

What is a disclosure?

A disclosure is the action of making new or secret information known or a fact, especially a secret that is made known. (*Oxford Dictionaries*)

The point of disclosure is an opportunity to provide immediate support, comfort and protection by connecting children, young people and adults with professional services that can keep them safe, provide support, conduct an investigation where necessary and facilitate their recovery, whatever their age. Disclosures can be made verbally and non-verbally.

Examples of a disclosure (not limited to):

- By making a verbal statement directly or ambiguously
- Change in behaviour or acting out something which raises concern.

Your response to a child's, young person's or adult's disclosure

You need to remain calm, be supportive emotionally and practically. Take seriously the child, young person or adult making the disclosure and take some action in response.

You should not ask lots of questions of the person making the disclosure; most information can be gathered with a minimum of questions and a maximum of listening.

All that is needed, is a brief account, including: where it took place, when it took place, who was involved, who was present. Clearly record the child, young person or adults disclosure in their own words.

This is all that is required to enable decisions to be made further on in the process. However, if they wish to give you more than this information, they should **not** be stopped from doing so.

What next?

If you do not take action when a child, young person or adult discloses abuse, it may place them at serious risk of ongoing harm and abuse and prevent them receiving the help they need. Therefore it is important to: listen to and support the child, young person or adult, reassure them that they have done the right thing, not make promises you can't keep, let the child, young person or adult know what you will do next and, follow your organisations procedures and Hull Safeguarding Children's Partnership guidelines and procedures.

As a practitioner, you must know your agencies procedures and Hull Safeguarding Children's Partnership Practice Guidance which can be accessed via: <https://hullscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

Further support and information can be accessed by attending the Responding Effectively to Disclosures from Children, Young People and Adults, half day training course.

For specific advice from a social care professional when you are concerned about a child or young person, please contact 01482 448879.