



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURE

BAAS, Befriending & Adult Autism Support believes that everyone has the right to live a life free from abuse

This guidance and procedure is designed to enable everyone who works in BAAS, whether as a Trustee, a member of staff or a volunteer, to understand and carry out responsibilities for safeguarding adults who need care and support and are at risk of, or are experiencing, abuse.

By following this guidance we can prevent abuse and empower adults who need care and support to achieve the outcomes they require.

GUIDANCE

1. Who should use this procedure?

This procedure should be used by all BAAS members and volunteers.

All operations staff, including volunteers, who are new to the team are to review this safeguarding policy and procedure within their induction process. They must sign to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure in the Employee Handbook provided to them on commencement of their employment/voluntary role.

All operations staff and volunteers must attend the Safeguarding Training delivered by BAAS at the first available date. Following this training session all staff/volunteers must be presented with a certificate detailing their completion of the training, a copy of which must be kept on their file. All staff/volunteers must attend a refresher Safeguarding training course every 2 years to remain current in their knowledge, understanding and referral processes.

All Designated Safeguarding Officers must attend training every 12 months to remain current in their knowledge, understanding and referral processes.

2. Key principles in adult safeguarding procedures

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of BAAS' work. The values of the Charity and the specific principles below should be used to inform and support all of our safeguarding activity.

Empowerment - We will empower adults who need care and support to make decisions about their own lives and to achieve the outcomes that they want.

Protection - We will give information and advice to enable adults to protect themselves. Where an adult is not able to protect themselves, or others may be at risk, we will take reasonable and appropriate action to promote their safety and wellbeing.

Prevention - We aim to prevent abuse happening by raising awareness and providing information. We will recruit, support and treat staff and volunteers safely and fairly.

Proportionality - We will act and respond in a way which is proportionate to the presenting concern. We will aim to promote individual rights and secure positive outcomes in any actions that we take and any information that we provide.

Partnership - We will work cooperatively with adults who need care and support, those who support them and relevant agencies to secure good outcomes.

Accountability - We will take responsibility for adult safeguarding by being aware of abuse, understanding how we can play a part in preventing and ending abuse, sharing concerns appropriately, learning from experience and monitoring our progress.

3. Designated Person for Safeguarding at BAAS

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within BAAS is the Service Manager.

If you have any concerns about the possible abuse of an adult who needs care and support, and are not sure what to do, you should immediately contact the DSL. If an urgent concern arises outside of office hours, advice should be sought from the Police (via 999) or adult services in the area where the alleged abuse has taken place.

4. What is Adult Safeguarding?

Adult Safeguarding is a term used to describe a range of activities aimed at ensuring that an adult, or adults, who need, or may need, care and support, are not abused.

There are two key parts to this process:

- a) **Preventing** abuse from happening. This includes safe recruitment to ensure that unsuitable people are not employed, and an organisational culture in which all staff and volunteers are empowered to play a part in preventing and ending abuse;
- b) **Protecting** people who may be experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, abuse. This includes empowering people to know their rights and to access the right support to enable them to achieve the outcomes that they want.

In England, Local Authorities, the Police, Health Services, The Care Quality Commission and the voluntary, independent, private and charitable sector are tasked with working together to prevent and end the abuse of adults who need care and support. This work is overseen by Local Adult Safeguarding Boards.

5. What is abuse?

Abuse is about the misuse of power, trust, respect, authority and control. It violates a person's civil and human rights. There are many different forms of abuse and neglect:-

- **Sexual Abuse** includes indecent exposure; sexual harassment; inappropriate looking or touching; sexual teasing or innuendo; sexual photography; being forced to watch pornography or sexual acts; being forced or pressured to take part in sexual acts; rape;
- **Physical Abuse** includes being hit, slapped, pushed or restrained; being denied food or water; not being helped to go to the bathroom when you need to; misuse of your medicines;
- **Psychological Abuse** includes threats to hurt or abandon you; stopping you from seeing people; humiliating, blaming, controlling, intimidating or harassing you; verbal abuse; cyber bullying and isolation; an unreasonable and unjustified withdrawing of services or support networks;
- **Domestic Abuse** is typically an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is, or has been an intimate partner or family member;
- **Discriminatory Abuse** includes some forms of harassment, slurs or unfair treatment because of a protected characteristic e.g. race, sex, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave;
- **Financial Abuse** This could be someone stealing money or other valuables. Or it might be that someone appointed to look after a vulnerable person's money is using it

inappropriately or using coercion in the way it is spent. Internet scams and doorstep crimes are also common forms of financial abuse;

- **Neglect** occurs when a vulnerable adult is made to suffer caused by a failure to meet their care needs e.g. ignoring physical or mental care needs, or withholding food, drink or heating.

6. Who might be at risk of abuse?

Adult safeguarding processes focus on supporting and protecting adults who may be at particular risk of abuse due to their need for care and support. **For BAAS this may include not only those who use our service, but also our trustees, volunteers and staff.** The Statutory Safeguarding adults at risk duties applies to any adult who:-

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Regardless of whether the local authority is providing any services, it must follow up any concerns about either actual, or suspected adult abuse.

PROCEDURE

7. Concerns and Disclosure of abuse

7.1 Concerns

A concern may be raised by anyone and can be:-

- an active disclosure of abuse by the adult - where the adult tells a volunteer or member of staff that they are experiencing abuse and/or neglect;
- a passive disclosure of abuse - where someone has noticed signs or abuse and/or neglect e.g. unexplained injuries;
- an allegation of abuse by a third party - where a family/friend/neighbour has observed abuse or neglect or has been told of it by the vulnerable adult;
- a concern raised by staff, volunteers, service user(s) or a member of the public
- an observation of the behaviour of the adult at risk;
- an observation of the behaviour of another e.g. a perpetrator.

The person who raises the concern of the abuse has a responsibility first and foremost to ensure the safety of the vulnerable adult at risk and must immediately take their concern to the DSL. The DSL will then make an assessment of the situation and decide on the next steps.

7.2 Disclosure

If someone begins to disclose abuse or potential harm to you, either as a victim or a perpetrator, you must remind them of our confidentiality procedure and inform them that you are required to share this information with the DSL, and that you may be unable to guarantee confidentiality. You must make them aware that in certain circumstances the DSL will contact the police, medical services and/or adult social services without their consent.

Do not ever promise to keep secrets. You must complete a Safeguarding Referral Form and submit this to the DSL if you have a feeling or concerns about a service user.

You must report any disclosures or concerns to the DSL even if it is outside of the working day.

You must write down as soon as possible what was said by the person in their own words.

Generally speaking we will be required to make a disclosure to the police/medical services/adult social care, if:

- there is a risk to a child;
- there is significant risk of self-harm or suicide;
- there is significant risk of harm to the service user, the person they look after or a third party;
- a vulnerable adult is involved.

8. Reporting abuse

If someone is in immediate danger of attack or assault then you must take urgent action to protect them and call the relevant emergency services. This would be where an assault has just occurred or is continuing.

If you feel that a vulnerable adult or a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse then you must discuss it with the DSL immediately. You **must not** start to investigate the issue on your own, confront the person who you feel to be responsible for the abuse, or attempt to intervene in any way. Getting involved in this way may affect later evidence.

It is the DSL's responsibility to decide whether to report abuse to the relevant authorities. BAAS will always err on the side of caution and report abuse to the relevant authorities, even if we are uncertain that definite abuse is occurring.

When reporting abuse, or potential risk of abuse, the DSL will provide the following details to Social Services:-

- type of abuse;
- date of referral;
- location of vulnerable adult and perpetrator;
- reason for vulnerable adult's vulnerability;
- nature and type of alleged abuse;
- details of alleged perpetrator and relationship to vulnerable adult;
- details of where the abuse occurred and the length and time of abuse.

Where possible we will inform the person involved that we are making the call, and in the first instance seek their agreement. We would not follow this step in cases where we believed that doing so would increase the danger to the victim or affect police evidence.

9. Suicide

Suicide - High Risk

Often people who are suicidal may give hints, such as make comments like "they'd be better off without me," "what's the point" or "I'm giving up." It is important to ask someone directly if they have ever thought about harming or killing themselves. If someone indicates that they do think about suicide, you can often find out how serious they are by asking if they have ever thought about **how** they might kill themselves. People are generally at greater risk of suicide if they have made a plan.

A person is considered high risk if they are talking about committing suicide and they have a plan or the means to do so. In this instance it would be appropriate to try and get the vulnerable adult's permission to contact their GP and/or social services, to inform the relevant services of how they are feeling. You should also signpost to relevant services, such as The Samaritans, for when they are feeling desperate. You will also need to speak to the DSL to discuss appropriate action, and any possible breach of confidentiality, should permission be denied to contact the GP/Social Services.

Suicide - Immediate Risk

This is where the vulnerable adult has either made an attempt on their life, self-harmed, or does so whilst they are with you/talking to you. In this instance you must take urgent action to protect them, and the relevant emergency services must be contacted immediately.

You are obliged to call for help even when the vulnerable adult asks you not to do so. We will always discuss with the vulnerable adult what action we are taking and why. Once the relevant emergency services have been contacted, you will then need to immediately contact the DSL.

If someone is on the telephone with you and tells you that they have made an attempt on their own life and you do not have their name or address, you will need to try to obtain this from them in order to alert the relevant emergency services.

10. Managing safeguarding allegations involving BAAS members and volunteers

a) Allegations that group members, relatives, carers, volunteers or staff have abused an adult at risk must be managed in a timely, effective and fair manner, that balances the right and need for protection for all those involved.

b) There is an assumption of innocence for staff and volunteers who are alleged to have abused an adult who needs care and support, until the allegations against them have been investigated.

c) The allegations against them should be instantly escalated to the Chairman or the DSL.

d) The investigating officer should always consider the wishes of the adult who needs care and support, along with the need for protective action, including referrals to the following agencies:-

- **Police** for any actions which may constitute criminal activity or where there are concerns for the immediate safety of an adult at risk or other members of the public;
- **Local Authority Social Service** in the area where the alleged abuse is reported to have taken place;
- **Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)** referrals to the DBS will only be made where the Chairman or DSL has concerns that a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including adults who need care and support. In these circumstances BAAS must make a referral to the DBS (usually following the outcome of an investigative process).

A referral to the relevant authority will only ever be delayed in order to ensure that relevant information can be gathered, and where determined that any such delay is likely to result in further harm to adults who need care and support.

e) The DSL will consider, in addition to any relevant disciplinary procedures, whether a temporary suspension or change of duties may be appropriate. At this stage any such action should be considered a neutral act.

f) The member of staff or the volunteer, should be kept informed of any progress of the case, except where it is determined that this may cause further harm to an adult who needs care and support. Where a statutory agency takes a lead role in a safeguarding process the mechanisms for communication with all parties should be agreed from the outset.

g) Appropriate records will be kept in accordance with BAAS' GDPR and Confidentiality Policy.

h) If an allegation or concern arises about a member of staff, outside of their work with BAAS, advice should be sought from the DSL.

i) Where a person tenders his/her resignation to BAAS, or ceases to provide their services to BAAS, this must not prevent an allegation being followed up. It is important that every effort is

made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations relating to the safety of adults who need care and/or support, including those where the person concerned refused to cooperate with the process. 'Compromise Agreements' whereby a person agrees to resign, the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, will not be used by BAAS in these cases.

Where things do go wrong, BAAS will strive to be open about what has happened, conduct thorough investigations, cooperate with relevant agencies, provide support for those involved and learn lessons, so as to avoid future repetition.

11. Sharing information with other agencies

All of those who share information with BAAS will need to have confidence that we will protect their privacy and personal data. It is important that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in this area. However, assurances of absolute confidentiality can never be guaranteed to those who raise safeguarding issues.

BAAS' aim will always be to empower vulnerable adults to raise concerns themselves, in order to obtain support from the relevant agencies. There will occasionally be **exceptional circumstances** in which onward disclosure of information by BAAS, might be required. The following are exceptional circumstances when this may be required:-

- where there are concerns about terrorism and/or criminal activity;
- where there is a legal requirement to disclose information e.g. a Court Order, DBS etc;
- where a statutory authority e.g. police, social services, etc, may request the disclosure of information;
- where it is not possible to receive consent from the adult at risk of abuse and there is a reasonable belief that onward disclosure of information is required in order to prevent serious harm to an adult who needs care and support;
- where a third party discloses concern about an adult who needs care and support but indicates that they are unwilling to pass this information onto the relevant agencies themselves.

In all such cases the DSL should be consulted.

INDUCTION PROCESS

12. Safe Recruitment

BAAS puts in place procedures to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out prior to the appointment of staff, trustees and volunteers, in order to prevent, as far as possible, anyone from using their position to abuse adults who need care and support.

In order to ensure safe recruitment processes we will do the following:-

- we will prevent unsuitable people from obtaining positions at BAAS by adopting a robust recruitment process;
- we will interview applicants for all roles, including staff, volunteers and trustees, to assess their competency;
- we will ensure that two appropriate references are obtained for all personnel at BAAS;
- we will ensure that an enhanced DBS check is carried out for all personnel prior to commencement of their role at BAAS. Exceptions to this may apply where students are allocated to BAAS on work experience placements and where their DBS's have already been applied for through their university or college - when this is the case BAAS will keep note of the DBS number;
- we will ensure that all staff, volunteers and Trustees complete relevant training to equip them for their role, including in Adult Safeguarding, Confidentiality and GDPR;
- we will ensure all BAAS personnel are made aware of the Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policies, and feel confident when acting on any concerns.

13. Continuous Development

We will conduct quarterly appraisals with all staff and volunteers, to assess training development needs in order for them to carry out their duties safely and effectively.

14. Charity Commission reportable incidents

When a serious incident, which may include some safeguarding incidents, has occurred at BAAS it must be reported to the Charity Commission.

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant harm to BAAS' beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with BAAS in the course of its work.

15. Aftercare

Adults who need care and support

BAAS has an important role to play in supporting adults who need care and support who have previously experienced abuse. We can play a part in helping people to regain the confidence and get the services and support they need to aid their recovery.

Where an adult who needs care and support discloses that abuse is historical, rather than current, support should always be offered via signposting to Bolton Adult Social Services or the Police.

Staff and volunteers

Receiving a disclosure of abuse, or witnessing abuse, can be a troubling and stressful experience. Where staff are concerned about the impact of such events they can seek support from their manager.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Designated Safeguarding Lead:-

Vicky Kenyon
01204 968320
vicky@b-aas.org.uk

Safeguarding Officer:-

Vivian Brown
01204 968320
vivian@b-aas.org.uk

Bolton Adult Safeguarding Team:-

Tel: 01204 337000 / 01204 332032
Mental Health North: 01204 483003

Samaritans:-

Tel: 116 123

Papyrus (under 35's only)

Suicide Prevention Line:-

Tel: 0800 068 4141

Date Policy Adopted: 01/01/26

Signed:



**Anita Powley
Vice-Chair**

Date of Review	Any Changes	Comments