



Safeguarding Policy

1. MISSION STATEMENT

- 1.1 In our work with children / young people / adults who may be at risk due to age, illness or disability, Bridges Centre will endeavour at all times to provide services and activities which minimise risk and are as safe as we can make them.
- 1.2 We aim to protect our service users from harm or maltreatment, prevent the impairment of health or development, ensure the provision of safe and effective care, promote people's life chances and ensure children enter adulthood successfully.
- 1.3 We will work in partnership with other local / national agencies to put in place appropriate procedures for reporting, making referrals, accessing training and specialist support, as and when required.

2. SAFER RECRUITMENT

- 2.1 Bridges Centre will seek to recruit using appropriate procedures, safeguards and checks.
- 2.2 We will take up references for all posts and volunteer roles prior to appointment. We will use Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks to help us to assess suitability and where there is eligibility to do so by determining which roles are in regulated activity and therefore subject to a barring list check and those roles eligible for enhanced DBS checks only. We will assess any criminal record information that is disclosed in line with our data protection and equalities (treating ex-offenders fairly) policies.
- 2.3 We will provide an induction programme for all new volunteers and staff, appropriate training to enable all personnel to undertake their roles safely and confidently, and ongoing training as benefits the personal and professional development of individuals and of our organisation.
- 2.4 We will regularly review our recruitment procedures in response to changes in legislation and systems external to our organisation e.g. DBS and barring list checks

3. VOLUNTEERS

- 3.1 We will ensure that all volunteers are treated fairly, are given clear expectations of their role within the organisation and are supported to fulfil that role.
- 3.2 All volunteer roles will be supported by a Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- 3.3 Volunteers will be treated equally alongside any paid staff, and all volunteers will be offered the same opportunities for advancement, responsibility, training and gaining qualifications and acknowledgement for their contribution to our organisation. In turn, our volunteers will adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times as a representative of our organisation.
- 3.4 Any volunteer roles, which would be regulated activity if unsupervised, will be appropriately supervised in accordance with statutory guidance.





4. SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

- 4.1 Our appointed Safeguarding Officer is the Centre Director and is supported by the Chair of the Personnel Committee as their deputy, who will be available to all staff, volunteers and service users to speak to when they have any concerns, issues or complaints regarding the safety, well-being or conduct of service users, volunteers and staff.
- 4.2 The safeguarding officer and deputy will have access to appropriate training to support them in these roles. They will liaise with appropriate local and national agencies, contribute to appropriate policies, maintain records and keep confidentiality, adhere to and promote this policy within the organisation, and support or provide access to support for individuals suffering harm or abuse.

5. AWARENESS OF HARM AND ABUSE IN OUR ORGANISATION

- 5.1 Harm is caused by accidents, deliberate abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, financial), neglect or factors such as bullying, prejudicial attitudes or a failure to enable *a person* to participate in activities that are open to most of their peers.
- 5.2 All incidents of harm to anyone involved in our service will require an appropriate response to reduce risks and improve our service
- 5.3 Deliberate acts of harm (sexual, physical, emotional and financial) and neglect are abuses against the person and will incur disciplinary proceedings and require reports and referrals to social services, the police, other professional bodies and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if in regulated activity.

6. SIGNIFICANT HARM

- 6.1 Where there is risk of significant harm to our service users, volunteers or staff, the Safeguarding Officer and deputy are empowered to act accordingly.
- 6.2 To log all conversations regarding the issue
- 6.3 To sign and request signatures on reports and statements
- 6.4 Confidentially seek advice from expert sources
- 6.5 Share concerns (with consent where required and appropriate) internally with senior staff / Chair of the Board
- 6.6 Share concerns and make referrals to external agencies such as Social Services, the Police or NSPCC as appropriate to the circumstances
- 6.7 Make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service regarding staff or volunteers in regulated activity whose conduct is harmful to service users and when they are removed from regulated activity





7. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1 All reports and logs (including personnel records) will be kept securely and confidentially according our data protection policy and confidentiality statement, or in line with DBS Code of Practice if appropriate, until or unless it is necessary to share this material with the agencies named above. Information will be shared on a “need-to-know” basis only.

8. COMMUNICATION

- 8.1 We will communicate this policy to all staff, volunteers, service users and their families / carers, using appropriate methods, formats and language to get the essence across.
- 8.2 We support and encourage all service users, volunteers and staff to speak up and contact the named Safeguarding Officer or deputy where there is
- a *concern* (a worry, issue or doubt about practice or treatment of a service user or colleague, or their circumstances), *or*
 - a *disclosure* (information about a person at risk of or suffering from significant harm) *or*
 - an *allegation* (the possibility that a volunteer or staff member could cause harm to a person in their care)
- 8.3 Staff or volunteers can report things that aren't right, are illegal or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties, putting someone's health and safety in danger or covering up wrongdoing. In the first instance they should speak with the Safeguarding Officer, their deputy or the trustee with appropriate responsibility
- 8.4 We would prefer our members and personnel to use internal processes whenever possible to make a report as above, but this does not prevent them from making a report or referral to statutory agencies such Social Services or the Police, in their own right as a private individual. We also support our staff or volunteers to raise concerns or to disclose information, which they believe shows malpractice - whistle-blowing (disclosure in the public interest).
- 8.5 We will encourage everyone involved in our organisation to understand that safeguarding is everybody's business, we will provide opportunities for discussions about issues and concerns, we will review our policy and procedures to reflect current legislation and continue to learn and improve in our safeguarding responsibilities.

