

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Policy and Procedures

Updated July 2026 (for review by September 2027)

The DSM Foundation delivers drug education in education settings, predominantly across the UK but also overseas on occasion, and hence works with children, young people and the trusted adults in their lives such as parents, caregivers, teachers and other professionals. This policy sets out our commitment to safeguarding and child protection, and the procedures all staff (salaried and sessional), volunteers, and trustees must follow.

This policy aims to provide all members of staff (paid and volunteers) with knowledge of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding, and the practical steps they need to take should a disclosure be made. For the remainder of this document all references to staff encompasses paid staff, contracted workers and volunteers including trustees, and the DSM Foundation is referred to as DSMF.

Policy statement

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. DSMF is committed to:

- treating the welfare of children and young people as paramount
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment
- respecting the rights, wishes, and feelings of children and young people
- recruiting staff safely, ensuring suitability to work with children
- providing effective training and supervision
- sharing concerns appropriately and working with statutory agencies when required
- creating a safe culture, encouraging open feedback, raising concerns, challenging or highlighting potentially unsafe practices.
- reviewing this policy and relevant practices on an annual basis.

Details of the legal and regulatory framework that this document complies with can be found in Appendix A.

Roles and responsibilities

Board of Trustees

- Ensure the charity has effective safeguarding policies and procedures
- Appoint a Safeguarding Trustee Lead with oversight responsibility
- Receive regular safeguarding reports and review serious incidents, with safeguarding a standing item at all Board meetings
- Ensure adequate resources for safeguarding.

Safeguarding Trustee Lead: Suja Chacko, suja@strategiclinks.co.uk, 07900 890029

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has operational responsibility for safeguarding. Their duties include:

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns
- Making referrals to children's social care and/or police
- Liaising with school Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Maintaining secure safeguarding records
- Ensuring staff training and DBS/PVG checks are up to date
- Including safeguarding on the agenda of regular internal meetings
- Reporting to trustees on safeguarding matters.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Fiona Spargo-Mabbs, fiona@dsmfoundation.org.uk and safeguarding@dsmfoundation.org.uk; 07785280116.

All staff

Everyone working for the DSM Foundation must:

- Read, understand, and follow this policy (a form for this is in Appendix B)
- Complete safeguarding training (before working with children if undertaking this activity) and undertake regular updates and refresher training
- Report all concerns to the DSL without delay
- Never promise confidentiality to a child regarding a disclosure
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.

Safer recruitment

We follow [safer recruitment practices](#) to prevent unsuitable people from working with children:

Step	Requirement
Job descriptions	Include safeguarding responsibilities.
Advertisements	State commitment to safeguarding and DBS requirements.
Application forms	Require full employment history with explanations for gaps.
Interviews	Include safeguarding-focused questions; panel of at least two people.
References	Minimum two references, including most recent employer.
DBS/PVG checks	Enhanced DBS with barred list check (and enrolled on Update service) for all roles involving regulated activity, and/or PVG if working in Scotland; Enhanced DBS for trustees (and enrolled on Update service); Basic DBS for all other staff (renewed every three years); All staff required to disclose any changes to their criminal record status.
Identity verification	Original documents checked in person.

Right to work	Verified before employment begins.
Induction	Safeguarding policy and training, and agreement to code of conduct before any contact with children or vulnerable adults (annually thereafter).

Contractors, sub-contractors and partnerships

All contracts with other companies, organisations or charities commissioned to provide services on behalf of DSMF, and all partnership agreements with organisations to provide services with DSMF, will require them to ensure that all staff have current enhanced DBS checks and have received safeguarding training appropriate to the nature of the work. They will also be required to provide a copy of their current Safeguarding Policy to DSMF.

Recognising abuse and neglect

Staff must be alert to signs of abuse and/or neglect as a result of harm being inflicted or a failure to act to prevent harm. This may happen within a family or community setting, by someone who is known to them, or from a stranger.

As well as abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) and neglect, staff must be aware of specific safeguarding issues, including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE), county lines involvement, online abuse including grooming, sexting, and cyberbullying, radicalisation and extremism (Prevent duty), female genital mutilation (there is a mandatory duty to report to police if it is discovered that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 years of age), forced marriage, peer-on-peer abuse including sexual violence and harassment, domestic abuse in the home, and mental health concerns that may indicate underlying harm. More information on forms of abuse and neglect, and signs to be aware of, can be found on the [NSPCC website](#).

Responding to disclosures or concerns

A child may disclose their experience of abuse, neglect or exploitation (directly or indirectly; partially or fully; verbally, non-verbally or through their behaviour), and it is vital that adults working with them know how to respond appropriately and provide the support they need.

In these situations, the staff member should:

- listen carefully and take them seriously
- reassure them that it is good they have shared this information
- record what they say in their own words and explain the next steps
- report it immediately to the DSL.

They should not:

- appear shocked or disbelieving
- promise confidentiality
- ask leading questions or investigate themselves
- delay.

The nature of the work undertaken by DSMF means that staff working with children and young people are usually doing so within their academic setting or organisation (including online), which will have its own safeguarding policy and procedures and these must be adhered to. These are generally made available when signing in as a visitor, or during the planning stage for delivery. Furthermore, DSMF staff do not usually know the identities of the individuals in their sessions – for this reason, it is vital that staff from the setting/organisation remain present during delivery in order to establish the identity of anyone who causes concern.

An additional consideration is that DSMF staff may have concerns about a child as a result of information that arises in a different way, e.g. through a response to a pre-workshop survey, or via a feedback form. This is generally anonymous, but must be treated in a similar manner to a direct disclosure. It can be difficult to be certain about what is a concern, but anything that doesn't feel or sit right should be passed on to the DSMF DSL, often informally (but always promptly) in the first instance.

Procedure for reporting concerns

All disclosures must be recorded as soon as possible (ideally immediately, but certainly on the same day) using the charity's Safeguarding Concern Form (in Appendix C and also available at xxx), and passed to the DSL of BOTH the setting/organisation AND DSMF (the email safeguarding@dsmfoundation.org.uk should be used for this). Where concerns are initially shared verbally, they will be followed up in writing.

The DSL(s) will then make an assessment and decide on the next steps, which may be one of the following:

- No further action required
- Provision of support within setting
- Referral for early help/intervention, usually through the setting
- Referral to social care/police, usually through the setting.

If the DSMF DSL is unavailable, the staff member should contact the DSMF CEO. They can also, if there is immediate risk, make a direct referral to children's social care or police themselves. DSMF will also make a direct referral if it is believed that the setting/organisation has not acted appropriately. The procedure for this is in Appendix D.

Allegations against DSM Foundation staff

An allegation is any concern that someone working for the charity has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children.

The following procedure must be followed:

1. The person receiving the allegation reports immediately to the DSL (or, if the allegation concerns the DSL, to the Safeguarding Trustee Lead).
2. The DSL/Trustee contacts the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day.
3. The individual may be suspended pending investigation — this is a neutral act.

4. No internal investigation begins until agreed with the LADO.
5. The matter is reported to the Charity Commission if it meets the threshold for a serious incident.
6. If the allegation is substantiated, a referral is made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The accused individual is not informed until advised by the LADO, to avoid prejudicing any investigation.

Staff and volunteers have a duty to report concerns about the behaviour of colleagues, as part of DSMF's [Whistleblowing policy](#). Reports can be made to:

- The DSL
- The Safeguarding Trustee Lead (if the concern involves the DSL, Deputy CEO or CEO)
- The NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk.

Reports made in good faith are protected, and reprisals against whistleblowers will not be tolerated.

Sitting behind this is the DSMF [Code of Conduct](#), which all staff are required to read and sign on an annual basis.

Information Sharing and Data Protection

We share information in accordance with:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018

Key principles:

- Information can and should be shared when necessary to protect a child, even without consent
- Only relevant information is shared, on a need-to-know basis
- Decisions to share (or not share) are recorded with rationale
- We cooperate fully with statutory agencies.

Training

Who	Training Required	Frequency
All staff	Safeguarding awareness (sometimes referred to as Level 1)	Upon starting, then refreshed every three years, plus regular updates
DSL and Safeguarding Trustee Lead	Advanced safeguarding training	Every 2 years, plus regular updates
Trustees	Safeguarding awareness for trustees	Within 6 months of appointment, then refreshed every 3 years, plus regular updates
Drug educators	Safeguarding awareness (sometimes referred to as Level 1) and Prevent training	Upon starting, then refreshed every three years, plus regular updates

Training records are maintained under the supervision of the DSMF DSL.

Key contacts

- DSMF designated safeguarding lead: Fiona Spargo-Mabbs, fiona@dsmfoundation.org.uk and safeguarding@dsmfoundation.org.uk; 07785280116
- DSMF safeguarding trustee lead: Suja Chacko, suja@strategiclinks.co.uk, 07900 890029

External contacts

- Police: 999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency)
- Local Authority Designated Officer ([LADO](mailto:lado@croydon.gov.uk)): Jane Rowe, lado@croydon.gov.uk, 020 8726 6000 ext 24817
- NSPCC: help@NSPCC.org.uk, 0808 800 5000 (for adults concerned about a child), 0800 1111 (Childline), 0800 028 0285 (whistleblowing)
- Charity Commission contacts: <https://www.charitysafeguarding.dcms.gov.uk/>

Appendices

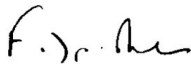
- Appendix A: Legal and regulatory framework
- Appendix B: Staff annual declaration form
- Appendix C: Safeguarding concern form
- Appendix D: Referral procedure

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner if:

- There is a significant change in legislation or guidance
 - An incident or near-miss identifies a gap
 - The Charity Commission or other regulator requires it.
- Reviews are led by the DSL and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Approval Date: 22nd July 2026

Signed by: 

Fiona Spargo-Mabbs, Chief Executive Officer

Date of next policy review: by 31 August 2027

Appendix A: Legal and regulatory framework

This policy complies with:

- [Children Act 1989](#) – enacted to provide a comprehensive legal framework for the protection, welfare and rights of children (defined at all those up to the age of 18 years, or up to 25 if they have special needs) in the UK, by ensuring the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in all decisions affecting them including parental responsibilities and care arrangements.
- [Children Act 2004](#) – designed to supplement the above and improve child protection by addressing gaps, promoting children’s welfare and ensuring inter-agency cooperation in safeguarding children.
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#) – established as a legal framework to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and vulnerable adults in the UK.
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR) – ensures that personal data is processed lawfully, fairly and transparently, and strengthens individuals’ rights over their data. The DPA 2018 defines UK-specific provisions under law, whereas GDPR makes provision for national discretion.
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#) – incorporates the European Convention of Human Rights into UK law.
- [Equality Act 2010](#) – UK legislations consolidating anti-discrimination laws, protecting individuals from unfair treatment based on specific protected characteristic, and aiming to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation while promoting equality of opportunity.
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\)](#) – statutory guidance for multi-agency collaboration to protect and promote the welfare of all children under 18 in England, issued under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2026) – statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England outlining legal duties, safeguarding expectations, staff responsibilities, safer recruitment, and procedures for managing concerns and allegations (note that at the time of reviewing this document, KSCIE 2026 had only been published in draft form intended for implementation from September 2026, but both this and the 2025 guidance were consulted for this document).
- The [Charity Commission's safeguarding guidance](#) – comprehensive guidance on safeguarding for charities and trustees that emphasises the importance of a strong safeguarding culture, which includes identifying and managing safeguarding risks, having robust policies, ensuring suitable checks on trustees, volunteers and staff, and the responsibilities of charity trustees to report serious incidents to the Charity Commission. In Scotland, there is similar [guidance issued by the Scottish Charity Regulator](#).
- [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) – legislation aimed at improving the lives of children and young people in Scotland by promoting their rights and ensuring integrated services.
- [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) 2022](#) – national framework and approach used across Scotland to improve the wellbeing of children, young people and their families, with an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and rights-based practice.
- [National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2023](#) – sets out the responsibilities and expectations for all professionals and agencies to protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

We also follow local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures in every area where we operate. It is important to acknowledge that whilst the DSMF is based in the UK, when working outside of the UK the organisation will comply with the national regulations where these differ, and best practice of the specific jurisdiction.

Appendix B: Staff annual declaration form

I have read, understood, and agree to comply with the DSMF's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

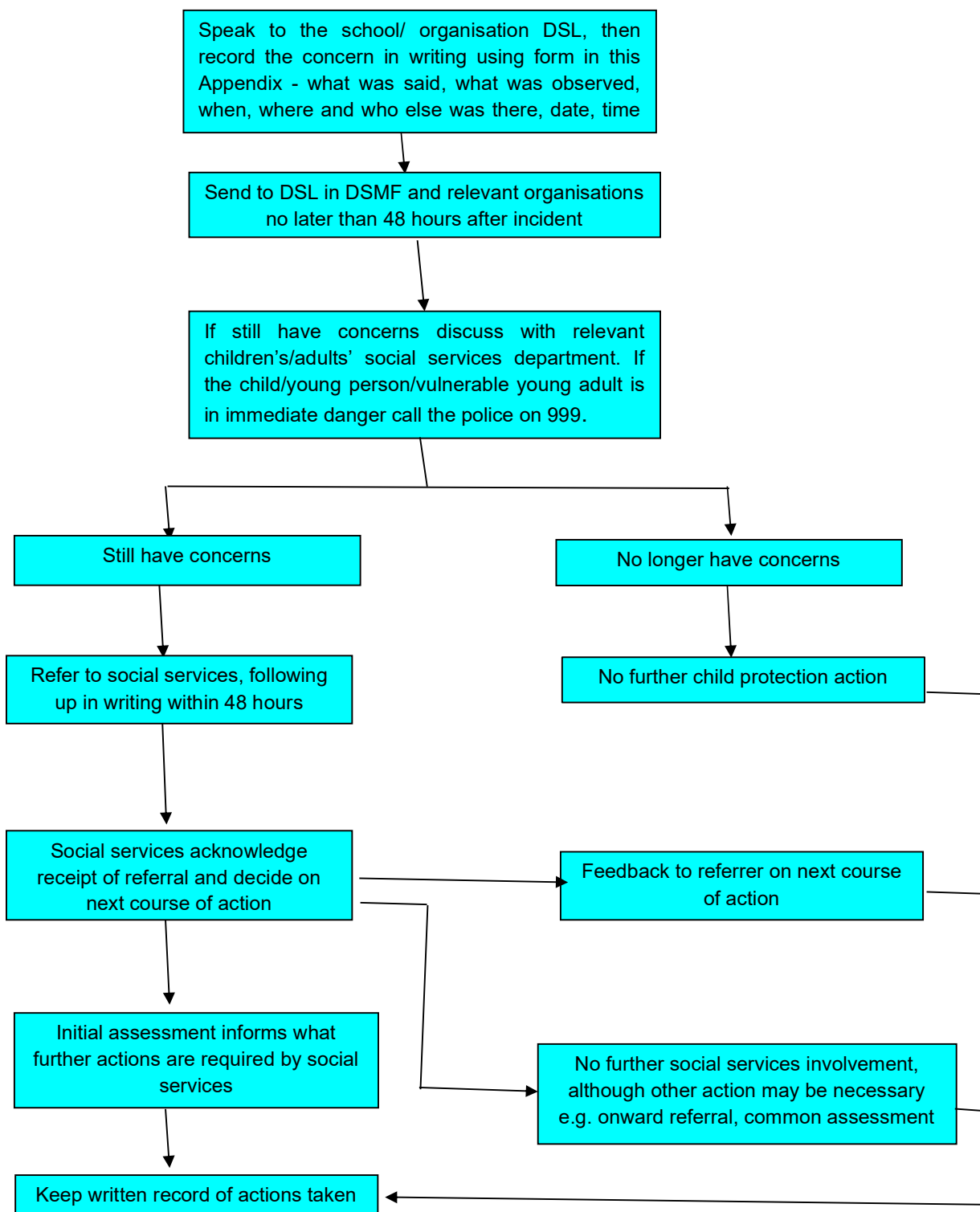
Appendix C: Safeguarding concern form

Section 1: for completion by individual raising concern	
Name and role of person initiating form	
Contact details (email and phone number)	
Date form started	
Setting/organisation concern relates to	
How concern has arisen, e.g. from survey, question or comment during workshop	
Is the individual identifiable who is the cause of concern?	Yes/No (delete as applicable) If yes, state their name and other details here:
Are there any details known that might help identify the individual, e.g. year group, concern arose during a session at a specific time, time of survey response known	
Please describe the concern here	
Is the individual who has caused concern at risk of significant harm? If yes, speak to the DSL (setting/organisation or DSMF immediately) and state when this was done if so.	
Any actions taken immediately, e.g. responded to question	Yes/No (delete as applicable) If yes, state details here
Any other actions taken, e.g. spoken to staff within setting	Yes/No (delete as applicable) If yes, state details here
If the concern has been raised with the setting/organisation, what was the response?	
Is any follow up felt to be necessary, e.g. provide information/resources, concern not taken seriously so needs escalating, training need within DSMF team	Yes/No (delete as applicable) State details here
Please add here any other information that could be relevant	
Section 2: for completion by the DSL (or alternative if not available)	

Name and role of person completing this section	
Contact details (email and phone number)	
Date this section of the form started	
Is the individual who has caused concern at risk of significant harm? If yes, speak to the DSL (setting/organisation) and state when this was done if so.	
Any actions taken further to those already stated?	Yes/No (delete as applicable) If yes, state details here
Is any follow up felt to be necessary, e.g. provide information/resources, concern not taken seriously so needs escalating	Yes/No (delete as applicable) If yes, state details here
Are you satisfied that the concern has been handled correctly and sensibly?	Yes/No (delete as applicable) Give further details here
Has this concern identified any training needs for an individual or the wider team?	Yes/No (delete as applicable) If yes, state details here
Any other action points?	Yes/No (delete as applicable) If yes, state details here
Please add here any other information/details that could be relevant	
Date form signed off as complete	

Appendix D: Referral procedure

What to do if you are concerned about a child's safety



Information required

Staff must be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible. In some situations all of this information may not be available, but this should not stop a referral. The form on the next page can be used for a referral.

- Name, telephone number, position, and the same information should be requested of the person to whom they are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child and siblings.
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- The names of professionals known to be involved with the child/family e.g. GP, Health Visitor, school.
- The nature and basis of the concern(s).
- A professional opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe.
- A professional opinion of the needs of the child and family, if appropriate.
- Whether the consent of a parent or person with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made.

Action to be taken following the referral

- Ensure that an accurate record is kept of the concern(s) made at the time.
- Put the concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
- Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

Confidentiality

DSMF will ensure that any records made in relation to a referral are kept confidentially and in a secure place. Information in relation to child protection concerns will be shared on a “need to know” basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child’s need for protection.

When completing this form, record the facts; do not interpret what you have observed. Immediately after completing it, it should be emailed with password-protection to the DSL within 48 hours of the incident.

Your name:		Name of organisation:
Your role:		
Contact information (you):		
Address:		Postcode:
Telephone number:		Email address:
Child's name:		Child's date of birth:
Child's ethnic origin:	Child's gender:	Does child have any SEND or other needs?
Contact information (parents/caregivers):		
Name(s):		
Address:		Postcode:
Telephone numbers:		Email address:
Have parents/caregivers been notified of this incident? Yes/no (delete as applicable) If YES please provide details of what was said/action agreed:		
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else:		
☐ Responding to my own concerns ☐ Responding to concerns raised by someone else		
If responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide further information below		
Name:		
Position within the organisation or relationship to the child:		
Telephone number:		Email address:
Day, date and times of incident:		
Location:		
Name of setting/organisation:		
Details of the incident or concerns: <i>What prompted the concern? Please describe the incident and include any relevant background or contextual information. If possible, record any speech verbatim, including clarifying questions asked</i> <i>Expand this box or use extra sheets if required. Include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay.</i>		
Child's account of the incident:		
Please provide any witness accounts of the incident:		

Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident: <i>Name:</i> <i>Position within the organisation or relationship to the child:</i> <i>Date of birth (if child):</i> <i>Address:</i> <i>Telephone number:</i> <i>Postcode:</i> <i>Email address:</i>			
Please provide details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury: <i>Name:</i> <i>Position within the organisation or relationship to the child:</i> <i>Date of birth (if child):</i> <i>Address:</i> <i>Telephone number:</i> <i>Postcode:</i> <i>Email address:</i>			
Please provide details of action taken to date:			
Has the incident been reported to any external agencies? Yes/no (delete as applicable) If YES please provide further details:			
<i>Name of organisation / agency:</i> <i>Contact person:</i> <i>Telephone numbers:</i> <i>Email address:</i> <i>Agreed action or advice given:</i>			
Your Signature:		Print name:	
Date:			
Name, of designated person form passed to			