



PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO A CONCERN

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It can be very difficult to identify that abuse or neglect is occurring, or that someone's poor conduct is having a serious impact on a child. It's not always a question of identifying the visible signs of abuse; often, a child or adult speaking out raises concerns. Children may not be able to give a clear explanation of what has happened, but will indicate that something is wrong.

It is not your responsibility to investigate or intervene, but it is your responsibility to listen and to make sure that the child receives all the necessary help and support.

Here are five simple steps that you should take if someone reports a concern to you:

1. Stay calm and assure the child.
2. It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose a problem, and he/she usually wants you to help. Therefore, you should not make promises of confidentiality, but be clear that you may have to contact other people who will be able to help.
3. Listen carefully to what the child says and do not suggest ideas. Keep questioning to a minimum, use open questions, and record the conversation as soon as you can on the Child Protection form. Record precise words and phrases (as closely as possible) and be clear to make a distinction between fact and opinion.
4. Report the concern to the Welfare Officer in your club, or go directly to the county/national LTA or Squash England. Do not hesitate to call national LTA Safeguarding Team if you need urgent advice. LTA Safeguarding Team contact details are given below. If you fear that a child is at immediate risk, and you cannot get advice from a Welfare Officer, you should contact your local police or social services.
5. Do not discuss the concerns with others until you have reported them, as above.

A club or county officer might contact LTA Safeguarding Team, if they feel the problem is serious, and it is possible that the police and/or social services may then become involved. It is not your responsibility to make these decisions; the correct course of action is for you to report the concern, as quickly and accurately as you can.

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