

# Safeguarding Crisis Checklist

FARRER & Co

# Safeguarding crises are complex and involve three different types of response

## **Safeguarding**

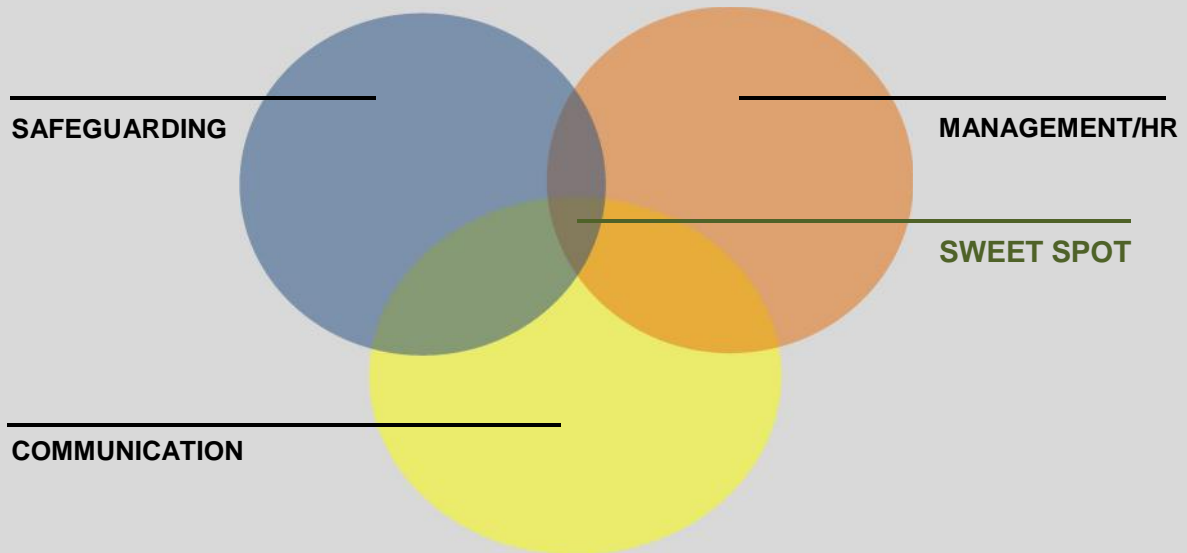
Actions which need to be taken to keep safe any child or adult potentially at risk. This response trumps all others.

## **Management**

The on-going delivery of services to children for whom the staff member was responsible and the HR response to any staff member accused.

## **Communications**

The communication (to the extent possible) of what is happening and the actions the organisation is taking in response to key constituencies (e.g. staff, parents, media).



The most effective management of a safeguarding crisis involves co-ordination of all three.

Whilst the safeguarding response must always come first, simultaneous attention to the other areas of response will create a strong sense of direction and co-ordination, providing the greatest reassurance to stakeholders (the 'sweet spot').

This requires safeguarding leads working in close co-ordination with senior leadership team, the board, HR, legal advisers and internal and external communications teams.

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**SAFEGUARDING CRISIS CHECKLIST**

# Safeguarding

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1. Are any urgent actions needed to safeguard a child or children in an emergency? If so call LADO, Police or other emergency services 999.

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  2. Are there other children who may be at immediate risk in addition to the child or children in the allegation? If so, notify LADO/Police.

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  3. Which agencies need to be informed immediately (e.g. LADO, Police, Childrens Services)?

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  4. Does any other body need to be informed (e.g. Charity Commission or other regulatory body)?

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  5. What are your immediate next steps? Take telephone advice from LADO/Police/Childrens Services and agree your actions.

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6. Will Police be coming on site (e.g. to arrest or conduct a search)? Discuss with LADO and Police the best approach so as not to cause unnecessary anxiety to other children or parents.

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  7. Who do you need to speak to in order to implement the agreed actions? Speak to them and implement actions.

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  8. What do you need to say to the child, his/her parents and the staff member concerned now? Agree this with the LADO, Police or Childrens Services as appropriate.

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  9. Has LADO convened a strategy meeting? If so, decide who attends and what you want to achieve.

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  10. Work with the authorities not against them. But remember the organisation has priorities too, so identify them in advance and be sure to include them in any discussions around future strategy.

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SAFEGUARDING CRISIS CHECKLIST

# Management/HR

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1. Who in the organisation needs to be made aware immediately? Inform them.
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2. Where is the staff member now? Is he/she in contact with children and if not when will the next opportunity for contact be? Agree with LADO and/or Police your next steps. Do not inform or suspend the staff member before reaching that agreement – you could be tipping off.
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3. Whilst Police investigations are underway how do you ensure the staff member's duties are carried out in coming days and how do you explain his/her absence?
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4. If investigation is likely to take some time will you suspend pending outcome of investigations? Discuss with LADO – it is the organisation's decision but LADO's input is valuable.
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5. What information is known about the staff member? Ensure you locate and provide all information to LADO or Police (probably at strategy meeting).

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6. How long will Police investigation and potential criminal prosecution take? If there is already clear evidence of misconduct consider dismissal.

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7. Has crisis shown up any immediate staff training issues (e.g. reporting of allegations or concerns)? If so, organise.

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8. Do you need to bring in any additional external resource to assist?

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9. If Police/LADO do not pursue the matter themselves conduct your own investigation and risk assessment.

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10. Where dismissal of staff member results (or resignation pending outcome of investigation) notify DBS/NCTL or other relevant agencies as appropriate. Never use compromise agreements, agreed resignations or agreed references.

# Communications

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1. Don't wait for a crisis to happen before you act. Develop a safeguarding risk register and crisis management plan. Agree the constituents and roles of your crisis response team, including specialist legal and communications advisors and spokesperson.
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2. Time is of the essence. Agree who is authorised to make final decisions quickly.
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3. Ensure coordination between your legal and communication strategies and get advice early in the process.
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4. What factors govern or limit communications? Check your safeguarding policies and consider any statutory rules about anonymity. Take advice from the LADO, Police and Children's Social Care services.
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5. Don't be in denial – establish the facts and consider the broader context. Are there other issues which can be conflated to suggest a pattern of behaviour?



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6. Be honest and transparent. Do not risk being accused of a cover-up or brushing things under the carpet as this will undermine trust.
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7. Get the tone right by putting yourself in the shoes of the receiving audience. Explain the actions you are taking and demonstrate care and concern for those affected. Have a plan to ensure it will not happen again.
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8. Consider the needs of all your stakeholder audiences and preempt their questions by providing them with sufficient information. Provide appropriate lines of communications for them and be responsive.
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9. Don't procrastinate. Demonstrating that you are managing the situation well will help retain trust. Stakeholders prefer to hear about issues from you rather than from the media.
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10. Don't say anything that you aren't prepared to see in print or online.

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# Farrer & Co Safeguarding Unit

Farrer & Co's Safeguarding Unit guides and advises organisations either working or coming into contact with children. Our approach is to take best practice and apply it to any organisation charged with the occasional or full time care of children.

## How we can help

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Policy and procedure implementation

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Safeguarding/child protection audits, investigations and reviews

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Handling current and historic child protection concerns

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Crisis management

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Regulatory issues such as inspections, investigations and development

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Governance structures for safeguarding/child protection

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Due diligence on mergers and acquisitions

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Tailored training on any of the above

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