



Broadacres

Safeguarding Children Policy

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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 is defined in the government guidance 'Working together to safeguard children 2023' 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
- 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 people. 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 childcare 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. 'Working together to safeguard children 2023' states:

'Everyone who works with children - including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early years' professionals, youth workers, police, Accident and Emergency colleagues, pediatricians, 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 Group 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 18th 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 in so far 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)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

In relation to self-harm, all colleagues who have contact with children or young people who self-harm should:

- understand how and when to apply the safeguarding principles from the procedure
- ask if there are any other safeguarding concerns such as abuse, bullying, violence or exploitation
- explore if the individual's needs need exploring and assessing

Bullying

The definition of bullying (from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) 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 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.

Any allegation of abuse from professionals will be recorded, investigated and reported to the necessary authorities through the safeguarding procedures. If the professional is a Broadacres colleague, disciplinary and grievance procedures and the Probity Policy will also be followed.

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 concerns 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 and marital or civil partnership status.

7. Recruitment and training

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps prevent unsuitable people from working or volunteering with vulnerable individuals. All colleagues are DBS checked and Broadacres ensures all colleagues and volunteers are employed according to DBS regulations.

All colleagues and volunteers complete mandatory safeguarding training as part of their induction. This is repeated at intervals appropriate for their role. Frontline colleagues attend mandatory training sessions appropriate to their role. All support workers, managers within the support service, income management officers and neighbourhood officers are trained to Level 2 Safeguarding. We recognise the emotional impact on colleagues of working with vulnerabilities and having to recognise and deal with safeguarding concerns. Colleagues have access to a specialist stress counsellor provided through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and clinical supervision.

8. 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 and strategic duties. It is also ensured 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, and shared with the Group 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 members of Broadacres Safeguarding Group.

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.

9. Publicity

We will publicise this policy in a number of ways including on our website. We will make this policy available in different formats on request to suit the needs of our customers.

10. Associated documentation

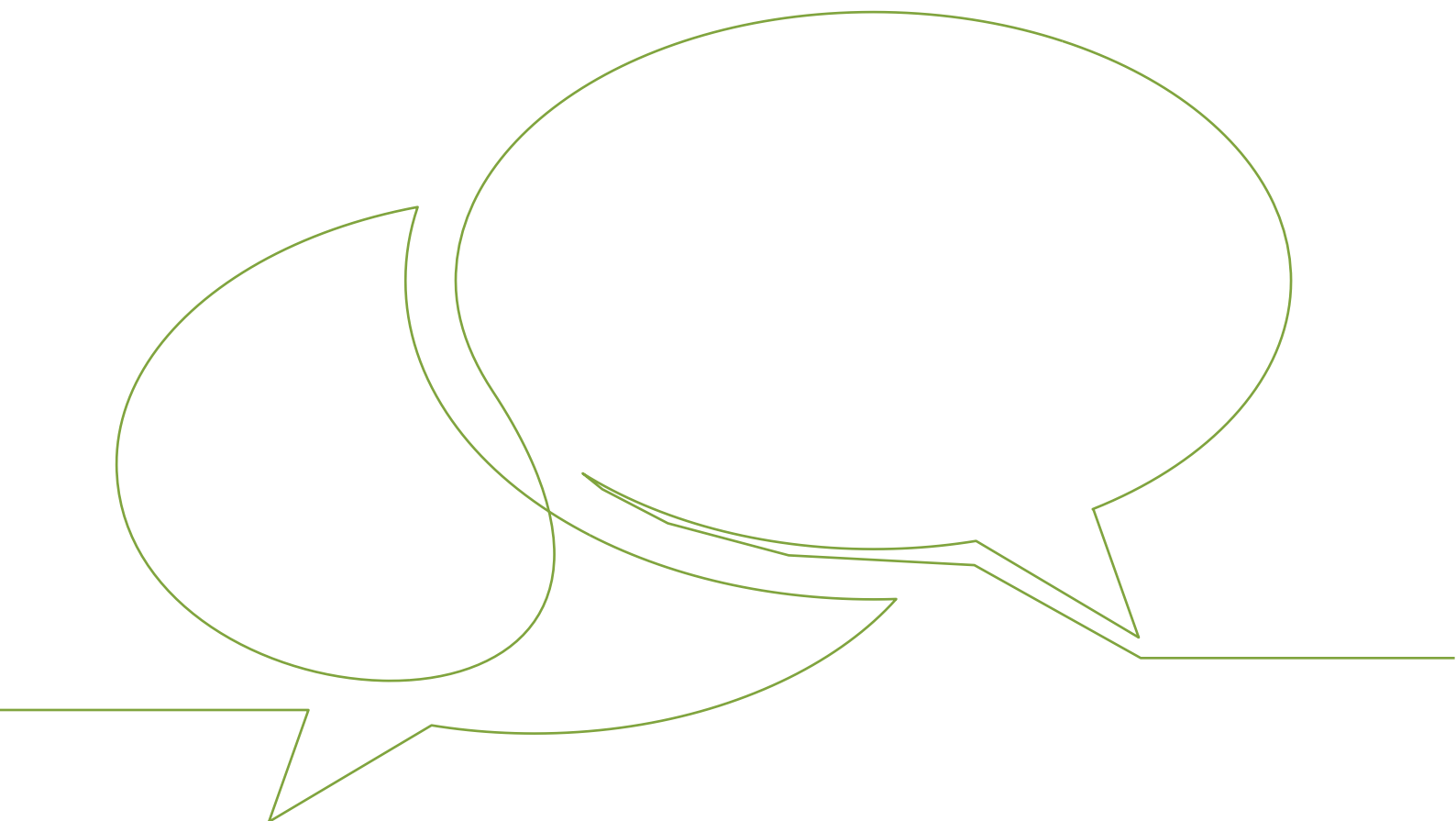
Safeguarding and protecting children is not a stand-alone policy or a separate activity, rather, it is very much part of our wider policy and operational frameworks. There are a variety of interlinking policies and procedures in place to ensure that we fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities. In particular:

- Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures
- Probity Policy
 - o Code of Conduct
 - o Whistleblowing
 - o 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)

11. Monitoring and review

Overall responsibility for this policy rests with Broadacres Board of Management with day-to-day oversight being provided by the Management Team. This policy will be reviewed every year or in line with business needs or changes in regulation and/or legislation. Appropriate training and guidance will be provided to colleagues as a result of any changes.

We will use appropriate measures to monitor the impact of this policy including satisfaction levels and customer feedback.



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