
POLICY: SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

Approved by	Board of Trustees
Last review	January 2024
Next review	January 2025
Version	0.0

Ammendments:
None

Date:
01/01/2024

VOLUNTEERING

Prior to starting your volunteer journey, a member of our team will talk you through the specifics of the role(s) you have signed up for and what will be required. If at any point you have any questions or concerns, please get in contact with us. We want volunteering with us to be enjoyable and something you feel confident and empowered to do. If at any point you feel you need additional training, please contact us and this will be arranged.

Prior to starting any role with us, a member of the team will talk you through the requirements of the role you have applied for, will introduce you to relevant members of the team and of course service users. They will also work with you if you have any specific requirements eg adjustments to the workplace.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment and selection process is incredibly important, due to the vulnerable populations we support. Because of this we want to ensure we recruit the right volunteers to join our team.

After an informal interview to discuss individuals expectations, skills and experience, as well as the roles we have available, volunteers will be asked to complete an application form and references and will be required to complete a mandatory DBS check.

The process is not designed to be competitive or intimidating but rather to ensure we recruit individuals that are absolutely suited for the role.

We also ask that all our volunteers read the Induction Book and sign an agreement to confirm that they agree to commit to our aims and work inline with our policies.

1. PURPOSE

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk of harm.

This policy defines how Bridge to Unity operates to safeguard adults at risk of abuse and/or neglect.

As an organisation we have a duty of care and are committed to the protection and safety of adults at risk that access any of our activities. This policy exists to protect them and support our staff who work or come into contact with service users at risk of harm.

Bridge to Unity recognises that under the Care Act 2014 it has a duty for the care for the protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. Bridge to Unity is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

Bridge to Unity is committed to inter agency collaboration and recognises its duty and responsibility for making arrangements to ensure all its functions and activities have regard to safeguarding adults at risk of abuse. The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

We believe that everyone working for and with Bridge to Unity has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all adults and to practise in a way that prioritises protection at all times. All staff will ensure that vulnerable adults are protected equally regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and refugee status.

As an organisation Bridge to Unity recognises the barriers and additional needs of adults with refugee status or seeking asylum, especially around communication and accessing services. The policy works to ensure individuals can access help easily and readily when required.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

Bridge to Unity's Board of Trustees is accountable for ensuring that the organisation abides with its safeguarding requirements as set out in this policy.

The Board of Trustees accept responsibility to ensure that:

- The policy is adhered to
- The policy is applied to all practice at all times and is legally compliant and compatible with the breadth of work carried out by Bridge to Unity
- The safeguarding lead remains up to date with safeguarding training (level 3 and above for adults and children)
- The policy remains up-to-date and is regularly reviewed

3. PERSONS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- **All staff, paid & unpaid, including volunteers**
- **All service users**
- **All visitors and contractors**

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All members of staff (paid and unpaid) are required to report any suspected abuse and be aware of the appropriate reporting and support procedure for safeguarding.

There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk from abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and mistreatment.

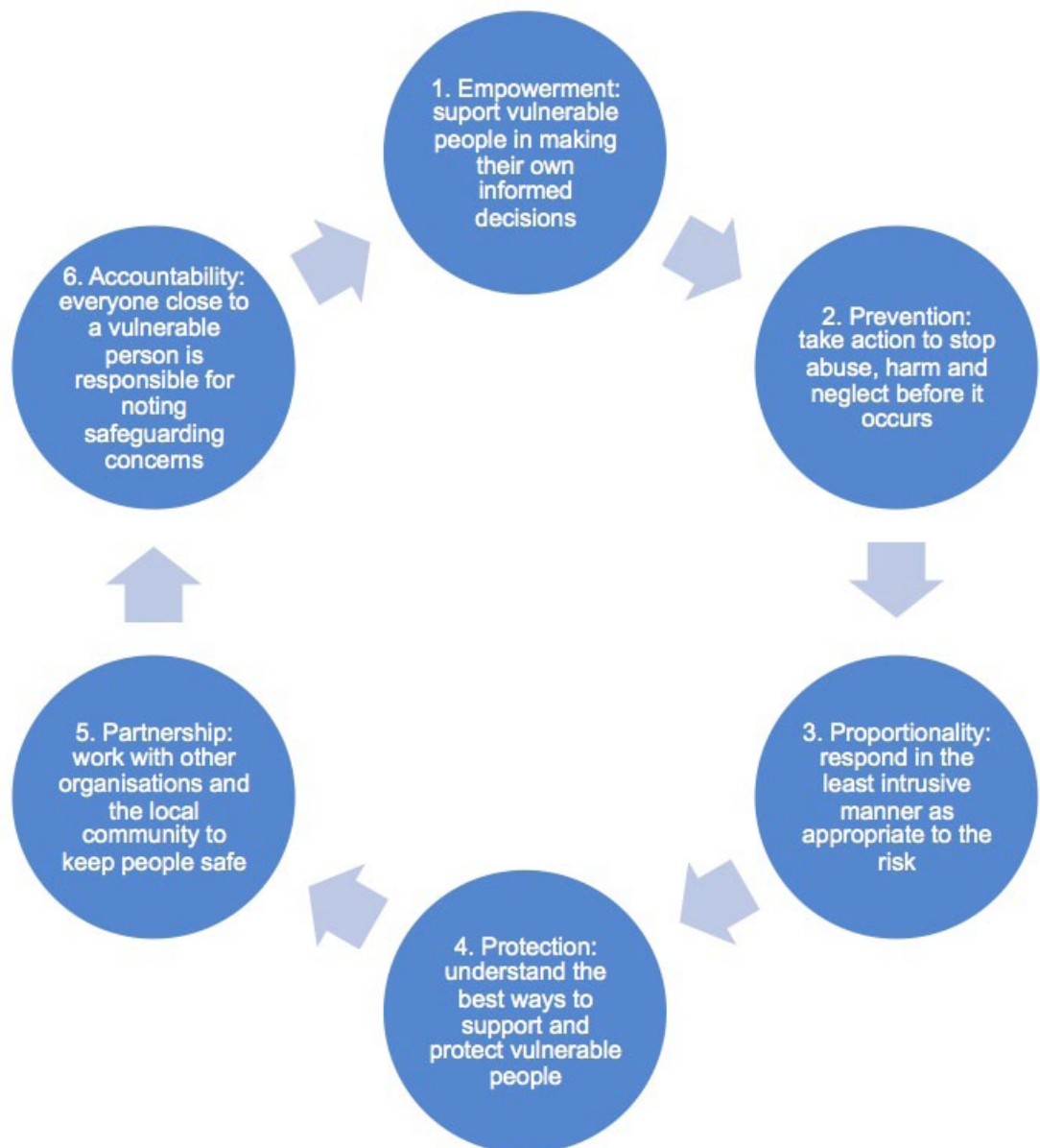
All staff must be made aware of the policy and procedures for the safeguarding and protection of adults at risk through appropriate safeguarding training, supervision and support for staff and for creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in meeting their safeguarding role.

Prior to starting work with Bridge to Unity, all staff are given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with safeguarding responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns.

A clear line of accountability for the provision of safe services exists. The Safeguarding Lead for Bridge to Unity is Alexandra Kenchington. All staff will be made aware of how to contact the Safeguarding Lead by phone and by email prior to starting volunteering.

4. DEFINITIONS

Through this policy and through the work carried out, Bridge to Unity aims to uphold the 6 key principles of Adult Safeguarding



For the purposes of this policy, Bridge to Unity recognises adults at risk of abuse or neglect to be someone over 18 years old who, according to paragraph 42.1 of the Care Act 2014:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- As a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it

There are many types of abuse including but not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional abuse
- Domestic violence
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect
- Self-harm and suicidal ideation

More information about the types of abuse and their signs and indicators can be found at:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse>

We request that all staff (paid and unpaid) read the above and familiarise themselves with it.

5. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING ABUSE

Recognising Abuse

You should be aware that sometimes recognising abuse and exploitation may be difficult. We ask that staff are alert and aware of changes in a service user's behaviour, for example in certain circumstances or in the presence of certain people. You should not keep safeguarding concerns to yourself, these should always be shared with the Safeguarding Lead or where this is not possible, a senior member of the Bridge to Unity team.

Reporting Abuse

All staff who suspect abuse or exploitation, whatever the suspicion, should share this with the designated Safeguarding Lead immediately by phone and in writing via email. This must be recorded in a way which gives precise details of the concerns. The Safeguarding Lead will then refer to necessary agencies as appropriate including but not limited to the police and adult social care.

When a service user discloses information about abuse, we must treat them with sympathy and respect. We ask that you don't ask leading questions but that you ask a statement of facts which are appropriately recorded.

Safeguarding should be person-led and outcome focused, engaging the adult at risk in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

When you suspect a safeguarding issue, or when it is disclosed to you, you are required to explain to the service user that Bridge to Unity's Safeguarding Policy requires you to inform the Safeguarding Lead who may then discuss the issue with outside agencies. It is important to record if there are children at home in the context of abuse of an adult. Details of this can be found below in the procedures section.

Whilst every effort must be made to work with adults experiencing abuse within the present legal framework there will be some occasions on which adults at risk will choose to remain in dangerous situations. It may be that even after careful scrutiny of the legal framework, staff will conclude that they have no power to gain access to a particular adult at risk. Staff may find that they have no power to remove the adult from a situation of risk or intervene positively because the adult refuses all help or wants to terminate contact with the professionals.

Safeguarding Leads will give full support to staff over problems when handling cases of adults remaining in high-risk situations, provided that:

- It is evident from case records that Safeguarding Adults procedures have been properly followed;
- Every effort has been made, on a multi-agency basis, to intervene positively to protect the adult at risk;
- Legal advice has been obtained and acted upon where required
- And ultimately that the adult at risk has been fully consulted and involved as far as practicable in every decision relating to their situation
- A vital aspect of all Bridge to Unity's work is to ensure clients have all the information needed to make informed decisions about all aspects of their lives and care to promote well-being and independence.

All adults have a right to independence and control over information about themselves that is shared with other services. Although it is always best practice to obtain consent for sharing information, in some circumstances that may not be possible and it may be in the person's best interest to share concerns and override consent, for example if you suspect a significant risk to an individual without capacity or a risk to the public.

If you suspect there to be a threat to life or concern for serious injury, including suicide, emergency services must be contacted immediately.

6. CONSENT & CAPACITY

The consideration of capacity is crucial at all stages of Safeguarding Adults procedures. For example determining the ability of an adult at risk to make lifestyle choices, such as choosing to remain in a situation where they risk abuse; determining whether a particular act or transaction is abusive or consensual; or determining how much an adult at risk can be involved in making decisions in a given situation.

The key development affecting this area of work is the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which provides a statutory framework to empower and protect adults at risk who may not be able to make their own decisions. It makes it clear who can take decisions in which situations and how they should go about this. It enables people to plan ahead for a time when they may lose capacity. It applies to anyone aged 16 years and over therefore appropriate liaison needs to occur for young people aged 16 to 18 years with Children's Services where relevant as part of Safeguarding Adults work.

The Bridge to Unity safeguarding leads will work inline with this legal framework to determine an individuals capacity and when consent should and should not be overridden.

7. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING

In General

You may be concerned about harm to another person because of something you have seen or heard, information you have been told by others or because someone has confided in you about things that are happening or have happened to them.

You should not keep safeguarding concerns to yourself.

If you have concerns and/ or you are told about possible or alleged abuse, poor practice or wider welfare issues you must contact the Safeguarding Lead or another member of the senior team as soon as you can.

If the Safeguarding Lead is implicated or you think has a conflict of interest, then report to another senior member of the organisation. You will be made aware of who to contact in these circumstances.

If you are concerned about harm being caused to someone else, please follow the guidance below.

- It is not your responsibility to prove or decide whether an Lead if the person allegedly causing the harm is likely to find out.
- Remember not to confront the person thought to be causing the harm.

Responding to a Direct Disclosure

If an adult indicates that they are being harmed or abused, or information is received which gives rise to concern, the person receiving the information should:

- Take it seriously.
- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said, allowing the adult to continue at their own pace,
- Be sensitive.
- Keep questions to a minimum, only ask questions if you need to identify/ clarify what the person is telling you.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information.
- Ask them what they would like to happen next.
- Explain what you would like to do next.
- Explain that you will have to share the information with the Safeguarding Lead
- Ask for their consent for the information to be shared outside the organisation.
- Make an arrangement as to how you/the Safeguarding Lead can contact them safely.
- Act swiftly to report and carry out any relevant actions.
- Record in writing what was said using the adult's own words as soon as possible.

It is important **not** to:

- Dismiss or ignore the concern.
- Panic or allow shock or distaste to show.
- Make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Make assumptions or speculate.
- Come to your own conclusions.
- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Promise to keep the information secret.
- Make promises that cannot be kept.
- Conduct an investigation of the case.

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- Confront the person thought to be causing harm.
 - Take sole responsibility.
 - Tell everyone.

Once a concern has been passed to Safeguarding Lead, they will keep clear records of decision making, actions taken, and the outcomes achieved. They will also collect feedback from the adult and involve outside agencies if required.

It is the Safeguarding Leads responsibility to find out whether the person making the report believes the adult has the mental capacity to make decisions about what safeguarding actions they want to be taken (they are not expected to assess this, only provide their opinion).

The safeguarding lead will decide whether action needs to be taken and who to contact for example:

Contact the police (where the crime took place) if:

- A serious crime has been committed.
- A crime has been committed against someone without the mental capacity to contact the police themselves.
- The adult has asked you to make a report to the police on their behalf because they are unable to themselves.

Make a referral/report to the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

AND

- The adult appears not to have the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety and well-being.
- The risk is from a person employed or volunteering in work with adults with care and support needs (including within a sports organisations).
- There are other 'adults at risk' (e.G. Another family member, another club member or other people using a service).
- The adult at risk lives in wales or northern ireland (no consent required).
- The adult at risk lives in england or scotland and they have asked you to make a report or have given their informed consent to you making it.

If a child is at risk the Safeguarding Lead must also make a child safeguarding referral to the Local Authority. This includes all situations where there is domestic abuse within the household where the child lives.

If it is unclear whether or not to make a referral/report you can ask for advice by contacting the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team/Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub and discuss the situation with them without disclosing the identity of the adult or the person who may be causing harm.

8. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF MEMBERS AND SERVICE USERS

Allegation against a staff member

All our staff members have a responsibility to report concerns about other members of staff. Any concerns must be reported immediately to a member of the senior team who will ensure this is investigated immediately, which may require a temporary suspension to the staff member's work.

Safeguarding checks such as seeking references and obtaining Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks where appropriate will be carried out prior to an individual starting work (paid or unpaid). In addition, substantial unsupervised access to clients is not allowed until DBS checks are received.

Allegations against a service user

Allegations against a Bridge to Unity service user are taken very seriously and should be reported immediately to a member of the senior team who will ensure immediate investigation and safeguarding measures are put in place.

For more information regarding safeguarding procedures, or if you have any concerns about the welfare of a service user please contact:

Safeguarding Lead: Alexandra Kenchington
Email: safeguarding@bridgetounity.co.uk
Tel: 07515422832