tel: 0115 951 5400
Email: ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk
www.anncrafttrust.org
Men's Advice Line
Support for male victims of domestic abuse.
0808 801 0327 (Monday–Friday, 10am–5pm)
https://mensadviceline.org.uk
Galop — LGBT+ abuse and violence support (18+)
0800 999 5428 / help@galop.org.uk
https://galop.org.uk — check current opening hours.

Domestic Abuse Helplines (support across the UK)

England	Northern Ireland
Refuge National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247 (24/7) https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk	Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline 0808 802 1414 https://dsahelpline.org
Scotland	Wales
Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline 0800 027 1234 https://www.sdafmh.org.uk	Live Fear Free 0808 8010 800 https://www.gov.wales/live-fear-free

Rape Crisis England & Wales
Rape and sexual abuse support for people aged 16 and over in England and Wales, including any gender. Use 999 for urgent danger.
24/7 Support Line: 0808 500 2222
https://247sexualabusesupport.org.uk
https://rapecrisis.org.uk
Respond
Trauma-informed psychotherapy and advocacy for people with learning disabilities and autistic people affected by abuse or trauma. Check service eligibility and referral arrangements; not an emergency safeguarding route.
Telephone: 020 7383 0700
Email: admin@respond.org.uk
https://respond.org.uk
Stop Hate UK
Hate-crime reporting and support. Its helpline is available only in commissioned areas; check local coverage before signposting.
Stop Hate Line (where commissioned):
Telephone: 0800 138 1625
https://www.stophateuk.org
E mail: talk@stophateuk.org
Check the website for local availability and current accessible contact methods. Police: 101; immediate danger: 999.
Suzy Lamplugh Trust / National Stalking Helpline
Practical stalking advice for victims, supporters and professionals; not an emergency service.
National Stalking Helpline: 0808 802 0300
https://www.suzylamplugh.org — check current opening hours.
Victim Support
Provides practical advice and help, emotional support and reassurance to those who have suffered the effects of a crime.
Tel: 0808 168 9111
https://www.victimsupport.org.uk
Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales
Domestic abuse information and local support resources. Use the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for immediate specialist telephone support, and 999 for emergencies.
www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support

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