

Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

This policy applies to all paid staff, volunteers, trustees and student counsellors.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide support and protection to the children who receive BSARCS services.
- Provide staff, volunteers and others working with BSARCS with guidance and procedures they should adopt in the event that a child requires additional support services or is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm.

BSARCS has adopted the following principles in relation to safeguarding and child protection:

- The welfare of the child is **PARAMOUNT**.
- Anyone under the age of 18 is considered as a child for the purpose of this policy.
- All children – whatever their age, culture, disability, racial origin, gender, language and/or religious beliefs have a right to protection from neglect, maltreatment and abuse.
- All allegations and suspicions of abuse will always be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. Any concerns regarding the welfare of children and young people will be reported to Barnsley's Assessment and Joint Investigation Team.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the safety and welfare of the child.
- We will work in conjunction and in accordance with the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and the Strategy for Dealing with Safeguarding Issues in Charities (2017).

We will ensure that all those working with BSARCS:

- Understand their personal responsibility for protecting and safeguarding the children with whom they work.
- Is able to take appropriate action if they suspect that a child is being abused or requires an assessment of their needs by statutory services.
- Know who the **Safeguarding Leads** are within our agency and that all concerns about children's welfare are reported to one of the **Safeguarding Leads** for managerial oversight and decision making.
- Are aware of how to report welfare and/or safeguarding concerns to Barnsley's Assessment and Joint Investigation Team.
- Is informed and able to respond in a helpful manner to children who allege or disclose that abuse is happening.

BSARCS will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Listening to, valuing and respecting them.
- Adopting and enforcing appropriate child protection guidelines and procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Recruiting all staff and volunteers safely and guaranteeing all necessary checks are made.
- Ensuring that staff, volunteers, trustees and service users and their families are aware of our **Safeguarding Procedures** and the role of the **Safeguarding Lead**.
- Ensuring that when we work with partners, they have appropriate and effective child protection policies and procedures in place. If issues transpire we will escalate these to the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- Ensuring effective management of staff and volunteers through induction, supervision, support and training.
- Ensuring that relevant BSARCS staff, volunteers and trustees undertake mandatory safeguarding training appropriate for their role.
- Appointing four designated Safeguarding Leads with relevant experience to respond to concerns and record these appropriately on our electronic recording system. (CRMS)
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are fully trained on how to document and record concerns for children on our electronic recording system.
- Ensuring that all appropriate recording and monitoring systems are in place and that information about concerns is shared with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Ensuring safeguarding is a mandatory agenda item to be discussed during team meetings and case supervision.
- Reporting any concerns or allegations made against staff, volunteers and/or trustees who work with children to Barnsley's Local Authority Designated Officer as outlined within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- Evaluating and reviewing these policies and procedures every 3 years or when significant legislative changes require it.

Child Protection Procedures

In considering whether or not a child is in need or in need of protection, please read this policy in conjunction with the procedures outlined by the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership, which can be found at www.proceduresonline.com/barnsley/scb or at www.barnsley.gov.uk

Introduction

The policy applies to all paid staff, volunteers, trustees, students and anyone else who is working with BSARCS.

This procedure outlines what people should do if they have a concern about a child's welfare and/or safety. These concerns could include when a child has been identified as requiring additional support services from Early Help provision, requires an assessment as a Child in Need, under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 or an assessment under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 where there are concerns that a child is at risk of suffering significant harm.

Law and Legislation:

The law and legislation which underpins this policy is the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2017.

It is of upmost importance that **concerns about the welfare and safety** of children are reported to **Children's Social Care**. The Local Authority have a duty to work with all relevant agencies to ensure the safety of children. Only the Local Authority, the Police and the NSPCC can legally investigate concerns about child abuse.

Every Child Matters 2006

Government guidance about how nationally children should be able to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

The UN Convention on the rights of the child

This is an internationally recognised set of rights for children ratified by the UK Government in 1991. Child Abuse is defined as:

- Physical Abuse (includes hitting, biting, burns, scalds, shaking, throwing and drowning)
- Emotional Abuse (includes making a child feel worthless, unloved, relying on the child to provide for your needs, to behave in an age inappropriate manner, to witness on-going violence and abuse)

- Sexual Abuse (includes rape, digital and oral penetration, sexual touching, being made to engage in sexual acts with others, forced to watch pornography)
- Neglect (includes failure to provide adequate food, clothing, warmth and shelter. Poor supervision, failing to ensure medical care is accessed)
- Other relevant factors which can suggest or be prevalent in cases of child abuse are domestic abuse, substance misuse, forced marriage, honour crimes, and female genital mutilation.

This list is not exhaustive an advice should be sought from the designated Safeguarding Leads if you have a concern about the safety or welfare of a child. If you have a concern about a child who you contact in the course of your work/volunteering role speak to the **Safeguarding Children's Lead** within 4 hours of identifying the concern. If the Safeguarding Leads are not available please speak to another **BSARCS manager** or contact **Children's Social Care** on 01226 772423 or the **Police** on 101/ 999 if the child is in immediate danger.

BSARCS Safeguarding Children Leads

There are **three** Safeguarding Children Leads who have the necessary training, knowledge, skills and experience to be able to deal with questions of safeguarding effectively, efficiently and appropriately.

The Safeguarding Children's Leads are:

- Adele Wragg
- Ruth O'Leary
- Tanya Willis

Their role is to:

- Receive and record information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have **child protection concerns**.
- Assess the information promptly and carefully.
- Clarify or obtain more information about the matter as appropriate.
- Where allegations **do not involve** parents/carers liaise with and inform them that a safeguarding referral to Children's Social Care is being made. If allegations involve parents and/or carers then discuss with Social Care regarding how the allegation information will be shared with parents/carers and by whom. (Permission from parents/carers **must be sought** before making a referral for **Early Help Services** or requesting a **Child in Need assessment from Social Care**.)

- Make a **formal referral** to Children's Social Care or the Police without delay. It is not the role of the Safeguarding Children's Lead to decide whether a child has been abused or not, this is the responsibility of Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

Procedures for Responding to Causes or Concerns of Allegations of Abuse

If a child says that he or she is being abused or provides information that suggests that they are abused or there is evidence that the child requires additional support services then the person receiving the information should:

- Be calm and reassure the child. Let them know at the earliest opportunity that you will share information with others. Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Discuss with the child who needs to be told about the situation.
- Ask questions only to clarify understanding of what the child has said. Do not interrogate the child.
- Let the child know you understand what they have said and that you will act upon it.
- Make a written record of the allegation including when the alleged incident took place, time and date if possible, who was present and what was said to have happened.
- Write this down immediately or as soon as is practicable, date and sign it (use the words and terms the child uses). Report the matter immediately to a Safeguarding Lead and/or Children's Social Care or the Police.

A Safeguarding Referral will be made when:

- A child makes a clear allegation of abuse.
- A child sustains an injury and there is a professional concern about how it was caused.
- A member of the public makes a clear, detailed, credible allegation that someone has abused a child.
- Professional concerns exist about sexual abuse, despite no allegations being made.
- Concerns exist about a child having contact with any person who may pose a significant risk to them. This will include people with a relevant criminal conviction or People Posing Risk (PPR). (See appendices for relevant offences to identify a person presenting a risk, or potential risk to children)
- A child has been abandoned.
- A child is being refused access to urgent or important medical assessment or services.
- A child is at risk of being subjected to illegal procedures, for example forced marriage, FGM, trafficking.
- Further concerns have arisen of increased or additional risk to a child who is subject to Early Help intervention, Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan where there

is immediate risk and/or an incident or allegation, a telephone referral should be made, and followed up in writing.

Recording Information

The Safeguarding Children's Leads should ensure that any incidents, concerns, suspected abuse about children are **clearly recorded on the child's file** by the member of staff alerted to this alongside **clear managerial oversight** recorded by the Safeguarding Lead. It is important that **all concerns should be recorded** whether a referral to Children's Social Care/Police is made or not. The following information should be recorded;

- Name and address of the child
- Age, date of birth
- Name and address of adults involved if known
- Date and time of the alleged incident
- Nature of injury or behaviour
- If the child arrived with an injury
- Child's explanation of what happened in their own words
- Adult's explanation of what happened
- Date and time of the record
- Any questions that were asked

Information should be **evidence based**. It should not include **assumptions** and should not refer to child abuse. Be aware that you may be required to give this information to a Social Worker, the Police, or the Court at a future date.

Attendance at Statutory Meetings

Children and families that we work with may already be receiving Early Help intervention, or be subject to a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan, or may enter these strands of support whilst we are involved. As an agency providing independent support directly to the child/ family, we may be invited to attend or contribute to statutory meetings. All such invites must be discussed with the Children's Service manager and it would generally be expected that the worker involved attend the meeting or, where required, submit a written report to the chair of the meeting.

As our role is first and foremost to provide independent support to the child/family any written report should be shared with the child or family prior to the meeting taking place, where this is practicable and safe to do so.

Monitoring

The Children's Service Manager will maintain a confidential tracker which details all referrals to Children's Social Care in order to monitor and follow up progress of referrals. The Safeguarding Lead and/or the member of staff working with the child will contact Social Care within 48 hours and follow up of any referrals made which raise concern that a child is at risk of suffering significant harm. Any referrals made for children to access Early Help

Services or be assessed as Children in Need will be followed up within 5 working days by the Safeguarding Lead or the member of staff working with the child. This will be agreed between the Lead and member of staff at the time of referral.

Whistle Blowing

Where there is concern about any of BSARCS' activities, an employee may refer directly to the Development Manager or a Trustee outside of the usual grievance procedure.

BSARCS have a clear Whistleblowing procedure which reflects the principles in Sir Robert Francis – Freedom to Speak up Review which is suitably referenced in staff training and the staff handbook.

Date of review	October 2020	Reviewed by	Adele Wragg
Date review due	October 2021		