

BRIGHTER FUTURES CONSORTIUM

SAFEGUARDING CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2021



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1. Introduction

Brighter Futures (BF) believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by a commitment to practice which protects them from harm.

A child is defined in law (Children Act 1989) as anyone below his or her 18th birthday. Child protection legislation and guidance therefore only applies to those users of Brighter Futures activities/services up to that time.

Brighter Futures also works with those over the age of 18 and recognises its duty of care to all the young people with whom it works. Whilst the legal framework may differ, the spirit of these procedures should be applied in respect of all young people and vulnerable adults. There may also be occasions when the duty of care extends to the children of clients.

Brighter Futures has an approach to the protection of children and young people that is based on the principles recognised in the Children Act 1989 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, part 7 safeguarding

We recognise:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief and sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is key in promoting young people's welfare.

2. The purpose of this policy and procedures:

- To provide protection for the children, young people and vulnerable adults who access Brighter Futures services.
- To provide all staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect that a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk from, some form of abuse.
- To guide staff on responding appropriately to and reporting child protection concerns.

3. To whom the policy applies

This policy applies to all staff, in this instance "staff" relates to all paid employees, seconded employee's, volunteers, mentors, students, agency workers, contract, sessional and unpaid workers working on behalf of Brighter Futures in any capacity and in any setting.

4. Safeguarding Advisers

Brighter Futures shall have people with special responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding and Child Protection. These staff are to be trained to carry out their duties. If unavailable then external personal shall be consulted.

4.1 Safeguarding Adviser

A senior advisor will be appointed from the board each year, His/Her responsibilities include:

- Developing Brighter Futures approach to Safeguarding, reviewing the policy and procedures on a regular basis.
- Providing advice and support employee's.
- Management of referrals/cases reported and work with Senior Management.
- Auditing the operation of the policy and procedures.
- Implementing the training strategy.

Brighter Futures Safeguarding advisor's are:

Jayne Jones jayne@brighterfuturesrhyl.co.uk 01745 798350

Katherine Park katy@brighterfuturesrhyl.co.uk 01745 798350

Shane Owen shane@brighterfuturesrhyl.co.uk 01745 798350

The 3 individuals form the safeguarding team.

5. Abuse

5.1 What is Abuse?

“We are defining abuse from All Wales Child Protection procedures 2008”

Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm, or fails to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection via an inter-agency child protection plan.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after. See also Fabricated Illness.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, for example by witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or, the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or caregiver failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. In addition, neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Financial

Financial abuse covers a wide variety of activities, from mishandling finances to fraud, but may broadly be described as a violation of an individual's rights relating to their financial affairs or assets.

Section 197(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in Wales define 'abuse' as including financial abuse, which covers:

- a. having money or other property stolen
- b. being defrauded
- c. being put under pressure in relation to money or other property; and
- d. having money or other property misused

5.2 Recognising Abuse

Staff are not expected to be Child Protection experts. However, there are a number of circumstances under which staff might have concerns that a child or young person has been or is being abused:

- A child or young person may tell about abuse they have experienced
- A third party – a parent, relative, carer, another young person, other professionals, neighbour – sharing concerns

Staff may also become concerned through observing:

- A bruise or injury which is unusual for example on a part of the body which is not normally prone to such injuries for example on the cheeks
- Injuries which require but have not received medical attention
- Cigarette burns or bite marks
- Unexplained changes in behaviour either over time or suddenly for example becoming aggressive, quiet or withdrawn
- Running away from home
- None attendance at school, projects or activities
- Reluctance to get changed or for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- The young person appears not to trust certain adults for example parent, carer, staff member with whom you would usually expect them to have or once had a close relationship
- The young person being discouraged or unable to make friends or from socialising with others
- The young person becoming unusually dirty or unkempt
- Changes to eating patterns
- The young person developing a disturbed sleeping pattern
- The young person self harms or attempts to self harm
- Age inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour

The above list is not exhaustive

Many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or crisis in the family the staff's knowledge of a young person over a period of time may help them to understand whether there is cause for concern.

5.3 What to do if someone discloses an abusive act or experience

If a child or young person confides to someone that they are being, or have been, abused they have placed that person in a position of trust.

Staff should:

- Be clear that they cannot keep secrets and that they have to pass on information if they think a child or young person has been or is being harmed in some way.
- Obtain consent if possible <https://www.safeguarding.wales/chi/c2/c2.p16.html?highlight=consent>
- React calmly. Panic may frighten or silence the person.
- Tell the person they were right to tell.
- Make it clear the child/young person is not to blame.
- Take what is said seriously recognising that there may be difficulties in interpreting what is said by a child.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said. Only ask questions if they need to clarify what they are being told –they should not ask about explicit details – it is up to Social Services/the Police to investigate fully.
- Make a full record of what is being said, heard and seen as soon as possible.
- Do not delay in passing the information onto a line manager and/or Social Services or the North Wales Police.
- Making a referral is not a matter for personal choice and may be a legal duty.

6 What to do if you have a concern

If you have concerns for the safety of a child or young person you should inform the Safeguarding Adviser.

6.1 Roles & responsibilities

Both recognising and responding to abuse can be a complex matter.

It is not the responsibility of Brighter Futures to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. It is the responsibility of staff at Brighter Futures is to act if there is cause for concern, in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any action necessary to protect a child or young person.

The legal framework differs depending on the age of young person. Where, your concerns relate to someone below their 18th Birthday, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding Adviser **in the same working day.**

If the member of staff is not happy with the response they receive, or cannot contact the Safeguarding Adviser, they should refer the matter to the North Wales Regional Safeguarding Board the North Wales Police or Social Services.

The member of staff should record the allegation/incident/suspicion. It is important that all concerns are properly recorded. Brighter Futures has a standard Safeguarding & Child Protection Report form to help people record relevant information. These forms **must** be used if you have a concern.

Some of the information requested by the form may not be available. Staff should not pursue the questioning of the child or young person for this information if it is not given freely. There should be no delay in reporting the matter by waiting for all the information.

In completing the form it is important not to write speculative comments but to stick to the facts. Staff's opinion may be crucial but it should be recorded as an opinion and any evidence stated to support these opinions. Records pertaining to issues of child protection may be accessible to third parties such as Social Services, Police, the Courts and Solicitors.

The Safeguarding Adviser to whom the concerns are reported has responsibility for deciding whether to refer the matter onto the relevant Social Services Department and/or the Police. Referrals should preferably be made within the same working day and certainly within 24 hours. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Adviser to follow the guidance of Social Services regarding contact with *decide whether* the parents/carers of the child or young person to *should* be informed of the referral.

There may be instances where urgent medical attention is needed. In these circumstances, staff should always consult with someone else, but it may be necessary to make immediate contact with the Police and/or Social Services or emergency health services. Log all interactions, actions and outcomes.

On occasion, a child or young person may abuse another child. Child protection procedures should be followed in those situations.

If you have concerns about someone over 18 then you should discuss these with the Adviser to discuss any appropriate action.

6.2 What happens to reports?

If the Safeguarding Adviser decides to report the concern they will do so by telephone within 24 hours. They will follow up the phone call by putting the concern in writing within 3 days of making the telephone call.

If the child has a known Social Worker they or their manager or, in their absence, the Duty Social Worker will be informed immediately. If the child is not known to Social Services, the Duty Officer will be contacted.

The Safeguarding Adviser will ensure that in reporting any incident that a Social Worker or Social Work Manager is spoken to directly and will make a note of name of the Social Worker spoken to and the action proposed.

Section 7 notes the roles and responsibilities of delivery partners.

6.3 Barriers to reporting abuse

Some people have concerns about sharing confidential information. It would normally be considered good practice not to refer a child or young person to another agency without their knowledge and consent. However this principle of confidentiality can be overridden when there are child protection concerns.

There are many common myths about the child protection system. One of the most common is that reporting child abuse means that a child or young person will be removed from his/her parents. This is rarely true and, even when it is, most children are returned to parental care.

*You **must** report any concerns that you have. The Safeguarding Adviser is available to provide support and discuss staff concerns.*

6.4 Responding to allegations of abuse or inappropriate or dangerous behaviour against a member of staff

Regardless of the age of the young person, if an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct is made against a member of staff, or person in a position of trust, then this **must** be reported to the Safeguarding Adviser **immediately**.

Concerns about staff must be treated with the same rigour as other concerns. If there are concerns that child abuse has taken place the Safeguarding Adviser will pass this information to the Social Services Department and/or the Police for investigation.

LADO and DOS (who in DCC)

The Safeguarding Adviser and senior managers will also need to refer to any Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and decide whether the member of staff should be suspended pending a full investigation.

If the member of staff is not happy with the response they receive from the Safeguarding Adviser then they should refer to North Wales Police.

Staff working in regulated activity found to have caused harm to a child in their care due to their actions or lack thereof, once removed from regulated activity due to this conduct (dismissed, re-deployed, resigned) will be referred to the DBS for barring consideration.

6.5 After an allegation

After an allegation or suspicion about a child protection concern has been investigated, there are likely to be strong feelings among staff, clients, parents and possibly among the wider community, which will need to be addressed. There are likely to be issues of:

- Communication – rumour or fact
- Guilt and blame – if suspicions have been around for sometime
- Impact – on individuals, of the nature of what occurred and to whom

The line manager or committee, in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adviser, will give careful thought to the provision of appropriate support.

7. Working with Partner Organisations

Brighter Futures is committed to working in partnership with other agencies. When this involves an agreement for another organisation to provide services on its behalf, Brighter Futures will ensure that the partner organisation has appropriate safeguarding policies in place which will include child protection policies and procedures, sound recruitment and selection practices and complaints procedures for users.

The written agreement or protocol detailing the services to be provided should include the procedure to be followed in the event of concerns about child abuse. The purpose of this is to ensure clarity as to which organisation is responsible for taking action in specific circumstances. If the delivery partner is responsible for taking action, the agreement should stipulate that Brighter Futures must be informed of all incidents.

If a member of staff becomes aware of allegations of abuse relating to a partner organisation, this should be discussed in the first instance with the Safeguarding Adviser.

* The Safeguarding Adviser for Brighter Futures may change annually, should a coordinator not be in post all issues should be taken to the Company chairperson.

The nominated advisor's for Brighter Futures are: Jayne Jones, Katy Park and Mr Shane Owen. (forming the Safeguarding team)

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Signature of Chair _____

Signature of the Safeguarding Advisor's _____