

Bridges For Communities Safeguarding Policy

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Introduction

Bridges for Communities exists to connect people from different cultures and faiths, giving them the opportunity to build friendships and understand one another better. It seeks to challenge the stereotypes and prejudice that exist between different groups of people, doing so by promoting interaction and friendship.

It seeks to give people who would not ordinarily meet the chance to do so, promoting friendship and understanding between diverse communities. By simply bringing people together and giving them opportunities to develop friendships, stereotypes are challenged and perceptions are changed.

Specific programmes run by Bridges for Communities and considered within the scope of this policy include:

- Peace Feast: people from different cultures sharing a meal together.
- Sharing Festivals: bringing people together around religious festivals and feasts — like Ramadan and Christmas.
- Befriending: providing one-to-one support for refugees and asylum-seekers in Bristol.
- Stitching Together – providing courses to enable refugee and asylum seeking women to start or develop sewing skills.
- Resettlement support: helping to support refugees who have been resettled in Bristol, through volunteer support and cultural awareness training.
- Cultural Exchange: organising trips to connect people from different cultures.
- Training: providing cultural awareness and refugee support training.
- RefuLingua: providing refugees with a volunteering opportunity through teaching their language to people in Bristol.
- Bristol Welcome Events: social events and trips that enable refugees and asylum seekers to meet with others and connect with their local community.
- Schools linking project – connecting with schools to facilitate children across the city getting to know each other.
- Walk With Me – organising walks to enable people from refugee or asylum seeking background to meet local people in a neutral space.
- Listening Spaces – facilitating intentional listening and dialogue between people of different cultures, races, faiths, social class and political opinions.

Policy statement

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Bridges for Communities to safeguarding adults, young people and children and to ensure that everyone involved in Bridges for Communities is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults, young people and children.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults, young people and children.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult, young person or child within the organisation.

Bridges for Communities believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status. We recognise that the welfare of children is paramount, and they have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Bridges for Communities is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm, which necessitates: the recognition of those who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; knowing how abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself; and being willing to report safeguarding concerns.

This extends to recognising and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community or voluntary activities, in the community, in the person's own home and in any care setting.

Bridges for Communities is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

Bridges for Communities acknowledges that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and is committed to prevent abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all involved.

"The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object" (ICSA The Governance Institute, 2017)

Scope

This safeguarding policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals involved in Bridges for Communities including all staff – paid and unpaid, trustees and volunteers, and to all concerns about the safety of adults, young people and children whilst taking part in our organisation and its activities.

Our commitment

At Bridges for Communities we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child."

At Bridges for Communities we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance.

We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding, as well as working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies essential in promoting adult and young people's welfare.

We will ensure adults with care and support needs, children and young people feel valued by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice and informing them of policies and procedures where appropriate.
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for adults, children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, adults, children, young people treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Linked policies and procedures

Bridges for Communities is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy and procedures.

In order to do so the following will be in place:

- A designated Safeguarding Lead, and a Deputy Lead (see roles below).
- Safeguarding procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- Regular management reports to the Board of Trustees detailing how any safeguarding reports have been addressed.
- Arrangements to work effectively with other relevant organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults, young people and children, including arrangements for sharing information, for example with the resettlement team at Bristol City Council
- Code of Conduct for trustees, staff and volunteers that specify zero tolerance of abuse in any form, and subsequent consequences.
- Policies and procedures that address the following areas and which are consistent with this Safeguarding Policy:
 - Cyber security
 - Managing complaints, including allegations against staff and volunteers
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion
 - Code of conduct
 - Discipline and grievance -includes bullying and harassment
 - Health and Safety
 - Role description for Safeguarding Lead
 - Whistleblowing
 - Online safety
 - Safe recruitment and selection (staff, trustees and volunteers)
 - UK GDPR - Information policy, data protection and information sharing (includes photos and images)

This policy and related policies are reviewed by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis and whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance as required by the Local Safeguarding Board, or as a result of any other significant change or event.

Roles

Director – The Managing Director of Bridges for Communities (Dan Green) is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy. The Managing Director is also responsible for investigating allegations against staff or volunteers. The Managing Director will report to trustees any significant concerns, and any concerns that need to be reported to the Charities Commission. They will also keep a log of any incidents.

Safeguarding Lead – The Bridges for Communities **Safeguarding Lead is Karen Green** – 07547498520.

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for providing safeguarding advice to the Director, staff and volunteers, and for ensuring staff and volunteers have adequate training in the identification and

reporting of abuse, as well as maintaining a record of staff training. The Safeguarding Lead is also responsible for onward notification of reports of abuse.

The deputy safeguarding lead is Mark Walters – 07999554996

The trustee responsible for safeguarding is Lizzie Briggs – 07764497517

Because of the marriage relationship between the current Safeguarding Lead and Managing Director (Dan & Karen Green), if there is a conflict of interest or the concern is about either of them then it should be raised with Lizzie Briggs (Trustee).

Although Bridges for Communities, by the nature of its activities, has limited statutory obligations with respect to safeguarding it recognises that it may encounter situations or plan to undertake activities where unsupervised contact with children or adults with care and support needs is a possibility. The Safeguarding Lead is therefore responsible for ensuring that Bridges for Communities retains the ability to make informed safeguarding decisions, and is responsible for reviewing the activities of Bridges for Communities on an ongoing basis with a view to ensuring that this policy remains relevant.

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

To safeguard those in Bridges for Communities we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

“1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.”

“2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.”

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

Safeguarding Adults Legislation

Safeguarding Adults in England is compliant with United Nations directives on the rights of disabled people and commitments to the rights of older people. It is covered by:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance.

- England – The Care Act 2014 Care and Support Statutory Guidance (especially chapter 14) 2014.

An Adult at risk is defined in the Care Act 2014 as an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- a. has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) AND;
- b. is experiencing, or 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.

The principles of adult safeguarding according to the Care Act 2014 are:

- Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Many other pieces of UK legislation also affect adult safeguarding.

These include legislation about different forms of abuse and those that govern information sharing. For example, legislation dealing with:

- Murder/attempted murder
- Physical Assault
- Sexual Offences
- Domestic Abuse/Coercive control
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Theft and Fraud
- Modern slavery and Human exploitation
- Hate crime
- Harassment
- Listing and Barring of those unsuitable to work with adults with care and support needs.

There is also legislation about the circumstances in which decisions can be made on behalf of an adult who is unable to make decisions for themselves:

- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) came into effect in April 2007. An amendment, contained in the Mental Health Act 2007, concerning deprivation of liberty safeguards came into force in April 2009. See Appendix 3 for more information about the Mental Capacity Act.
- The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) were introduced into the Mental Capacity Act 2005, (which became effective in April 2009,) and provides a legal framework in circumstances where deprivation of liberty appears to be unavoidable and aims to prevent breaches of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- DoLS apply to people in hospitals and care homes aged 18 years and over who lack capacity to consent to arrangements that amount to a deprivation of liberty.

The concept of 'Person Centred Safeguarding'/'Making Safeguarding Personal' means engaging the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their situation in a way that enhances their

involvement, choice and control, as well as improving their quality of life, well-being and safety. Organisations work to support adults to achieve the outcomes they want for themselves. The adult's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs must be taken into account when decisions are made about how to support them to be safe. There may be many different ways to prevent further harm. Working with the person will mean that actions taken help them to find the solution that is right for them. Treating people with respect, enhancing their dignity and supporting their ability to make decisions also helps promote people's sense of self-worth and supports recovery from abuse.

Detailed signs and indicators types of abuse in adults are presented in Appendix 2.

Safeguarding Children legislation

The Children Acts 1989, 2004 and 2010 define a 'child' as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Therefore, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means 'children' and 'young people'.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' legislation defines safeguarding as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that 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 life chances

(This policy is based on UK and international law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely the Children Act, 1989, 2004; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; Data Protection Act, 1998; Sexual Offences Act, 2003; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012; Equality Act 2010; Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015; other relevant UK government guidance on safeguarding children including Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 and the Prevent Duty.)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Working Together 2018 highlights four areas of abuse: Physical abuse, Emotional abuse, Sexual abuse and Neglect. Detailed signs and indicators of these types of abuse are presented in Appendix 1.

In addition, there are many other ways in which children can be placed at risk of harm – these are also listed in Appendix 1.

Safer recruitment

Bridges for Communities will ensure all staff will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate

- A self-declaration form and disclosure and barring check (DBS) has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Safeguarding training

Bridges for Communities is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all trustees, staff and volunteers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All trustees, staff and volunteers will be provided with an appropriate level of safeguarding training prior to commencing their work, to allow them to identify potential types and signs of abuse and develop an understanding of how to raise any concerns with the Bridges for Communities Safeguarding Lead through clear pathways of reporting. Yearly training will be provided for staff, and volunteers will be invited to update their training every 3 years or as required. Opportunities to undertake recognised safeguarding training will also be available. We will provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies and procedures and code of conduct confidently and competently.

Training provided to volunteers will also make clear what activities and services Bridges for Communities supports, and will highlight those activities which would be considered regulated activities and which Bridges for Communities therefore does not support as part of its work. Training will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have concerns.

Disclosure and Barring

Where trustees, staff and volunteers have direct or indirect contact with children, they will be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Because Bridges for Communities does not, in the normal course of its activities, carry out regulated activities with respect to either adults or children, it is not appropriate for volunteers to be routinely checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Bridges for Communities recognises, however, that other agencies which partner with Bridges for Communities may require DBS checks, and Bridges for Communities will fully comply with any such requirement.

Bridges for Communities may also choose to carry out a basic DBS check for volunteers or staff.

Where Bridges for Communities does carry out regulated activities (for example, providing tuition to children), an appropriate level of DBS check will be sought.

Partnership working

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse. We recognise that working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting individuals welfare.

We therefore have clear guidelines with regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and where appropriate have a partnership agreement for safeguarding.

Recording and information sharing

All charities must comply with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) – see separate UK GDPR policy.

Bridges for Communities will be clear as to the grounds for processing and sharing information about concerns of abuse.

Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with our Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

Information about adult safeguarding concerns should only be shared with the consent of the adult. However, the circumstances when we need to share information without the adult's consent include those where:

- it is not safe to contact the adult to gain their consent – i.e. it might put them or the person making contact at further risk.
- you believe they or someone else is at risk, including children.
- you believe the adult is being coerced or is under duress.
- it is necessary to contact the police to prevent a crime, or to report that a serious crime has been committed.
- the adult does not have mental capacity to consent to information being shared about them.
- the person causing harm has care and support needs.

When information is shared without the consent of the adult this must be explained to them, when it is safe to do so, and any further actions should still fully include them.

Any decision to share or not to share information with an external person or organisation must be recorded together with the reasons to share or not share information.

Child Protection Records retention and storage

All child protection records need to be kept confidential and stored securely. Electronic files should be password protected and stored on computers with protection against hackers and viruses.

Information about child protection concerns and referrals should be kept in a separate child protection file. A child protection file for each child should be started as soon as any concerns are raised.

If records are shared (within Bridges for Communities or externally), they are to be kept confidential.

In England, child protection records should be kept until the child is 25 years old.

If concerns have been raised about an adult's behaviour around children, records should be kept in their personnel file at least until they reach their normal retirement age or for 10 years – whichever is longer (IRMS, 2019; Department for Education, 2021). This applies to volunteers and paid staff.

Bridges for Communities insurers state that records must be held for a minimum of 15 years.

Responding to allegations of abuse

You may be concerned about harm to another person because of something you have seen or heard, information you have been told by others or because someone has confided in you about things that are happening or have happened to them.

You should not keep safeguarding concerns to yourself. If you have concerns and/ or you are told about possible or alleged abuse, poor practice or wider welfare issues you must contact the Bridges for Communities Safeguarding Lead as soon as you can:

Karen Green

07547498520

karen.green@bridgesforcommunities.com

In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made to:

Mark Walters (Deputy)

07999554996

mark.walters@bridgesforcommunities.com

or

Lizzie Briggs (Trustee)

07764497517

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the Police.

Under no circumstances should you carry out your own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

- 1 If someone has a need for immediate medical attention call an ambulance on 999.
- 2 If you are concerned someone is in immediate danger or a serious crime is being committed contact the police on 999 straight away. Where you suspect that a crime is being committed, you must involve the police.
- 3 Listen to the concerns being shared. See guidance notes on this below.
- 4 Speak to the Safeguarding Lead or your project manager and report your concerns without delay (as soon as possible and within 24 hours). If concerns are reported to a project manager they will refer them directly to the safeguarding lead without delay.
- 5 Complete a Safeguarding Children and Young People Concerns Report Form APPENDIX (for concerns regarding anyone under 18 years old) or a Safeguarding Adults Concerns Report Form APPENDIX and submit to the Safeguarding Lead.

The Safeguarding lead will:

- Ensure any immediate actions necessary to safeguard anyone at risk have been taken
- Ensure they understand the report form and all parts have been completed
- Inform, reassure, and advise the person making the report e.g. what to do/what not to do. Explain what will happen next. Reinforce the need for confidentiality.
- If necessary, consult with the deputy safeguarding lead, the managing director, and / or the lead for safeguarding trustee, and with the Local Authority/the Police, and any referring organisation that may be relevant, and decide which of the following actions need to be taken:

1 - Make a referral to the police if a serious crime has been committed or a crime has been committed against someone without the mental capacity to contact the police themselves.

2 - Make a referral to Children's Services:

If you are unsure whether or not to make a referral/report you can ask for advice from **Families in Focus:**

- **North team - 0117 3521499**
- **South team - 0117 9037770**
- **East/central team - 01173576460**

Or you can seek advice from the thirtyone:eight helpline 0303 003 1111.

- **To make a referral call the First Response Team on 0117 903 6444 (Emergency Duty Team 01454 615 165).**

3 - Make a referral to Adult Services:

- **Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Name: Care Direct 0117 922 2700**

Referrals can be made online via.....

[Adult Care Referral form for professionals - bristol.gov.uk](http://bristol.gov.uk)

[Adult Care and Health: Reported Suspected Adult Abuse - bristol.gov.uk](http://bristol.gov.uk)

4 - Use policy and procedures to stop harm within the organisation

LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer In order to manage allegations against professionals working with children, every Local Authority appoints a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). They can be reached through the first response team, or on the number below. The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk to children.
- (Working Together 2018)

The Local Authority Designated Officer in Bristol is Nicola Laird who can be contacted on 0117 9037795

Detailed procedures where there is concern about an adult:

Remember to be person centred and make safeguarding personal. If it will not put them or you at further risk, discuss your safeguarding concerns with the adult and ask them what they would like to happen next. Inform them that you have to pass on your concerns to your Safeguarding Lead. Do not confront the person thought to be causing the harm.

If an adult indicates that they are being harmed or abused, or information is received which gives rise to concern, the person receiving the information should take it seriously and stay calm. Listen carefully to what is said, allowing the adult to continue at their own pace. Keep questions to a minimum, only ask questions if you need to identify/ clarify what the person is telling you. Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information. Ask them what they would like to happen next and explain what you would like to do next. Explain that you will have to share the information with Bridges for Communities Safeguarding Lead. Ask for their consent for the information to be shared outside the organisation and make an arrangement as to how you/the Safeguarding Lead can contact them safely. Help them to contact other organisations for advice and support (e.g. Police, Domestic Abuse helpline, Victim Support.) Make sure you record in writing what was said using the adult's own words as soon as possible.

- **Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times.**
- **This information must only be shared with your Safeguarding Lead and others that have a need to know –e.g. to keep the person safe whilst waiting for action to be taken.**

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you:

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to the safeguarding lead
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g.: 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, 'You're not to blame'.
- Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (e.g.: Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as 'Anything else to tell me?'
- Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).

- Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

If it is safe to do so, and will not put the child or yourself at risk, the parent/carer needs to be informed that a record has been made of what the child has said. They should be shown the record and asked to sign it. They then need to be informed of what action will be taken.

If the allegations are of sexual abuse, or if there is a risk of greater harm to the child, the parent should not be informed.

- **Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times.**
- **This information must only be shared with your Safeguarding Lead and others that have a need to know –e.g. to keep the person safe whilst waiting for action to be taken.**

When filling in a report form:

- Describe the circumstances in which the concern came about
- It is important to distinguish between things that are facts, things that have been observed or over-heard and opinions, in order to ensure that information is as accurate as possible.
- If someone has told you about the harm or abuse, use the words the person themselves used. If someone has written to you (including by email, message) include a copy with the form.

Allegations involving a trustee, member of staff or volunteer

Bridges for Communities is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people where appropriate.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within 24 hours to the Safeguarding Lead. The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting. The Safeguarding Lead will obtain details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made, ensuring clear and accurate records are made and a report form is filled in.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against staff or a volunteer whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

APPENDIX 1

Child Abuse – Definitions of abuse together with signs and symptoms

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. This is known as Fabricated or Induced Illness.

Bumps and bruises don't always mean a child is being physically abused. All children have accidents, trips and falls, and there isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for, but it's important to be aware of the signs. If a child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

Physical abuse symptoms include:

- Bruises
- broken or fractured bones
- burns or scalds
- bite marks.

It can also include other injuries and health problems, such as:

- scarring
- the effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning.

Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse so it's important to be aware of these.

Visible signs include:

- swelling
- bruising
- fractures
- being extremely sleepy or unconscious
- breathing problems
- seizures
- vomiting
- unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly.

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.

Emotional abuse 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
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate

- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another (including domestic abuse)
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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.

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse, and a child might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. That's why it's important to look out for signs in how a child is acting. As children grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be difficult to tell if they're being emotionally abused. But children who are being emotionally abused might:

- seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
- struggle to control their emotions
- have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- act in a way that's inappropriate for their age.

The signs of emotional abuse can be different for children at different ages

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.

Sexual abuse 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional signs of sexual abuse:

- Avoiding being alone with, or frightened of a person they know
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know
- Bed wetting or nightmares
- Self harm
- Changes in eating habits

Physical signs of sexual abuse

- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains, soreness in genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

If a child is being or has been sexually abused online, they might:

- spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media

- seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

Children and young people might also drop hints and clues about the abuse

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and 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 care-givers) or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

Signs of neglect include:

Poor appearance and hygiene:

- being smelly or dirty
- being hungry or not given money for food
- having unwashed clothes
- having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter
- having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants.

Health and development:

- anaemia
- body issues, such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- medical or dental issues
- missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations
- not given the correct medicines
- poor language or social skills
- regular illness or infections
- repeated accidental injuries, often caused by lack of supervision
- skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- tiredness
- untreated injuries
- weight or growth issues.

Housing and family issues:

- living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating
- being left alone for a long time
- taking on the role of carer for other family members

Changes in behaviour:

- becoming clingy
- becoming aggressive
- being withdrawn, depressed or anxious
- changes in eating habits
- displaying obsessive behaviour
- finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities
- missing school
- showing signs of self-harm
- using drugs or alcohol.

In addition, you should be aware that there are many other ways in which children can be placed at risk of harm. These may include:

1. Domestic abuse between those age 16 and over – includes any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse. Experiencing domestic abuse (directly or indirectly) constitutes harm to a child and young person.
2. Mental illness of parent or carer
3. Drug or alcohol misuse by parent or carer
4. Children becoming 'young carers'
5. Information Communication Technology (ICT) – computers and mobile devices such as mobile phones and games consoles may be used as a means of abusing and grooming children and young people
6. Specialist circumstances such as gang activity, abuse linked to spiritual and religious beliefs, Race and Hate crime, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Human Trafficking, Modern Day Slavery, Honour Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage and Fabricated or Induced Illness.

Common signs for any abuse:

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent

- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour, but if you have any concerns, please contact the safeguarding lead for Bridges for Communities to discuss your concerns.

APPENDIX 2

Definitions of abuse for adults together with signs and symptoms

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance.

There are different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and different circumstances in which they may take place.

Physical abuse

Includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can manifest itself in many ways including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional or based on honour. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as occurring between two people (aged 16 and over) who are 'personally connected to each other' and the behaviour is deemed 'abusive'. Behaviour is 'abusive' when any of the following is identified:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse;
- psychological, emotional or other abuse, such as spiritual abuse.

Sexual abuse

Includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the individual has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Sexual abuse may also take the form of sexual exploitation which can involve coercion and an exchange for basic necessities or something that the perpetrator seeks to gain from the victim.

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse may take the form of:

- emotional abuse
- threats of harm or abandonment
- deprivation of contact
- humiliation
- blaming
- controlling
- intimidation
- coercion
- harassment
- verbal abuse
- cyber bullying
- isolation

- unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Financial or material abuse

Includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse of misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Some of the potential signs or indicators may be:

- change in living conditions
- lack of heating, clothing or food
- unexpected or sudden inability to pay bills
- unexpected or sudden changes in financial accounts, documents or unexpected change of behaviour, or loss of trust in professionals should the person be experiencing any of the above from people they know.

Financial abuse is not only material, it can impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing as it may be perceived as a loss of control over an important aspect of their lives. It may lead to social isolation and loneliness and may impact on the person's relationships with others, particularly if the perpetrator may have been someone they trust. In some instances, it can also result in financial hardship where the victim faces difficult meeting their everyday living or care costs.

Modern slavery

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Modern slavery may not immediately seem like it warrants an adult social care or adult safeguarding response as local responses may be led by community safety or justice teams. However, modern slavery should be considered an adult safeguarding concern and local authorities have statutory duties to provide support for suspected or known victims. This is set out in the Care Act 2014 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The Modern Slavery Act statutory guidance 2020 outlines the signs that someone may be a victim, the support available to victims and responsibilities of public bodies and professionals.

Discriminatory abuse

Includes forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender, and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse

Includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect of poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission

Includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Self-neglect

Self-neglect is used to describe a wide range of behaviours which relate to neglect to care for one's own personal hygiene, health or surroundings. The person themselves may not recognise the impact of their behaviour or may not use the same terminology to describe their own situation. Ultimately, self-neglect becomes a cause for concern where there are serious risks identified to an individual's health, wellbeing or lifestyle. Self-neglect may take the form of a neglect of nutrition or hydration, or behaviours such as hoarding.

Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person.
- Self-harm.
- A fear of a particular group of people or individual.
- A parent/carer always speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure

APPENDIX 3

Mental Capacity and Decision Making

We make many decisions every day, often without realising. UK Law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they can't. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise.

We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted. The Law says that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate our decision

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health.

Most adults have the ability to make their own decisions given the right support however, some adults with care and support needs have the experience of other people making decisions about them and for them.

Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time that decision is needed. A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe/possible, then wait until they are able to be involved in decision making or to make the decision themselves.

For example:

- A person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure.
- Someone who is anxious may not be able to make a decision at that point.
- A person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Mental Capacity is important for safeguarding for several reasons.

Not being allowed to make decisions one is capable of making is abuse. For example, a disabled adult may want to take part in an activity but their parent who is their carer won't allow them to and will not provide the support they would need. Conversely the adult may not seem to be benefiting from an activity other people are insisting they do.

Mental Capacity must also be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an 'adult at risk' has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened, however, in some situations the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

The principles of Mental Capacity legislation (Mental Capacity Act 2005) are:

- We can only make decisions for other people if they cannot do that for themselves at the time the decision is needed.
- If the decision can wait, wait – e.g. to get help to help the person make their decision or until they can make it themselves.

- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we must make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account what we know about their preferences and wishes.
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe will restrict them then we must think of the way to do that which restricts to their freedom and rights as little as possible.

If a person who has a lot of difficulty making their own decisions is thought to be being abused or neglected, then they will be referred to the Local Authority, and this should result in health or social care professionals making an assessment of mental capacity and/or getting the person the support they need to make decisions. Anyone with an assessment under the Mental Capacity Act will need to have their case reviewed monthly.

Decisions taken in order to safeguard an adult who cannot make the decision for themselves could include:

- Sharing information about safeguarding concerns with people that can help protect them.
- Stopping them being in contact with the person causing harm.

The Mental Capacity Act does allow restrictions and restraint to be used in a person's support, but only if they are in the best interests of a person who lacks capacity to make the decision themselves. Such restrictions or restraint can take away a person's freedom and so deprive them of their liberty (decisions about what amounts to a deprivation of liberty are ultimately made by courts).

Restrictions and restraint must be proportionate to the harm the care giver is seeking to prevent, and can include:

- the use of some medication, for example, to calm a person
- close supervision in the home, or the use of isolation
- requiring a person to be supervised when out
- physically stopping a person from doing something which could cause them harm
- removing items from a person which could cause them harm
- holding a person so that they can be given care, support or treatment
- bedrails, wheelchair straps, restraints in a vehicle, and splints
- repeatedly saying to a person they will be restrained if they persist in a certain behaviour.

Where a managing authority thinks it needs to deprive someone of their liberty they have to ask for this to be authorised by a supervisory body – usually the local authority. In exceptional circumstances a person may need to be deprived of their liberty before the supervisory body can respond to a request for a standard authorisation – in these situations the managing authority can use an urgent authorisation. The managing authority can deprive a person of their liberty for up to seven days using an urgent authorisation; this can be extended by a further seven days if the supervisory body agrees.

Staff and volunteers for Bridges for Communities will not be in a position to place such restrictions or restraints and so do not need to be experts about what is and is not a deprivation of liberty, but should be aware of situations where a person might be deprived of their liberty and raise any concerns as safeguarding concerns using Bridges for Communities' safeguarding procedures.

APPENDIX 4

Safeguarding Children Report Form

To be completed as fully as possible if you have concerns regarding a child, and send it to the safeguarding lead at Bridges for Communities.

Details of child (you have concerns about)	
Name of child	
Address	
Date of Birth/ Age	
Gender	
Parent's details (if known) Including names, address, phone number	
Details of the person completing this form/ Your details	
Name	
Contact phone number(s)	
Email address	
Role	
Name of organisation	
Details of concern	
Please explain why you are concerned. Please give details about what you have seen/been told/other that makes you believe the child is at risk of harm or is being abused or neglected (include dates/times/evidence from records/photos etc.)	
Details of the person thought to be causing harm (if known)	
Name	

Address	
Date of Birth/Age	
Relationship/connection to child	
Do they have contact with other children at risk in another capacity? E.g. in their work/family/as a volunteer	
Was the child able to say what happened? If so, how did they describe it?	
Risk to others	
Are any other children or adults at risk? Yes/No/Not known – delete as appropriate	
Other agencies contacted	Who contacted/reference number/contact details/advice gained/action being taken
Police	
Ambulance	
Other – please state who and why:	
Contact with safeguarding lead	
Who else has been informed of this issue? – and what was the reason for information sharing	
Consultation with Safeguarding Lead	Dates and times
Completed Form copied to Safeguarding Lead; Date and time	
Signed:	
Date:	

Sharing the concerns (To be completed by Safeguarding Lead)

Details of contact with the Local Authority Safeguarding Team - advice can be still sought without giving personal details if unsure

Details of any other agencies contacted:

Details of the outcome of this concern:

APPENDIX 5

Safeguarding Adults Report Form

To be completed as fully as possible if you have concerns regarding an adult.

If it is safe to do so, it is important to inform the adult about your concerns and that you have a duty to pass the information onto the safeguarding lead. The Safeguarding Lead will then look at the information and start to plan a course of action.

Section 1 – Details of adult (you have concerns about)	
Name of adult	
Address	
Date of Birth/ Age	
Contact number	
Emergency contact if known	
Consent to share information with emergency contact?	
Section 2 – Details of the person completing this form/ Your details	
Name	
Contact phone number(s)	
Email address	
Line manager or alternative contact	
Name of organisation / club	
Your Role in organisation	
Section 3 – Details of concern	
Please explain why you are concerned. Please give details about what you have seen/been told/other that makes you believe the adult is at risk of harm or is being abused or neglected (include dates/times/evidence from records/photos etc.)	
Date/ Time	What happened
Section 5 – Details of the person thought to be causing harm (if known)	
Name	
Address	
Date of Birth/Age	
Relationship/connection to adult	
Role in organisation	
Do they have contact with other adults at risk in another capacity? E.g. in their work/family/as a volunteer	

Section 6 – Have you discussed your concerns with the adult? What are their views, What have they stated about what they want to happen and what outcomes they want?

Section 6A – Reasons for not discussing with the adult

Discussion would put the adult or others at risk. Please explain:

Adult appears to lack mental capacity. Please explain:

Adult unable to communicate their views. Please explain:

Section 7 – Risk to others

Are any other adults at risk Yes/No/Not known – delete as appropriate
If yes please fill in another form answering questions 1-6

Are any children at risk Yes/No/Not known Delete as appropriate
If yes please fill in a safeguarding children referral form and attach to this.

Section 8 – What action have you taken if any /agreed with the adult to reduce the risks?

Section 9: Other agencies contacted

Who contacted/reference number/contact details/advice gained/action being taken

Police

Ambulance

Other – please state who and why:

Section 10: Contact with safeguarding lead

Who else has been informed of this issue? – and what was the reason for information sharing

Consultation with Safeguarding Lead

Dates and times

Completed Form copied to Safeguarding Lead; Date and time

Signed:

Date:

OFFICE USE ONLY

Section 11 – Sharing the concerns (To be completed by Safeguarding Lead)

Details of your contact with the adult at risk of harm. Have they consented to information being shared outside of Bridges for Communities?

Details of contact with the Local Authority Safeguarding Team where the adult at risk of harm lives – advice can be still sought without giving personal details if you do not have consent for a referral.

Details of any other agencies contacted:

Details of the outcome of this concern:

APPENDIX 6

Further sources of Information and Support

NSPCC 24 hour Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (free from a landline)

NSPCC Text helpline: 88858 (service is free and anonymous). There is a lot of helpful information on their website www.nspcc.org.uk

Police: 101 (non-emergency calls)

Barnardos – supporting victims of child abuse [Child sexual abuse | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](http://Child%20sexual%20abuse%20|%20Barnardo's%20(barnardos.org.uk))

Childline – phone line for help and support – 0800 1111

Men's Advice Line

For male domestic abuse survivors

Tel: [0808 801 0327](tel:08088010327)

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Tel: [0800 999 5428](tel:08009995428)

National 24Hour Freephone Domestic Abuse Helplines

Tel: [0808 2000 247](tel:08082000247)

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/Contact-us

Rape Crisis Federation of England and Wales

Email: info@rapecrisis.co.uk

www.rapecrisis.co.uk

Respond

Respond provides a range of services to victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse who have learning disabilities, and training and support to those working with them.

Tel: [020 7383 0700](tel:02073830700) or

[0808 808 0700](tel:08088080700) (Helpline)

Email: services@respond.org.uk

www.respond.org.uk

Stop Hate Crime

Works to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity. Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.

24 hours service:

Telephone: [0800 138 1625](tel:08001381625)

Web Chat: www.stophateuk.org/talk-to-us/

E mail: talk@stophateuk.org

Text: [07717 989 025](tel:07717989025)

Susy Lamplugh Trust

The Trust is a leading authority on personal safety. Its role is to minimise the damage caused to individuals and to society by aggression in all its forms – physical, verbal and psychological.

Tel: [020 83921839](tel:02083921839)

Fax: [020 8392 1830](tel:02083921830)

Email: info@suzylamplugh.org

www.suzylamplugh.org

Victim Support

Provides practical advice and help, emotional support and reassurance to those who have suffered the effects of a crime.

Tel: 0808 168 9111

www.victimsupport.com

Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales

Women's Aid is a national domestic violence charity. It also runs a domestic violence online help service.

www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support