



Safeguarding Children Policy

January 2022



POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Safeguarding children is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and defined in 'Working together to safeguard children 2013' as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health and development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Broadacres recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse. We take seriously our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young children. We will:

- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns;
- Have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse;
- Maintain good links with statutory child care authorities.

Broadacres recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, this policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against colleagues and volunteers. We recognise the need to build constructive links with the child care agencies.

The Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on agencies to co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. And the government guidance Working together to safeguard children (PDF) states:

'Everyone who works with children - including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early years' professionals, youth workers, police, Accident and Emergency colleagues, paediatricians, voluntary and community workers and social workers - has a responsibility for keeping them safe.'

'No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.'

Professionals who fail to report cases of abuse or neglect may be subject to professional disciplinary proceedings or held to account through Serious Case Review reports or professional negligence cases.

These guidelines have been prepared in accordance with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures. They will be kept under review and will be supported by appropriate training.

This policy is approved and endorsed by Broadacres Board of Management with oversight from the Customer Experience Committee. It is publicised, promoted and made available to colleagues, volunteers and people acting on Broadacres behalf who come directly into contact with children. Every individual has a responsibility to

inform the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Lead must decide if the concerns should be communicated to Children's Social Care or the police.

Training on this policy forms part of the induction process for all new colleagues. All existing colleagues identified as operating in roles that bring them into contact with vulnerable people will receive regular training on how to implement and adhere to this policy.

1. Definitions

1.1 A Child or Young Person

A child or young person is anyone who has not yet reached their 19th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

1.2 Child Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet).

They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. All forms of abuse are wrong and have damaging effects on children and young people.

2. Types of Abuse

2.1 There are five main areas of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 (including cyber 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.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), which may not necessarily involve a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

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, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying

The definition of Bullying (From NSPCC) is:

“Deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical, verbal and emotional. The damage inflicted can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).”

3. Awareness of Abuse and Neglect

Broadacres will provide all colleagues with adequate safeguarding training in order to carry out their role and responsibilities under this policy. Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by colleagues and volunteers.

All colleagues should respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with the Safeguarding Children procedure.

We are committed to actively developing service provision so as to minimise the risk of abuse occurring; to work with partner agencies to support children at risk who have experienced abuse and to work with partner agencies to end any abuse that is occurring.

4. Principles and Values

This policy is based upon the principles and values that govern how safeguarding procedures should be implemented. These reflect the most recent national guidance and Local Authorities multi-agency procedures. The underpinning aim is to achieve good outcomes for children at risk, and to support families.

5. Prevention

Whilst the safeguarding children procedure focuses on responding to potential abuse, its prevention must always be the primary objective. We all, colleagues, volunteers, and the Board of Management have a role in preventing abuse and we will work with partners to prevent, respond and end abuse.

6. Managing safeguarding arrangements

6.1 Risk assessment and management

We recognise that people may bring their children up differently and it is important to be sensitive to and tolerant of customs and views which may be held by customers, while at the same time making clear what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

All colleagues have a responsibility to report their concerns to ensure all children and young people are safe. Anyone who is concerned that a child is suffering harm or is likely to suffer harm from another person has a responsibility to protect the child by reporting their concern to their line manager / or Safeguarding Lead immediately.

6.2 Information sharing

Information sharing between organisations is essential to safeguard children at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. In this context 'organisations' means statutory organisations, voluntary and independent sector organisations, housing providers, the police and Crown Prosecution Service and organisations that provide advocacy and support.

Decisions about what information is shared and with whom will be taken on a case by case basis.

6.3 Equality and Diversity

It is every child's human right to live a life free from abuse and neglect. Every child at risk has an equal right to support and protection within this policy regardless of their individual differences or circumstances. Due regard must be given to individual differences including age, disability, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race or racial group, caring responsibilities, class, culture, language, pregnancy or marital or civil partnership status.

7. Quality Assurance and Performance Reporting

Arrangements are in place to ensure incidences of abuse are effectively managed and that the organisation is fulfilling its corporate/strategic duties. It also ensures that key learning points are identified and shared across the organisation, including near misses as well as actual incidents.

An annual review of all abuse cases across the whole organisation is undertaken,

coordinated by the Head of Customer Experience Housing and Support and shared with the Customer Experience Committee.

In addition to reflective learning from the annual review, any lessons learned and/or areas for improvement from serious/significant incidents (including “near misses”) are reviewed by Broadacres Safeguarding Panel Members.

All serious incidents including any that involve colleagues are reported to the Local Authority/Police and the Head of Organisational Development is always notified of any incident that involves a colleague either alleged, suspected or actual.

8. Associated Documentation

Safeguarding and protecting children is not a stand-alone policy or a separate activity, rather, it is very much part of our wider policy and operational frameworks. There are a variety of interlinking policies and procedures in place to ensure that we fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities. In particular:

- Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures
- Probity Policy
 - Code of Conduct
 - Whistleblowing
 - Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery, Anti Money-Laundering
- Professional Boundaries and Lone Working
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Recruitment (including DBS Policy)

This is not an exhaustive list.

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