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What is safeguarding?

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Receiving a disclosure of abuse, harm or neglect
If a child or adult in need says that they have suffered harm, abuse or neglect, you (the
person receiving the disclosure) should try to involve the safeguarding lead at the
earliest opportunity, following the steps and advice below until it has been reported to
them:

1. Listen to what the individual is saying.
2. Don’t make any promises to keep the information confidential.
3. Call 999 if the individual is at immediate risk of harm or has been harmed, i.e.
serious sexual or physical assault– if the disclosure has occurred during a

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Under no circumstances should anyone other than the Safeguarding Lead investigate
any safeguarding concerns themselves as this can cause further harm.

The three key steps are for someone reporting concerns are to:

1. Produce a written record of the concerns as soon as possible. This should be
written as objectively as possible in describing what has been observed/heard.
2. Report what has been witnessed/disclosed immediately – either in person or by
phone – to the safeguarding lead. If you are at another employer’s premises at
the time you should report this in line with that organisation’s safeguarding
policy/guidance.
3. Send the written record to the safeguarding lead.

For NMC registrants, the Group considers reporting safeguarding issues in line with this
guidance as discharging the individual’s duty under the NMC Code.

Those making reports may not know what happens after their report is submitted but
should receive confirmation that their report has been received.

The safeguarding lead, with appropriate advice where needed, will handle the disclosure
from this point onwards, including referring to appropriate external agencies and
seeking support from local authority services who will lead any next steps. Only at this
level may decisions be taken to breach the confidentiality of the individual concerned
where there are genuine concerns about their safety or the safety of others. This might
include reporting a crime, or suspected crime, to the police as well as to any regulatory
bodies.

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Role specific guidance
Those who work in the following teams or roles do, or are more likely to, provide services
directly to young people and/or adults in need:

x Counselling team – this includes off-payroll workers who are provided with
additional guidance as part of their contracting arrangements with the RCN.
x Welfare, Lamplight and Immigration teams
x Legal Officers and Senior Legal Officers
x

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members or others they are supporting or representing. The below are available at no
cost to employees:

x management support – people managers should ensure that any team member
who has received a disclosure or witnessed abuse or harm is offered the
opportunity to talk about what has happened and to take some time out to
recover. All are encouraged to talk to their manager. Managers are not generally
expected to be experts in this area and will not provide counselling, but if they
know what their team member is dealing with and how they are feeling, they will
be better able to provide support. Managers should provide signposting and can
make referrals for support such as through the EAP or Occupational Health.
x the employee assistance programme (EAP) – this 24/7 confidential service offers
an advice line on a range of matters including legal, money and care issues. The
programme also provides up to six counselling sessions. The EAP is not just for
employees – an employee’s partner and dependent relatives at home can access
it, along with dependent children between the ages of 16 and 23 as well as
younger children in certain circumstances and with consent and supervision.
x Help@Hand – through our current Group Income Protection policy with provider
Unum, employees and some family members can access four key support
services including mental health support.
x approaching a Mental Health First Aider who can listen and guide individuals to
further support.

What other measures are in place?
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
The DBS maintains a list of people barred from working with children and adults in need.
It is a criminal offence for an employer to knowingly allow a barred individual to work in
a regulated activity with children or adults in need.

The Group will apply for enhanced DBS checks, with barred lists check, of all those who
will undertake regulated activity (as defined by DBS and safeguarding legislation) –
whether they are directly employed by the Group or working on its behalf. These will be
undertaken at the outset and repeated every three years. Where the individual refuses
to agree to a DBS check being made, refuses to allow the Group to see the DBS
certificate, or the DBS check results in an outcome unsatisfactory to the Group, the offer

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Reporting and record keeping
As described above, all have a responsibility to report safeguarding issues to the
safeguarding lead. The form to be used is available for staff on the RCN Group intranet.

Where incidents are

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The disclosure of personal information without the consent of the subject will be made
in certain conditions, including for the purposes of the prevention and detection of a
crime, for example where there is a safeguarding concern. The welfare and safety of
adults in need and children comes first but disclosures must be made within the
framework of data protection legislation.

What happens if there are concerns about Group employees or others
relating to safeguarding?
Where there are concerns about any employee or other person working on behalf of the
Group in relation to safeguarding, these should be reported. The Group will support all
those who report such concerns.