

## Helping all staff talk, listen and respond to children safely

It takes courage for a child to speak up. Your response matters.

### RECOGNISE

#### If you are worried about a child

- Notice changes in behaviour, mood or presentation
- Gently open a conversation
- Use open questions and allow time to respond

Try:

“I’ve noticed you seem a bit quiet...”

“Is everything okay?”

### RESPOND

#### If a child approaches you

- Stop and listen — give your full attention
- Stay calm, open and approachable
- Let them talk in their own words and at their own pace

Say:

“I’m really glad you told me”

“I’m listening”

## Make it easier to talk

Side by side, or on the move doing an activity can help | Children may share information over time | They may communicate through behaviour or play |

### Listen and take them seriously

- Give your full attention
- Let them talk at their own pace
- Show you are listening
- Do not show shock or disbelief

### What you say matters

- “I believe you”
- “This is not your fault”
- “You’ve done the right thing”
- “I’m here to help”

### Avoid

- Asking leading or probing questions
- Promising to keep secrets
- Showing shock or disbelief
- Pressuring them

### Be clear and honest

- “I need to share this with someone who can help”
- Use simple, clear language
- Explain next steps

Tell them they can contact **Childline** at any time if they need confidential support, by calling 0800 1111 or going to the **Childline website**.

**For further advice on supporting children, scan the QR code**

## TAKE ACTION NOW

Report it. Follow your organisation’s safeguarding procedure. Write down what was said and seen. Use the child’s words.

To make a safeguarding referral about an adult or child call: **0300 121 3 121**

Police (non-emergency): 101 | Emergency: 999 | NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

If you are a professional seeking advice you can access advice from a Social Worker via the professionals’ consultation line [01609 535070](tel:01609535070).

