BRIDGE TO UNITY
Bringing communities together

Safeguarding Policy (Adults)

Policy	Safeguarding Policy (Adults)
Version	1.1
Issued	October 2026 (interim update)
What changed	Safeguarding Lead changed to Jordan Burne-Cronshaw, a trustee. Route added for concerns about the Safeguarding Lead (Chair of Trustees). Contact details updated.
Approval	Originally approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2025. This update is to be ratified at the next Board meeting.
Next full review	January 2027

Worried about someone's safety?

If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

Otherwise, contact our Safeguarding Lead, **Jordan Burne-Cronshaw** (Trustee):

Phone or WhatsApp: **07925 462476** Email: **info@bridgetounity.co.uk**

If your concern is about the Safeguarding Lead, contact the Chair of Trustees, **Chris White**, on the same phone number or email and ask to speak to him directly.

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 who access any of our activities. This policy exists to protect them and to support our staff who work with 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 and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. Bridge to Unity is committed to promoting wellbeing, preventing harm and 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 adults at risk 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.

Accountability

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

Who this policy applies to

- All staff, paid and 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, and through an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in meeting their safeguarding role.

Before starting work with Bridge to Unity, all staff are given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with safeguarding responsibilities and the procedures to follow 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 **Jordan Burne-Cronshaw**, a trustee of the charity. If a concern involves the Safeguarding Lead, it must go to the Chair of Trustees, **Chris White**. All staff will be told how to contact the Safeguarding Lead by phone and by email before they start volunteering.

Definitions

Through this policy and the work we carry out, Bridge to Unity aims to uphold the six key principles of adult safeguarding: empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability.

For the purposes of this policy, Bridge to Unity recognises an adult at risk of abuse or neglect to be someone over 18 years old who, as set out in section 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 themselves 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: www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse

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

Recognising and reporting abuse

Recognising abuse

Recognising abuse and exploitation can sometimes be difficult. We ask that staff are alert to 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. Always share them with the Safeguarding Lead or, where this is not possible, the Chair of Trustees.

Reporting abuse

All staff who suspect abuse or exploitation, whatever the suspicion, should share this with the Safeguarding Lead immediately by phone and in writing by email. This must be recorded in a way which gives precise details of the concerns. The Safeguarding Lead will then refer to the 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. Please don't ask leading questions; record a statement of the facts as they are told to you.

Safeguarding should be person led and focused on outcomes, engaging the adult at risk in a conversation about how best to respond to their 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 are in the procedures section below.

While 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 choose to remain in dangerous situations. Even after careful scrutiny of the legal framework, staff may conclude that they have no power to gain access to a particular adult at risk, or to remove the adult from a situation of risk, or to intervene positively because the adult refuses all help or wants to end contact with professionals.

The Safeguarding Lead 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
- 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 they need to make informed decisions about all aspects of their lives and care, to promote wellbeing 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 a threat to life or a risk of serious injury, including suicide, emergency services must be contacted immediately.

Consent and 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 legislation in this area is 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 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 and over, so appropriate liaison needs to occur with children's services for young people aged 16 to 18 where relevant.

The Safeguarding Lead will work in line with this legal framework to determine an individual's capacity and when consent should and should not be overridden.

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 as soon as you can.

If the Safeguarding Lead is implicated, or you think they have a conflict of interest, report to the Chair of Trustees, **Chris White**, instead.

If you are concerned about harm being caused to someone else, please remember:

- It is not your responsibility to prove whether harm has happened, or to decide whether the person allegedly causing the harm is likely to find out.
- Do not 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, and only ask questions if you need to identify or 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 or 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
- Confront the person thought to be causing harm
- Take sole responsibility
- Tell everyone

Once a concern has been passed to the 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 Lead's 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 to give 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 or report to the local authority Safeguarding Adults Team or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) if:

- The adult appears not to have the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety and wellbeing
- The risk is from a person employed or volunteering in work with adults with care and support needs
- There are other adults at risk (for example another family 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 has asked you to make a report or given 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 or report, you can ask for advice by contacting the local authority Safeguarding Adults Team or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and discuss the situation without disclosing the identity of the adult or the person who may be causing harm.

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 the Safeguarding Lead, or to the Chair of Trustees if the concern involves the Safeguarding Lead, who will ensure it is investigated immediately. This may require a temporary suspension of the staff member's work.

Safeguarding checks such as seeking references and obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where appropriate will be carried out before an individual starts work (paid or unpaid). Substantial unsupervised access to clients is not allowed until DBS checks are received.

Allegation against a service user

Allegations against a Bridge to Unity service user are taken very seriously and should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Lead, who will ensure immediate investigation and that safeguarding measures are put in place.

Volunteering and safer recruitment

Before you start volunteering, 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 touch. We want volunteering with us to be enjoyable and something you feel confident and empowered to do. If you feel you need additional training at any point, please contact us and this will be arranged.

Before you start any role with us, a member of the team will talk you through the requirements of the role, introduce you to relevant members of the team and service users, and work with you on any specific

requirements, for example adjustments to the workplace.

The recruitment and selection process is incredibly important because of the people we support. After an informal interview to discuss expectations, skills and experience and the roles we have available, volunteers will be asked to complete an application form and provide references, and will be required to complete a DBS check. The process is not designed to be competitive or intimidating, but to make sure we recruit people who are well suited to the role.

We also ask all our volunteers to read the induction book and sign an agreement confirming that they commit to our aims and will work in line with our policies.

Contacts

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

Safeguarding Lead: Jordan Burne-Cronshaw, Trustee
Phone or WhatsApp: 07925 462476
Email: info@bridgetounity.co.uk

If the concern is about the Safeguarding Lead: Chris White, Chair of Trustees, on the phone number or email above.

In an emergency: call 999.