

Bracknell Forest Information, Advice & Support Service (IASS) Safeguarding Policy



This policy is to be read in conjunction with Bracknell Forest Council's other safeguarding policies.

We always advise new parents/young people/children that any discussions we have with them are confidential with the exception of any safeguarding concerns.

The overriding principle is that if you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, you should discuss your concerns with your line manager.

If for any reason, you are unable to speak to a manager and there is an immediate risk you should take advice direct from the appropriate social care team.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

A vulnerable adult is described as someone "*who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness and is or may be unable to take care or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation*".

Other key principles:

- The interests of the child/young person/vulnerable adult are paramount and should underpin all safeguarding work and resolve any conflicts of interest.
- Any concerns can be discussed informally with your line manager.
- The welfare of clients can only be safeguarded and individuals at risk protected when all relevant agencies and individuals accept their share of responsibility and co-operate with one another.
- Statements about or allegations of abuse or neglect made by children, young people and vulnerable adults must always be taken seriously.

- The wishes and feelings of the client are vital elements in assessing risk and formulating protection plans and must always be sought and given due consideration according to their level of understanding.
- Investigation is the responsibility of the relevant social care department and the police. These agencies have to balance the necessity for action to protect the client with the potential adverse effects of an investigation on the family and/or others.
- Record keeping is essential at each stage and all documents should be kept to the standards outlined in the data retention policy.
- Disclosures or information relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults with suicidal feelings should always be discussed with your line manager.

Guidance on practice:

If someone tells you that they, or someone they know is at risk:

- Take it seriously
- Reassure the person who has made the disclosure to you that they have done the right thing.
- Give the person time to talk and do not probe or ask leading questions. Investigation is not your responsibility.
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Explain to the person that you will share this information with staff within BFC who will ensure that the appropriate procedures will be followed.
- Ensure that you have taken detailed notes of the disclosure and that they are verbatim recordings.
- Discuss all cases of young people or vulnerable adults you are concerned about with your line manager, usually within one working day of recognition.
- When a referral is made to social care, agree with them what the client and parents will be told, by whom and when. Do not leave messages. You must confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing within 48 hours. Social care should acknowledge your written referral within one working day of receiving it. Should you not have a response within three working days, contact them again.
- Under no circumstances should you confront an abuser.
- Do not share suspicions or information with any other person other than your line manager and social care.
- If you believe that there are child protection/safeguarding concerns with a BF employee, immediately inform the LADO. Confidentiality must be maintained and the information not shared with other staff.

The Data Protection Act allows for disclosures to be made to external agencies without the consent of the young person/vulnerable adult when there is evidence that this disclosure will prevent them from harm. It is important to check the legitimacy of the caller and never disclose information to a caller from a mobile phone.

Following a referral to social care, you might be required to contribute to a child protection conference. This could include attending meetings to discuss the case, producing reports for any case conferences, contribution to the decision regarding further action.

12.09.17 RS

Reviewed Jan 2020

Reviewed and amended Jan 2021, Jan 2022, 2023, Jan 2024 Jan 2025 Jan 2026