



FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY WINCHESTER LIMITED

SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Scope of policy

Friends of the Family supports parents and children to cope with the challenges of family life, providing a range of support services and guidance to overcome the challenges they face. We strive to offer a safe and nurturing environment through therapeutic and holistic support, meeting the unique needs and vulnerabilities of each child or parent.

Keeping children and families safe is everyone’s most important responsibility as an organisation.

Safeguarding is the actions taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, protect them from harm and support them to have the best outcomes. It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and affiliates to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

A **child** is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children’s Act 1989).

The definition of a ‘**vulnerable adult**’ is any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. It also includes people encountering domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking, homelessness, alcohol and substance misuse, and refugees or asylum seekers.

This policy outlines our commitment and reporting requirements to protect both children and vulnerable adults from all forms of harm and abuse. It also gives a brief overview of abuse and our prevention activities. This policy sits alongside our wider safeguarding procedures.

This policy is mandatory for all staff, trustees and volunteers, as well as any partners, suppliers, visitor and other affiliates of Friends of the Family Winchester.

2. Policy Statement

Friends of the Family is committed to promote the welfare of all children and adults and protect them from harm. We will work with children, parents, staff, volunteers and the community to ensure the safety of children, and to give them the very best start in life. We will also work to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults participating in, or volunteering with, our projects.

Friends of the Family commits to:

1. Provide a safe environment and build a 'culture of safety' in which children and adults are protected from abuse and harm.
2. Respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies accordingly.
3. Promote awareness of child safeguarding and child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for staff, volunteers and parents.
4. Empower children and vulnerable adults to know their rights and feel able to speak up, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and feel listened to.
5. Ensure safeguarding processes are regularly reviewed and amended where necessary.

Safeguarding in Friends of the Family is based around four key principles:

Awareness We will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others are aware of the problem of abuse and, in particular, risks to children. Children and their families will be made aware of the standards of behaviour they can expect from our representatives and of how they can raise a concern.

Prevention We will ensure, through awareness raising and good practice, that staff, volunteers and others minimise risks to children and adults. Staff and volunteers will provide a safe and welcoming environment underpinned by a culture of openness, where both children and adults feel secure, able to talk and believe that they will be listened to.

Reporting We will ensure that staff, volunteers and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children or adults.

Responding We will ensure that action is taken to support, safeguard and protect children and those at risk where concerns arise involving harm and abuse.

3. Understanding abuse

Children and adults can come to harm through misconduct, abuse, poor practice or activities that put them at risk due to poor design or delivery.

Children and vulnerable adults can experience abuse regardless of age, gender, disability, race or ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual or gender identity. In general, a child or vulnerable person will be abused by someone they know – a friend, family member, teacher or instructor, or any other person in a position of trust. Opportunistic strangers can also carry out abuse.

The table below outlines the four main types of **child abuse**¹:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Physical abuse Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person in on purpose.</p> <p>It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hitting with hands or objects - slapping and punching - kicking, shaking, and throwing - poisoning, burning and scalding - biting and scratching - breaking bones - drowning - making up symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell | <p>Neglect Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic needs.</p> <p>This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - failure to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter - not properly supervising a child or keeping them safe - not ensuring they receive an education - not providing the nurture and stimulation they need - not giving access to proper health care |
| <p>Emotional abuse Emotional abuse includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - humiliating or constantly criticising a child - threatening or shouting at a child or calling them names - making the child subject of jokes or using sarcasm to hurt a child - blaming and scapegoating - making a child perform degrading acts - not recognising a child’s own individuality or trying to control their lives - pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations - exposing a child to upsetting events or situations (including domestic abuse, drug taking) - failing to promote a child’s social development - not allowing them to have friends - persistently ignoring them - being absent - manipulating a child - never saying anything kind or expressing positive feelings towards a child - never showing any emotions in interactions with a child | <p>Sexual abuse Sexual abuse can happen in person or online, does not necessarily involve a high level of violence, and is abuse even if the child is not aware of what is happening. It includes:</p> <p><i>Contact abuse</i>, where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sexual touching of any part of a child’s body, whether they are clothed or not - using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child - forcing a child to take part in sexual activities - making a child undress or touch someone else - Can also include touching, kissing or oral sex <p><i>Non-contact abuse</i>, where a child is abused without being touched, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exposing or flashing - showing pornography - exposing a child to sexual acts - making them masturbate - forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images/videos - making, viewing or distributing child abuse images/videos - forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online/via a phone <p>This also includes sexual harassment and child sexual exploitation.</p> |

Other forms of abuse include: bullying and cyberbullying; online abuse; grooming; child trafficking; criminal exploitation and gangs; domestic abuse; coercive control; child labour; female genital mutilation. Abuse may come under more than one category.

Many of above examples can also apply to adults. With **vulnerable adults**, it is important to be particularly aware of the risks and prevalence of:²

¹ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>

² <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse>

- Domestic violence – which can be psychological, physical, sexual, emotional or financial, and includes coercive control
- Sexual abuse – which includes any unwanted touching and any sexual activity (contact or non-contact) that is non-consensual. This includes where the person lacks the capacity to consent.
- Financial abuse – which includes theft, fraud, exploitation of a person’s money/assets or preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- Modern slavery – which includes forced labour, human trafficking, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation
- Neglect – including failure to allow access to basic needs, refusal of access to visitors, ignoring or isolating a person, preventing a person from making their own decisions, failure to ensure privacy and dignity
- Self-neglect – including lack of self-care that threatens a person’s health and safety, inability to avoid self-harm, failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs

These lists are not exhaustive.

4. Reporting and handling disclosures

It is the responsibility of all staff members, trustees and volunteers to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, and to report to the appropriate member of staff (outlined below). All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

It is not a member of staff or volunteer’s role to investigate or assess whether or not abuse has occurred, but any person who knows or suspects that a child or vulnerable adult is being or has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, has a duty to report their concern.

If you think a child or adult may be in immediate danger, call 999

What to do if you are concerned abuse is happening

If you have concerns about a child or adult you must report it within 24 hours to your associated **Project Leader**. Alternatively, you can contact the **Designated Safeguarding Officer**. You only need to report to one person.

Remember it is not your responsibility to investigate or decide whether or not abuse has occurred.

What to do if abuse is disclosed to you

If abuse is disclosed to you, the disclosure must be taken seriously.

Use the guidance below to respond to the person who has disclosed to you appropriately. Immediately after, record what the child/adult has told you, using their actual words spoken than an interpretation of what was said as much as possible.

You must report any causes of concern or disclosures of abuse within 24 hours to the associated **Project Leader**. Alternatively, you can contact the **Designated Safeguarding Officer**. You only need to report to one person.

Where an adult discloses to you their own history of experiencing abuse, you need to consider if there are children who may be at risk of continuing abuse. This is a complex area and you will need to tell the adult that you should seek advice from your supervisor/manager.

*For more guidance and contact details see **Annex 1: How to Report***

What to do if the allegation is against a member of staff or volunteer

Allegations against a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported immediately to the [Safeguarding Trustee](#).

If the person concerned is a member of staff, they will be suspended on full pay for the duration of the investigation.

Where a member of staff is dismissed because of misconduct relating to a child or adult, Friends of the Family will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service in line with legal requirements.

Where allegations are made against a member of staff or volunteer, Friends of the Family will:

- Ensure all parents and children know how to complain about a member of staff or volunteer, including any concerns or allegations of abuse
- Follow the guidance of the Hampshire Children's Services (or Adult Services) when responding to any complaint regarding a member of staff or volunteer
- Respond to any disclosure by parents, children or staff that abuse has occurred by first recording details of any such alleged incident
- Refer any such complaint immediately to the Hampshire Children's Services to investigate, and to the Police where necessary
- Co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by Children's Services in conjunction with the Police.

For more guidance and contact details see [Annex 1: How to Report](#)

What next?

You should expect to receive confirmation from the person you reported to that they have received the concern and that they will take it forward. They may provide you with a brief update or need to ask you more questions. However due to confidentiality, they will be unable to share details of the case and follow-up with you. If relevant, you might receive further support and guidance of what it means for your role.

If appropriate, the Project Leader or Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) may discuss your concerns with the child as appropriate to their age and understanding. They may also discuss concerns and actions with the child's parent/carer.

Reporting

The Project Lead will record the information in the safeguarding log, and report it to the DSO. The DSO will ensure the concern is responded to appropriately, report all incidences to the Safeguarding Trustee and seek guidance where necessary. The DSO will hold a safeguarding incident meeting and oversee any referrals to external agencies. The DSO will ensure incidences are reported to the Police and Charity Commission where required.

Referral

The DSO will ensure concerns or incidences are referred to the Hampshire Children's Services or Adult Services, or other agencies, where necessary. Some incidences may be investigated internally as appropriate. Serious cases will be referred directly to the Police.

5. Code of behaviour

Friends of the Family commits to building a safe, open and empowering culture for children and families. Our behaviours are founded on principles of respect, dignity, safety and agency. In all activities provided by Friends of the Family, staff, volunteers and all other representatives must ensure children and vulnerable adults are protected from harm and abuse.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding this code of behaviours, please discuss it with your Project Leader or the DSO.

To go against any of these codes of behaviour is a direct violation of our Safeguarding Policy and may result in disciplinary action.

Staff, volunteers and other representatives should:

- ❖ **Respect** all children and adults and their right to personal privacy
- ❖ **Empower** children and adults to feel that they can speak up, and that their voice matters
- ❖ **Listen and support** all children and adults within the scope of your role
- ❖ **Accept** others who may be different to you
- ❖ **Plan** activities with children to have more than one adult present. Where this is not possible all activities should be in an appropriate public space and pre-agreed with the Project Leader and parent
- ❖ **Inform** your colleague or Project Leader where you are and what you are doing when you are working with children. If plans have to change, you should inform them as soon as possible.
- ❖ **Assess risks** in every element of any project or activity that involves children or vulnerable adults (including online)
- ❖ **Support** all children according to their needs, do not show favouritism
- ❖ **Encourage** feedback from children and adults and support them to share any concerns with you
- ❖ **Report** all concerns, including those which happened a long time ago – take them seriously
- ❖ **Challenge** attitudes, behaviours and actions that contravene this code of behaviour

Staff, volunteers and other representatives must never:

- Engage in any form of sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Take part in inappropriate behaviour with or in the presence of children (including online or via mobile phones)
- Physically, sexually or emotionally harm, or threaten to harm, a child – online or in the real world
- Sleep in the same area as a child with whom you are working with
- Share a changing room or toilet with a child with whom you are working with
- Drink alcohol or use harmful substances when working with children, and never supply these to a child
- Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves
- Place children in an unsafe or insecure situations
- Meet with a child outside of the times and terms agreed with the Project Leader
- Use harmful or discriminatory language in front of a child
- Invite or allow a child to visit you at home
- Engage in harmful, discriminatory or bullying behaviour towards a child, adult beneficiary, member of staff, volunteer or other representative
- Engage in any relationship that could be an abuse of trust or power, e.g. a sexual relationship with an adult who participates in, or who's child participates in, our activities
- Allow concerns, allegations or suspicions of abuse to go unreported

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- Take or share photos of a child with whom you are working without parental permission and Friends of the Family permission. All photos should be for Friends of the Family use only.
- Send private messages to children you've met through Friends of the Family – any contact should go through the parent/carer
- Take a child or children in your car alone unless the travel and destination has been pre-approved by the parent *and* Project Leader. In these instances, the child must always sit in the back seat.
- Connect with a child or parent on social media (inc. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), for example accepting a friend request or using direct messaging. Staff should always use the official Friends of the Family account to communicate with volunteers or adults via social media.

6. Prevention

Friends of the Family takes proactive steps to ensure that no children or adults come to harm within our work. More details are outlined in our *Safeguarding Standard Operating Procedures*. Measures include:

Following safer recruitment principles

- Recruitment of all staff, trustees and volunteers must follow safer recruitment principles, including obtaining suitable references (2 minimum), providing evidence of identity and the successful completion of enhanced DBS checks
- Requirement of enhanced DBS checks will be outlined in all job vacancy posts
- Staff, trustees and volunteers cannot work with children in any capacity until an appropriate DBS check has been obtained. DBS checks will be renewed every three years in line with DBS guidance

Training and supporting staff and volunteers

- All staff, trustees and volunteers will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction. All training will have an expiry date and refreshers provided.
- The safeguarding policy must be shared with all new staff, trustees and volunteers
- Resources and guidance on child safeguarding will be made available for staff and volunteers

Raising awareness and empowering families

- All parents will receive a copy of the safeguarding policy and guidance of how to raise concerns when joining Friends of the Family
- Children and families will have access to child-friendly, age-appropriate materials about their rights and will be supported to know how to raise concerns
- The safeguarding policy is made visible on the website with contact details

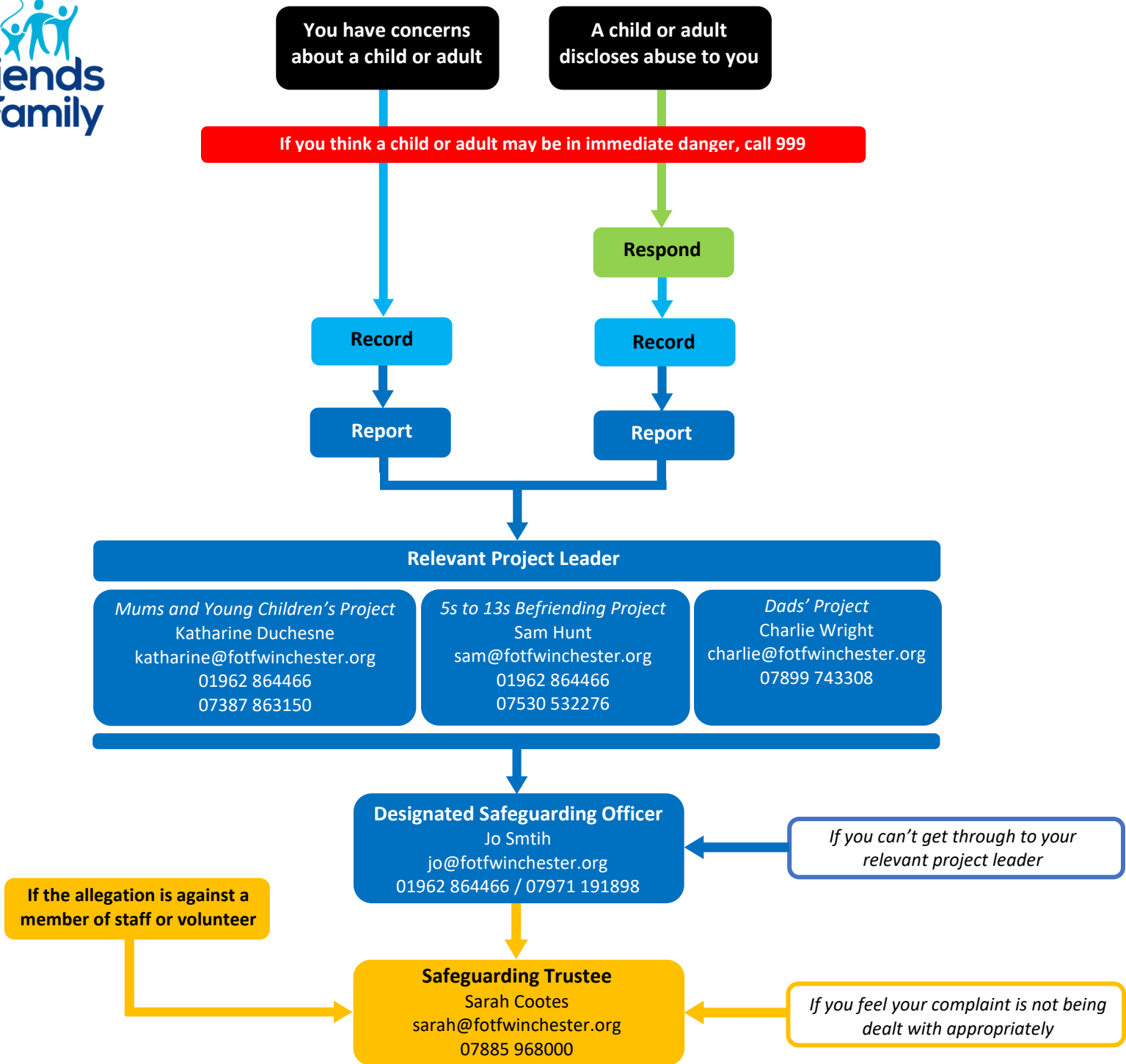
Strengthening projects and governance

- Risk assessments will be conducted for every project activity
- All volunteers are required to sign a volunteer charter
- The safeguarding policy and procedures must be reviewed annually by trustees
- All safeguarding incidences will be logged, and critical incidences reviewed by the board

Working in partnership

- Any contractual relationships and partnerships must have clear obligations and commitment to safeguarding. Where partners, groups or organisations do not have their own written policies, or do not meet Friends of the Family's standard, they must formally agree and implement the standards of this safeguarding policy.
- We will work to strengthen our partnerships and relationships with key referral organisations

Policy reviewed and approved by the Friends of the Family Board of Trustees: September 2024
Next review date: September 2025



Respond to a child or adult who discloses abuse:

- ❖ Ensure the child or adult is not in immediate danger
- ❖ Listen carefully to what they're saying without interruption
- ❖ Do not probe or ask leading questions
- ❖ Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you
- ❖ Say you'll take them seriously
- ❖ Do not promise to keep secrets – explain you need to tell someone who can help
- ❖ Do not confront the alleged abuser
- ❖ Explain what you'll do next
- ❖ Report what the child or adult has told you as soon as possible

Record what the child/adult has told you, using their actual words spoken than an interpretation of what was said as much as possible. Specific facts relating to the named people, dates, places etc. should be recorded accurately along with any details of the injuries, including where they are and what they looked like. Do not speculate or jump to conclusions.

What stops a person disclosing abuse?

People, especially children, often don't tell others about abuse because they are frightened about what may happen to them, they feel they may not be believed or they think it is their fault. They may not be aware that what they are experiencing is abuse. Although they want the abuse to stop, they may care about the abuser and are worried about them being punished.

Adults who are aware of abuse happening may also not report concerns, because they are worried about consequences or that they might have got it wrong.

ANNEX TWO | Where to get more information or support

| Organisation | Contact | Opening Hours |
|--|---|---|
| Friends of the Family <i>Please contact us if you have any concerns or questions regarding our safeguarding policy or procedures</i> | contactus@fotfwinchester.org 01962 864466 | Mon - Thu |
| Hampshire Children's Services | 0300 555 1384 0300 555 1373 childrens.services@hants.gov.uk | 8.30am – 5pm, Mon-Thu 8.30am – 4pm, Friday Out of hours |
| NSPCC Helpline | 0808 800 5000 Guidance on keeping children safe Support for parents | Free helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week |
| Childline | 0800 1111 | Free helpline for children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week |
| Family Lives (previously Parentline) <i>For confidential advice on any aspect of parenting and family life</i> | 0808 800 2222 askus@familylives.org.uk www.familylives.org.uk | Free phone service 9am – 9pm, Mon-Fri 10am – 3pm, Sat/Sun |
| Hampshire Adult Services | 0300 555 1386 0300 555 1373 | 8.30am – 5pm, Monday 9.30am – 5pm, Tue-Thu 8.30am – 4.30pm, Friday Out of hours |
| Rape Crisis <i>For adults and children aged 16-18 who have experienced any type of sexual violence</i> | 0808 500 2222 www.rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/ | Free helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Webchat also available |
| NAPAC <i>National Association for People Abused in Childhood</i> | 0808 801 0331 www.napac.org.uk | Free helpline for adult survivors of child abuse 10am – 9pm, Mon-Thu 10am – 6pm, Friday |
| If you think a child or adult may be in immediate danger, call 999 | | |