Bristol Parent Carer Forum
Shaping the Future Together

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Table of Contents

1 Introduction 3

2 Legislation and guidance that underpins this policy 3

3 Aim of the Policy 3

3.1 Types of abuse 4

3.2 Guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of abuse 4

3.3 How to deal with a safeguarding referral 4

4 Safeguarding disabled children and young people 4

5 The principles behind this Safeguarding Policy 4

6 Policy Statement 5

7 Emergency Situations 5

8 Disclosures and safeguarding incidents 5

9 Allegations against Adults who work with Children 5

10 Reporting Concerns 6

11 Contact and Further Information 7

11.1 Bristol City Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 9

11.1.1 Social Work Assessment Teams 9

11.1.2 Police 9

11.1.3 NSPCC 24-hour helpline: 0800 800 5000 9

1 Introduction

Bristol Parent Carers (BPC) is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children, young people, and adults who come into contact with our work. Safeguarding is central to our values and underpins everything we do.

As a parent carer-led organisation, we recognise the importance of protecting not only the families we represent but also our staff, trustees, volunteers, and partners. We are committed to preventing harm, promoting wellbeing, and ensuring that any concerns are dealt with swiftly, appropriately, and in line with statutory guidance.

This policy sets out our safeguarding responsibilities and the standards of practice expected of everyone associated with BPC. It provides clear guidance on recognising, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns, and ensures that all those connected to our work understand their duty of care.

Through this policy, BPC affirms its commitment to:

- Protecting children, young people, and adults at risk from abuse, harm, or exploitation.
- Embedding a culture of vigilance, accountability, and transparency.
- Working in partnership with families, statutory services, and community organisations to uphold the highest safeguarding standards.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. By following this policy, we ensure that our work strengthens trust, protects the most vulnerable, and contributes to safe and supportive communities across Bristol.

2 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 (Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership) multi agency guidance for Safeguarding Children, Young people and young adults with disabilities
- Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership website

3 Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure an understanding of how BPC 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:

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

Whilst recognising the BPC Team will have little direct contact with children and young people, its work with parent carers means 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.

3.1 Types of abuse

Abuse can take many forms and may include physical, emotional, sexual, financial, discriminatory, organisational abuse, and neglect. Staff should remain aware that abuse may be perpetrated by anyone and can occur in any setting.

3.2 Guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of abuse

When someone discloses abuse, staff should listen without judgement, avoid asking leading questions, reassure the individual that they have been heard, and record the information accurately and promptly. It is important not to promise confidentiality, only that the information will be handled appropriately.

3.3 How to deal with a safeguarding referral

Any concerns or disclosures must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL is responsible for reviewing the information, determining whether a safeguarding referral is required, and contacting the appropriate external agencies in line with statutory guidance and organisational procedures.

4 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 factors and ensure they offer appropriate support to any parent/carer or child. As an organisation led by and working alongside families of disabled children and young people, Bristol Parent Carers has a particular responsibility to recognise these additional risks and to ensure our practice reflects the needs and experiences of the community we serve.

5 The principles behind this Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding is the action 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.

6 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 recruit using safe recruitment practices to ensure candidates are suitable individuals to take on a role which puts them into contact with large numbers of parent carers.
- Employees/Volunteers will be provided with an induction to assist them to fulfil their duties.

7 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.

8 Disclosures and safeguarding incidents

It is vitally important 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 SharePoint to comply with GDPR, if you aren't sure where please ask your line manager.

9 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.

You should report them immediately. How can be found in the next section.

10 Reporting Concerns

You should immediately contact the **BPC Safeguarding Lead** Hayley Hemming via 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 the Safeguarding Lead or if the concern is connected to them, please report the issue to the chair of Trustees: Liz Newton – liz.newton@bristolparentcarers.org.uk Or the Head of Community Support and Engagement: Sian Morgan – sian.morgan@bristolparentcarers.org.uk

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 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.

Staff please report concerns, disclosures or incidents securely here, Hayley Hemming and Liz Newton will be notified:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=NtLxyU02GE6B7XddneQqNKXsfCHujblMj03lv6V2NQlUME1EMFY1VFVJVlJBN1RRRklFUTRKSEZJUi4u

11 Contact and Further Information

Education Safeguarding Contacts Bristol 2025-26

If you have concerns about a child/young person in Bristol

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	**POLICE** 999	
To make a referral, i.e. a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call children's social care.	**FIRST RESPONSE** - 0117 9036444	
Out of Hours Referrals	**EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM** - 01454 615 165	
Mental Health Crisis (24 hours, 7 days a week)	**Bristol Mental Health** - 0300 555 0334	
To raise concerns and ask for advice about radicalisation (also contact First Response).	**PREVENT DUTY** - 01278 647466 PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk	
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police unit	**Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit** (Avon and Somerset police) 01278 649228 LighthouseBristol@avonandsomerset.police.uk	
For advice and guidance about whether to make a referral	**Family Help**	
South 0117 9037770	**East Central** 0117 3576460	**North** 0117 3521499

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

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	**Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO)** T: 0117 9037795 KBSP LADO notification form

For information, advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures.

Safeguarding in Education Team T: 01179222532 E: Safeguardingineducationteam@bristol.gov.uk		
South Advisor Helen Macdonald helen.macdonald@bristol.gov.uk 01179222533	**East Central Advisor** **Vacant** Safeguardingineducationteam@bristol.gov.uk 01179222532	**North Advisor** Elisabeth Clark elisabeth.clark@bristol.gov.uk 01179222534
Child sexual exploitation	**Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police)** https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul	

Education Safeguarding Contacts Bristol 2025-26

Safer Connections Urgent Referrals and Threshold Advice: For all urgent referrals, requests for service **(including Weapons and Drugs in Schools)**, and threshold advice, contact First Response: T: 0117 903 6444 Partnership Support: To request non-urgent, non-case specific support from the Partnership Team (such as consultations, training, or coordination around emerging concerns) E: saferconnections@bristol.gov.uk	
Report a Child Missing from Education	**Bristol City Council – Education Welfare** https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme
Children affected by Forced Marriage	**Forced Marriage Unit** T: (0) 20 7008 0151 E: fmu@fco.gov.uk
Online Safety Advice	**Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline** T: 0344 381 4772 E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Reporting online abuse and grooming	**Child Exploitation and Online Protection command** https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
FGM advice	**NSPCC FGM Helpline** T: 0800 028 3550 E: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic Abuse support (Bristol)	**Directorate of local and national services** https://www.bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/abuse-violence
Young Carers – advice and support.	**Carers Support Centre** T: 0117 958 9980 W:https://www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk/young-carers/contact-young-carers/
Whistleblowing professional policy	**NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline** T: 0800 028 0285 E: help@nspcc.org.uk

Child and Adolescent Mental health (CAMHS)

Primary Mental Health Specialists (advice) Child and Adolescent Mental Health

South	**East Central**	**North**
0117 3408121	0117 3408600	0117 3546800

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust 24/7 crisis line: 0800 953 1919

Advice around harmful sexualised behaviour.	**Be Safe** 0117 3408700 W: https://www.awp.nhs.uk/camhs/camhs-services/HSB-services/be-safe
	Brook Traffic Light Tool CPD: Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool (RSE) Course

11.1 Bristol City Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

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)

11.1.1 Social Work Assessment Teams

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

11.1.2 Police

In an emergency: 999
If not an emergency but help required fast: 101

11.1.3 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.