



## Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

### Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide members of the Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum (BBPCF) Steering Group with clear guidance about their role and responsibilities in safeguarding vulnerable adults, and to provide information for parents and carers about the safeguarding measures that BBPCF employs to ensure that it meets its responsibilities to promote the welfare of and safeguard vulnerable adults.

### Legislation and guidance that underpins this policy

From April 2015 the introduction of The Care Act 2014 put the Safeguarding Adults Board on a statutory footing. The safeguarding policies and procedures have been amended to reflect the changes in law, terminology and culture of safeguarding practice.

The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance states that safeguarding should be personal, it should be person led and outcome focused, it should enhance involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety. The Care Act 2014 states that local authorities must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if they reasonably suspect an adult with care and support needs is or is at risk of being abused or neglected

### The principles behind the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

In today's world all agencies and individuals now share the responsibility to protect adults from harm or the risk of harm. We live and work in a climate where we, as adults, *"have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults"*

1.1 The application of BBPCF Safeguarding and vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures is based on the following key principles:

- The welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All vulnerable adults have the right to;

- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing
- All vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

Whilst it is not the responsibility of this organization to determine whether or not abuse has taken place (this is undertaken in liaison with external adult protection professionals), it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns in relation to vulnerable adults to the relevant authority.

The BBPCF Steering Group does not have direct contact with vulnerable adults, however by the nature of the organisation we work directly with their parent carers. Therefore, it is essential that we have robust policies and procedures.

All Steering Group members are expected to be familiar with, and comply with this policy, and its procedures.

## Policy

- Parent carers of vulnerable adults who attend or are members of BBPCF need to be aware that any concerns that a vulnerable adult has, or may be experiencing harm, which comes to the attention of Steering Group members may be referred to the local statutory agency.
- That Steering Group members, and any staff employed by the BBPCF will be recruited using safe recruitment practices (including the taking of references) to ensure they are suitable individuals to take on a role which puts them into contact with large numbers of parent carers.
- Steering Group Members and staff will be provided with training and induction to assist them to fulfil their duties.

## Procedures:

Whilst recognising that the BBPCF Steering Group will have little direct contact with vulnerable adults, it's work with parent carers means that they may indirectly have contact with, and certainly have contact with their parent carers who often live in particularly challenging situations.

Therefore, these procedures are designed to support the recognition of abuse of vulnerable adults and provide clear guidance about what processes and actions should be taken if this is identified to ensure that adults are safeguarded and protected.

## **Safeguarding disabled children and young people**

There is clear evidence that disabled adults have an increased vulnerability to being abused, and that the presence of multiple impairments further increases their vulnerability. There are many reasons for this, and it is important that all those who work with vulnerable adults have some understanding of these reasons and ensure that they offer appropriate support to any vulnerable adult who discloses abuse.

### **Guidance on how to respond to a vulnerable adult disclosing abuse**

#### **DO:**

The objectives of an enquiry into abuse or neglect are to:

- Establish facts;
- Ascertain the adult's views and wishes;
- Assess the needs of the adult for protection, support and redress and how they might be met;
- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the adult as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- Do tell the adult what you are doing and when and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.
- Do write down everything said and what was done.

#### **DON'T:**

- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't interrogate the adult – 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.
- Don't cast doubt on what has been told to you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse.
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your nominated Safeguarding Children person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advise.

### **Should we tell parent / carers if we are going to make a referral?**

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parent carers about any concerns and you 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 Adult Safeguarding Board 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 (previously known as Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy) 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, yourself, or others at immediate risk.

## **Guidance on how to respond to a parent carer disclosing abuse**

### **DO:**

- If you enter into a discussion with a parent carer who you believe may begin to disclose information which leads you to believe that an adult has suffered, or may suffer harm, make sure they know as soon as possible that you will not be able to keep this information to yourself.
- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the parent carer as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do tell the parent carer they are right to tell you.
- Do be honest about who you have to tell and why.
- If a referral needs to be made to Adult Safeguarding Board, encourage the parent carer to make the referral themselves. Support them if necessary – however be clear that if they won't do this you will have to do this.
- Do make sure you are clear (if possible) where the vulnerable adult is at the current time and consider their immediate safety.
- If you have to make the referral, do tell the parent carer what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Do write down everything said and what was done.

### **DON'T:**

- Don't make promises you can't keep – e.g. tell people they can tell you things in confidence.
- Don't interrogate the parent carer – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and Adult Safeguarding Board, who have experience in this.
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your nominated Safeguarding person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

## **Reporting Procedures – DO NOT DELAY**

### **Emergency Situations**

If emergency medical attention is required, this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

If an 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

### **Other situations**

It is vitally important that any disclosure made in confidence is recorded factually as soon as possible; this is whether or not the matter is taken to another authority.

An accurate account should be made of:

- Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
- Names of people who were involved
- What was said or done by whom
- Any action taken by the group to gather information and refer on
- Any further action, e.g. suspension of a worker or volunteer
- Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency
- Names of person reporting and to whom reported

The designated member of the BBPCF responsible for Safeguarding should then use the appropriate reporting systems for the situation. This may be reporting the matter to Local Authorities Adult Safeguarding Board or the police. This is why recording all information impartially and accurately is vital as this could be used for evidence for later use.

The Local Adult Safeguarding Board will be able to provide you with Inter Agency referral forms to report a concern, or you may wish to devise your own form. Completed forms and any written information regarding Safeguarding adult issues concerning individual's needs to be kept in a safe locked place to ensure confidentiality.

### **Recruitment selection and Vetting Process**

Steering Group members will also be vetted to ensure that they are suitable individuals to take on a role which places them in contact with a large number of parent carers.

Steering Group Members and staff will be provided with training and induction to assist them to fulfil their duties.

## **Allegations against Adults who work with vulnerable adults**

If you have information which suggest an adult who works with vulnerable adults(in a paid or unpaid capacity) has

- ❑ Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed an adult
- ❑ Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to an adult
- ❑ Behaved towards an adult in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with adult.

You should speak immediately with the nominated safeguarding advisor. The safeguarding officer will consult with / make a referral to the Adult Safeguarding Board. (Local Authority Delegated Officer)

## **Code of Conduct**

BBPCF has a Code of Conduct which all Steering Group members are expected to comply with.

The Code of Conduct has a clear section in relation to action taken should a safeguarding issue be raised in relation to a member of the Steering Group.

Steering Group members must inform the Chair about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately or risk bringing the name of BBPCF into disrepute.

The following are examples of types of circumstances

- Any allegation that an individual may have committed, or is being investigated in relation to having committed a crime
- Any safeguarding concern relating to vulnerable adults.
- Any significant challenge between individuals and Government agencies (e.g. where individuals may end up in a litigious relationship with a central or local Government Department)
- Other similar circumstances

In these situations, it will be standard practice to ask the Steering Group member to temporarily stand down until the issues are resolved. This is a neutral and non-judgemental position, designed to protect the organisation and the individual, and to ensure the individual involved is able to focus all of their attention on the issue at hand. It is felt necessary however to insist on this protocol to safeguard both BBPCF and the individual involved.

## **Nominated safeguarding advisor**

The nominated Safeguarding Advisor for BBPCF Steering Group is Jo Jones

The role of the nominated officer is to:

- To provide a single point of contact between BBPCF and the Ault Safeguarding Board.
- To offer consultation and advice about safeguarding and adult protection concerns pertaining to the activity of BBPCF.
- To ensure Safeguarding training is completed every 2 years to keep updated with guidelines

## **Monitoring and review strategy**

This policy and procedure document will be reviewed on an annual basis.