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Safeguarding Children Policy

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Safeguarding Children Policy

1.Introduction

Communityworks exists for the benefit of the communities of Otley Road and Undercliffe. The community includes children and young people. The following policy and procedures reflect the commitment of Communityworks to work effectively in promoting children's welfare and safeguarding them from harm with particular regard to protection from abuse and neglect. This includes all children and young people participating in Communityworks activities.

As Communityworks staff/volunteers all have regular contact with children and young people, this policy applies to all people working in the organisation whether in a paid or a voluntary capacity. In order to protect young people from both potential and actual child abuse it is important that all concerned have a basic understanding of the issues involved.

Communityworks is committed to creating an environment that enables children and young people to learn, develop and express themselves in a safe, understanding and encouraging environment. Parents/carers trust us to look after their children, to care for them, to give encouragement and to keep them safe. We need to ensure that we honour their trust.

1.1 Aims of the Policy

The policy recognises that safeguarding children covers a range of issues that require close attention including:

- Communityworks recognises that anyone working with children and young people owe a duty of care to safeguard and protect children and that this should be done in full partnership with other agencies.
- In order to safeguard children and young people Communityworks will address the needs of children across the whole organisation including those where children are not the primary users.
- Communityworks will pay close attention to the safe recruitment and selection of staff / volunteers.
- Communityworks will be guided by current legislation relating to safeguarding children and will regularly review policies to ensure continuous improvement in safeguarding children.

Key Legislation and documentation

The following key legislation and documentation should be referred to alongside this safeguarding policy and procedure guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children: 2026
'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners'
The Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales
Keeping Children Safe in Education
Information sharing advice
Ofsted's inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings
Bradford's continuum of need and risk identification tool
Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework

The policy aims to ensure that the procedures in place are understandable and easy to implement by anyone providing a service to young people at Communityworks. Communityworks will ensure that all centre staff/volunteers are aware of this policy and know how to recognise and refer any concerns. A flow chart of the procedure to follow in cases of child protection is included in this policy. This will also be displayed throughout the centre.

All people using Communityworks will be given information about the limits of confidentiality. All users will be informed that it is our responsibility to report any concerns to the police and /or The Bradford Partnership (formerly known as Bradford Safeguarding Children Board).

1.2 BACKGROUND

Child abuse is a difficult issue and presents challenges to all that provide services for young people. People may feel uncomfortable with the subject. It is not easily recognisable, and individuals often fear reading too much into a situation or making an incorrect judgement. Many young people experience minor accidents causing injuries, but there may be occasions where you are concerned over the nature and frequency of injury. This document contains information on some of the signs that may give cause for concern. This document is based on the principle that:

"It is not your responsibility as members of Communityworks to decide whether or not child abuse is occurring, but it is your responsibility to act on those concerns and do something about it."

1.3 WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE

Do not ever think that you could *never* be placed in the position of reporting child abuse.

The term 'child abuse' is used to describe ways in which young people are harmed by someone in a position of power. There are many different ways in which children can be harmed, all with a common factor that the child feels under-valued and worthless. Abuse can happen anywhere, but research indicates that the perpetrators of such abuse are likely to be known and trusted by the child.

It is important to recognise that abuse isn't always perpetrated by adults; children can abuse other children and it can happen both inside and outside of educational settings and online. This is referred to as 'child-on-child abuse' and can include:

- bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery')

- ‘Up skirting’ which involves taking a picture under someone’s clothing without them knowing; this is usually with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Up skirting is a criminal offence and anyone of any gender, can be a victim
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

All staff should be able to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports in line with this policy. Even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse, it should be recognised that this does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

Staff should understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

1.4 TYPES OF ABUSE

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 carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition, sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation which occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Emotional

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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 and development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers);
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Other Specific Categories of Abuse

Domestic Abuse

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines Domestic Abuse as:

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling, or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and adolescent to parent violence. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Domestic abuse continues to be a prevalent risk factor identified through children social care assessments for children in need. Domestic abuse has a significant impact on children and young people.

Children may experience domestic abuse directly, as victims in their own right, or indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on others such as the non-abusive parent.

Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, if they see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, and are related to the perpetrator of the abuse or the victim of the abuse.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and some elements of pressure or abuse are used. Forced Marriage is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights, which cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done. It's also known as "female circumcision" or "cutting", and by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan, among others.

Modern Slavery and/or Trafficking

'Modern slavery' is a form of organised crime in which individuals including children and young people are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal and financial gain. It encompasses human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour.

'Trafficking of persons' means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

'Exploitation' for modern slavery purposes is defined, as a minimum, to include: sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and organ trafficking.

Radicalisation and the Prevent Duty

Since July 2015 all schools and childcare providers have a duty under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn

into terrorism". This duty is known as the **Prevent duty**. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by preventing people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, go on to participate in terrorist groups.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks. Children need to be protected from messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, various paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

1.5 Effects of Abuse

The effects of child abuse can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not have the support to cope with that abuse. Indications that a child may be being abused include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- Signs of FGM - procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her.
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour such as becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.

2. Safeguarding Practices

Communityworks has 3 designated safeguarding leads :

Vikrant Bhatia: Communityworks CEO

Tel: 01274 200589 / 07429305165

Email: vikrant.bhatia@communityworksbradford.org.uk

Sandra Walker: Nursery Manager

Tel: 01274 200589 Email: sandra.walker@communityworksbradford.org.uk

Nabila Begum: Safeguarding Board of Director

Tel: 01274 200589 Email: Safeguarding.CW@outlook.com

Julie McLouglin: Deputy Nursery Manager acts as **deputy designated safeguarding lead** on occasions when both Vikrant and Sandra are not available

The procedures contained in this document attempt to provide staff with a practical guide on how to record a concern about a child. Communityworks will ensure all staff/volunteers are familiar with and follow the policy and procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and know who to contact within Communityworks.

2.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers

Communityworks will ensure the safe recruitment and employment of staff/volunteers and board members through appropriate routine checks. Any individual taking up employment/volunteering with Communityworks must agree to an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Check. This requirement will be made clear on all application forms for employment. It will also be stated as part of any interview process and will be a condition before any offer of employment can be confirmed. DBS checks will be updated every 3 years, this is in line with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. All DBS details will be stored on the single central record. The single central record will be checked on a monthly basis by the Communityworks CEO and updated as necessary. (See SCR Policy) Communityworks will always obtain at least two references for staff/volunteers prior to that person beginning employment.

In order to ensure staff can recognise, respond and report situations of possible child abuse and be aware of how to respond to a child disclosing information Communityworks will ensure all staff/volunteers and board members are trained in Basic Awareness of Child Protection, this is done as part of the induction process and refreshed every two years. The designated safeguarding leads will undertake level 3 safeguarding courses available through The Bradford Partnership.

Staff/Volunteers will be kept up to date with knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role effectively. This will include training identified in supervision and updates on current legislation.

If Communityworks has a concern about a safeguarding issue relating to a worker/ volunteer due to misconduct with children or young people, the *"What to do in the event of allegations of abuse against a member of staff"* policy will be followed. This will instigate a LADO referral and as a result that person will be referred to the police, social services and The Bradford Partnership.

3. Procedure

Any safeguarding concerns staff/ volunteers/ board members have should be acted on **immediately**. This is done by both informing a designated safeguarding lead and completing an incident report recording form and passed to a designated safeguarding lead. **This should take priority over any other work commitments.** The named child protection officer will decide whether or not to report the matter further and what action needs taking.

In making the decision, the designated safeguarding lead should refer to Bradford Safeguarding Partnership's key messages and documentation to support them to make a referral;

- Prevention and Early Help
- Continuum of need and risk identification tool

'Prevention' and 'Early Help' is the way families are supported in Bradford. 'Prevention' is about stopping problems and 'Early Help' is about preventing problems. 'Early Help' is not a specific service. It is a way of 'thinking' and 'working' through a collaborative approach between services with families. It is about providing support to families when a need is identified or as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. This can be from the point of conception through childhood and into adolescence (0 to 19 yrs. and 24yrs SEND) to prevent or reduce the need for statutory services. These services are provided by the Family Hubs.

The Continuum of need and risk identification tool document is aimed at every agency, and professional who works directly or indirectly with children, young people and families. This guidance is to help agencies identify a child's level of need and vulnerability, and respond appropriately, "getting the right help, at the right time." The framework describes need in 4 levels - these are not rigid, as a child's needs are unique.

The description of each level 1 to 4, gives examples of how need might present itself and may help you understand better how a child's needs will be met. It can be stepped up and down depending on factors along the way.

Level 1 – Universal: no additional needs. Needs are met by universal services e.g. GP, dentist, health visitor, school, childcare setting.
Level 2 – Universal Plus: additional support needed which may or may not require multi-agency work with other professionals and/or services i.e. food bank, debt service.
Level 3 – Targeted Support / Partnership Plus: help and support from a range of professionals for families with complex needs.
Level 4 – Statutory / Specialist and Child Protection: high priority needs including other specialist services – children who are experiencing significant harm.

If concerns are at level 1 or 2 in the continuum of need document, the setting will complete an Early Help Assessment with parent/carer consent, more information available here.
If concerns are at level 3 or 4 in the continuum of need document, the setting will phone Bradford Children's Services Integrated Front Door (IFD) to make a referral. After phoning Bradford Children's Services Integrated Front Door (IFD) and discussing concerns, the IFD will advise what steps to take next.
The setting may be asked to submit documentation relating to a child or young person following a conversation with one of the Consultant Social Workers. This would be submitted via the Children's portal - portal for professionals. This is the link to create a portal account - click here.

In the event of referral to Social Services, copies of all relevant correspondence, notes of dialogue, diagrams of any injury witnessed must be passed to the child protection officer for filing. It is very important that any concerns on a child's safety are logged.

Responding to a direct disclosure

If a child alleges that a person living, working, or looking after them either at the setting or elsewhere has harmed them or put them at risk of harm, this is known as a **direct disclosure**. If a child makes a **direct disclosure,** it **must be acted upon** and referred to **Bradford's Children's Services Integrated Front Door** and/or the **Police**.

Before deciding what to do next, the practitioner whom the child has made the disclosure to, needs to find out more information from the child by asking open ended questions ready to share with the IFD practitioner advice and referral helpline, and for the setting records.
Depending on the answers the child provides, and the information already held, the setting needs to consider if speaking to the parent/carer would put the child in more danger by doing so. If after speaking to the parent/carer a plausible explanation is provided, or the child changes their story the setting must still refer. It is not the role of the setting to decide if the allegation is true or not.

4. Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff or Volunteer

Communityworks will ensure that any allegations made against members, or a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker must ensure that the child is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The designated safeguarding lead for child protection should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving a designated safeguarding lead, alternative arrangements should be made to ensure that the matter is dealt with by an independent person. (Note: this could be one of the other designated safeguarding leads or the Safeguarding board of director).
- The designated safeguarding lead should contact the local authority designated officer (LADO - who is based at the Child Protection Unit) for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the police. It should also be reported to Ofsted.
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should complete an incident report recording form outlining what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The designated safeguarding lead (if appropriate) can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or social services.
- Regardless of whether a police and/or social services investigation follows, Communityworks will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and reference to the operation of disciplinary procedures may be made. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal dependent on the nature of the incident.

5. Good Practice in the Care of Children

Situations where abuse may occur can be minimised by:
• Always being publicly open when working with children.
• Where possible parents should take responsibility for their own children.
• Where possible avoid taking children alone on car journeys, however short, unless there is no other option and the child's parents have given permission. This may be acceptable as a one-off, but very unwise to do on a regular basis.

Those working with children should never:
• Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
• Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
• Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
• Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Guidelines for discussing suspicions with children:

- Listen to the child rather than directly question them
- Do not try to interview the child
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events
- Make notes of the discussion, (use an incident recording form) as soon as possible afterwards, taking care to record the timing, setting, people present and what was said. Be as accurate as possible
- Never promise to keep a secret. For example, you can say: "*Depending on what it is you tell me I may have to tell someone else so we can help you."*
- Any concerns should be reported to a designated safeguarding lead and recorded on an incident report form.

If you have any concerns regarding your own, a child's or other adults' behaviour please seek supervision. Any member of staff, volunteer or board member dealing with such instances will be given supervision.

Useful Numbers

During office hours (8.30am – 5pm Monday to Thursday, 4.30pm on Friday) call **Bradford Children's Services Integrated Front Door (IFD)** on 01274 433999

Where the DSL is not sure whether it is a child protection issue, they may seek advice from the Education Safeguarding Team **Tel: 01274 437043**

At all other times, Children's Social Care Emergency Duty Team on 01274 431010

If you have reason to believe that a child is at IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM, contact the Police on 999

Website: https://saferbradford.co.uk

The Designated Officer (LADO) for Working Together to Safeguard Children – The Bradford Partnership can be contacted via the Duty Officer, on 01274 435600 or LADO@bradford.gov.uk

OFSTED Helpdesk	0300 123 1231
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline	0800 0280285
National Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000 247
Police (Non-Emergencies)	101

Related Policies:

What to do in the event of allegations of abuse against a member of staff
Confidentiality
Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
Incident Recording Procedure
Health & Safety
Opening Up and Exiting the Building
Behaviour management
Special educational needs and inclusion
Comments, Compliments and Complaints
Equality and Diversity
Emergency Procedures
Recruitment and Selection
Single Central Record Policy and Procedure
Online Safety Policy

USEFUL CONTACTS

Team	Email	Telephone
Access Team	Education.Access@bradford.gov.uk	01274 439393
Attendance Support Team	Attendance@bradford.gov.uk	01274 435743
CE Hub	Child.Exploitation@bradford.gov.uk	01274 435080
Child Employment / Entertainment	cee@bradford.gov.uk	01274 437607
Children Missing Education	CME@bradford.gov.uk	01274 438877
Council switchboard		01274 431000
Customer Contact Centre	childrens.enquiries@bradford.gov.uk	01274 432111
Early Years	earlyeducationfund@bradford.gov.uk	01274 437503
Educational Psychology Team	EducationalPsychologyTeam@bradford.gov.uk	01274 439444
Elective Home Education	electiveheducation@bradford.gov.uk	01274 439340
Holidays in term time fines	PN@bradford.gov.uk	01274 439651
LADO	LADO@Bradford.cov.uk	01274 435600
Missing team	Childrens.enquiries@bradford.gov.uk	01274 439999
Prevent Coordinator	Danielle.King@bradford.gov.uk	07788264621
Prosecution/Penalty Notice	Attlegal@bradford.gov.uk	01274 439651
Safeguarding complaints, compliance & advice	EdSafeTeam@bradford.gov.uk	01274 437043
School Admissions Team	schooladmissions@bradford.gov.uk	01274 439200
Social Communication Interaction & Learning Team (SCIL)	SCILTeam@bradford.gov.uk	***01274 439500***
Special Educational Needs & Disability Team (SEND)	SEND@bradford.gov.uk	01274 435750