

RESPONDING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

If a child or young person says or indicates that they are being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that they are being abused, the person receiving the information should listen carefully and -

react calmly so as not to frighten the young person:

- Tell the young person they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- Do not show distaste, disgust or anger.
- Do not ask direct questions – who, what, where, when.
- Do not put words into their mouth by suggesting what has happened and by whom.
- Do encourage them to talk.
- Take what they say seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in languages says.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Keep calm and, even if you find what they are saying difficult or painful, keep listening.
- Reassure them but do not make promises of confidentiality, which may not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible including dates and times.
- Do not contact or confront the individual who is alleged to be responsible.