

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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| Version number | Comments | Date Approved | Author | Approved by |
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| 1 | General update of all forum policies | 29.11.2021 | HH & JS | Steering Group |
| 2 | Scheduled View | 05.03.24 | HH | Trustee Board |
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Legislation and guidance that underpins this policy

This Policy and Procedures have been developed in line with the principles/in reference to:

- The Children Act 1989/2004
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused \(2006\)](#)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- [Non-Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Disabled Children \(2009\)](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice age 0-25 \(2014\)](#)
- [Bristol Safeguarding Partnership Procedures](#)
- [KBSP multi agency guidance for Safeguarding Children, Young people and young adults with disabilities](#)
- [Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership website](#)

Statement/Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure an understanding of how BPC, (Bristol Parent Carers) meets its responsibilities to promote the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children/young people and protect them from harm.

This policy aims to:

- I. Provide the BPC Team (made up of Management Committee, Trustees/Steering Group members, Staff and Volunteers and anyone else acting on behalf of BPC) with clear guidance about their role and responsibilities with regards safeguarding.
- II. Advise parents and carers about the safeguarding measures that the BPC Team are expected to understand and comply with.

Whilst recognising that the BPC Team will have little direct contact with children and young people, its work with parent carers means that they may indirectly have contact with children and young people and certainly have contact with parent carers who often live in particularly challenging situations. Whilst it is not the responsibility of BPC to determine whether or not abuse has taken place (this is undertaken in liaison with external child protection professionals) it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns in relation to children or vulnerable adults to the relevant authority.

This policy operates within the expectations and procedures of Bristol City Council safeguarding guidelines and within the remit of national advice. Please see the appendix which outlines:

- Types of abuse
- Guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of abuse
- How to deal with a safeguarding referral

Safeguarding disabled children and young people

There is clear evidence that disabled children and young people have an increased vulnerability to being abused and that the presence of multiple impairments further increases their vulnerability. There are many reasons for this. It is important that all those who work with disabled children and young people have some understanding of these

reasons and ensure that they offer appropriate support to any parent/carer, child or young person who discloses abuse and are constantly vigilant to any signs of possible abuse.

The principles behind this Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm. In today's world all agencies and individuals share the responsibility to protect these groups from harm/risk of harm.

The application of this policy is based on the following key principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All members of the team have a safeguarding responsibility for any children, young people and vulnerable adults they may come in contact with.

Policy Statement

Parent carers of children/young people who are members of BPC should be aware that:

- Any concerns that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has, or may be experiencing harm, which comes to the attention of BPC, will be referred to the local statutory agency.
- BPC will be recruited using safe recruitment practices to ensure they are suitable individuals to take on a role which puts them into contact with large numbers of parent carers.
- BPC will be provided with an induction to assist them to fulfil their duties.

Emergency Situations

If emergency medical attention is required, this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999). If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger the police should be contacted, Dial 999, as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via their powers to use Police Protection.

Disclosures and safeguarding incidents

It is vitally important that any disclosure, made in confidence, is recorded factually as soon as possible; regardless of whether or not the matter is referred to an agency or authority. An accurate account should be made of:

- Names of people who were involved and what was said or done by whom.
- Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made.

- Names of persons reporting and to whom reported.
- Any action taken by BPC to gather information and refer on if needed
- Any further action, e.g. suspension of a worker or volunteer.
- Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency.

Any written information regarding Safeguarding issues, concerning individuals, needs to be kept in a secure place. This will be a restricted area of BPC One Drive to comply with GDPR.

Allegations against Adults who work with Children

If you have information of any circumstances which suggest an adult who works with children, young people or vulnerable adults (in a paid or unpaid capacity) has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or young person.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or may be related to, a child or young person.
- Behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children or young people.
- Have any other safeguarding concerns.

Reporting Concerns

You should speak **immediately** with the BPC **Safeguarding Lead – Hayley Hemming (as of 30.11.2021) on hayley.hemming@bristolparentcarers.org.uk** please also read the [whistle blowing policy](#) which may have further relevant info. The safeguarding lead renews their safeguarding training every 3 years and commits to annual CPD in this area.

In the absence of a chair or if the concern is connected to the chair and the safeguarding lead is not available, please report the issue to **Tracy Baggott on tracy.baggott@bristolparentcarers.org.uk** as she has completed BCC safeguarding training. They will then consult with Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub ([MASH](#)) and if necessary make a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Delegated Officer) for Bristol Council in line with local safeguarding policies and safeguarding legislation.

Any concerns about BPC staff, contractors, or volunteers mean that the person in question will be asked to temporarily stand down until the issues are resolved. Where an accusation is made against a member of the BPC Team and is found not to be valid, BPC will carry out risk assessments to prevent such incidents occurring again. For



example, we would ensure reps are never alone with parents/carers or their children or we may ensure a different rep is assigned to work with a family that has raised a previous complaint.

Please reports concerns, disclosures or incidents securely here, Hayley Hemming and Tracy Baggott will be notified:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=NtLxyU02GE6B7XddneQqNKXsfCHujbIMj03lv6V2NQUIUME1EMFY1VfVJVIJBN1RRRkIFUTRKSEZJUi4u>

Contact and Further Information



If you have concerns about a child...

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| If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE | POLICE 999 | |
| To make an URGENT referral, i.e. a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call First Response | FIRST RESPONSE 0117 9036444 (Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team 01454 615 165) | |
| To make a NON-URGENT referral, contact FIRST RESPONSE using the online form (must have parental/carer consent). | FIRST RESPONSE https://www2.bristol.gov.uk/form/child-or-young-person-request-support-or-report-concern | |
| To raise concerns and ask for advice about extremism (also contact First Response). | PREVENT DUTY 01278 647466 channelsw@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk | |
| For advice and guidance about whether to make a referral. | Families in Focus (N) 0117 3521499 Families in Focus (E/C) 0117 3576460 Families in Focus (S) 0117 9037770 | |
| For information, advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures. | Schools Safeguarding Advisors | |
| | North Lesley O'Hagan 0117 9223786 07901102652 | East/Central Henry Chan 0117 9224282 07464989157 |
| | | South Helen Macdonald 0117 9222710 07464 989 158 |

If you have concerns about a professional working with a child...

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| To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children | Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Nicola Laird 0117 9037795 |
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Bristol City Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) ([link to supporting documents](#)) manages allegations of abuse made against people who work with children and young people in any setting. The LADO process is concerned with managing allegations or concerns about the neglect, sexual, physical or emotional abuse of children. It can also be used to manage wider concerns about grooming or other less obvious possibly harmful behaviour. LADO should be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention, including those made directly to the police.

Contact Email: childprotection@bristol.gov.uk

Contact Telephone: 0117 903 7795 (LADO Admin)

Social Work Assessment Teams

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| Disabled Children's Social Work Team: | 0117 903 8250 |
| North Bristol - Ridingleaze, Lawrence Weston: | 0117 903 8700 |
| East/Central Bristol - Welsman, Princes Street, St Pauls: | 0117 903 6500 |
| South Bristol - Symes House, Hartcliffe: | 0117 353 2200 |
| Care Direct (adult social care): | 0117 922 2700 |
| Police | |
| In an emergency: | 999 |
| If not an emergency but help required fast | 101 |
| NSPCC 24 hour helpline: | 0800 800 5000 |

The safeguarding lead / next in line will use secure email for sending referral forms or any other sensitive information.

Appendix - TO BE READ WITH THE BPC SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Definitions and signs of abuse

There are four recognised types of abuse and it is important that all the BPC Team know what they are and how to recognise them. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF 2018).

1. **Physical Abuse:** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.
2. **Emotional Abuse:** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
3. **Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

4. **Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

How to respond to a child, young person or vulnerable adult disclosing abuse:

DO:

- Treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the young person as if you believe what they are saying.
- Tell the young person they are right to tell you and reassure them they are not to blame.
- Be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- Tell the young person what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – inform the BPC Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Write down everything said and done, be clear on dates and times of information.

DON'T:

- Make promises you can't keep.
- Interrogate the child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social care who have experience in this area.
- Cast doubt on what the child has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse
- Do nothing – make sure you inform the BPC Safeguarding lead immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

How to respond to a parent carer disclosing abuse:

DO:

- Clarify whether the parent / carer is disclosing information about abuse which has happened to them or whether this is in relation to their own child or another child.

- Inform the parent carer, as soon as possible, that you believe they have begun to disclose information which leads you to believe that a child has suffered, or may suffer harm, that you will not be able to keep this information to yourself.
- Treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the parent carer as if you believe what they are saying.
- Tell the parent carer they are right to tell you, advise who you have to tell and why.
- Support them if necessary – If a safeguarding referral needs to be made, encourage the parent carer to make the referral themselves. If they won't do this, be clear you will have to refer the incident yourself. Inform the parent carer what you are doing and when and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Make sure you are clear (if possible) where the child / young person / vulnerable adult is at the current time and consider their immediate safety. Write down everything that was said and what was done.

DON'T:

- Make promises you can't keep – e.g. advising they can speak to you in confidence.
- Interrogate the parent carer – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and children's social care, who have experience in this.
- Do nothing – make sure you tell the BPC Safeguarding Lead immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice

Informing parent carers if BPC is going to make a referral

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parent carers about any concerns you have. If you need to make a referral to social care, you should normally discuss this with the parent carer before you do. However, inability to inform parent carers should not prevent a referral being made. It would then be a joint decision with Children's Social Care about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.

However you should NOT discuss your concerns with parent carer in the following circumstances:

- where sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected
- where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- where Fabricated or Induced Illness is suspected
- where Female Genital Mutilation is the concern
- in cases of suspected Forced Marriage



- where contacting or discussing the referral would place a child, young person, yourself or others at risk.