

Investigating child abuse and safeguarding children - Guidance overview

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 21 January 2014

The requirement for action in child abuse cases creates obligations at every stage of the police response. These obligations apply when taking reports of concern for children and throughout the process of investigation. They also include the multi-agency response for safeguarding, and in particular, under the [**Children Act 2004, section 11**](#) a statutory obligation on the police service to safeguard children. A thorough investigation should be completed in all cases where concern for a child is reported.

Officers should also ensure that their actions and decision making (including cases where actions are considered unnecessary or disproportionate) are recorded in detail. An investigation into child abuse is a search for the truth and, from the outset, officers should focus efforts on gathering evidence that proves or disproves the allegation and does not rely solely on the victim's or suspect's account.

Each force should appoint a lead chief officer for issues relating to safeguarding children.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with [**HM Government \(2018\) Working Together to Safeguard Children**](#), [**Welsh Government \(2022\) Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014**](#), [**CPS \(2013\) Guidelines on Prosecuting Cases of Child Sexual Abuse**](#), forthcoming APP on working with vulnerable people and forthcoming APP on working with partners.

Tags

Child abuse