

THE BRIDGES COMMUNITY TRUST

P13: Child Protection Policy



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1. Statement of Purpose

- 1.1. The Bridges Community Trust Child Protection Policy applies to all young people. That policy specifically applies to young people aged up to the age of 18 (where after the Adult Safeguarding Policy should apply) and covers the four areas of safeguarding; Physical, Emotional, Neglect and Sexual Abuse.
- 1.2. All young people and their families will be made aware of the policy by TBCT staff and how this affects any confidentiality agreement especially relating to sharing information with outside agencies through the CAF process, CIN and CP reviews and conferences. Within the offices of TBCT posters are displayed that clearly identify the Safeguarding Officer including contact details.
- 1.3. The Bridges Community Trust is fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them. The Bridges Community Trust has a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Furthermore we will endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.
- 1.4. This Child Protection Policy will be followed by all staff and volunteers of The Bridges Community Trust and followed and promoted by those in a position of leadership within the organisation. New staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the policy and are directed to both the electronic copy (which is on TBCT's shared drive) and the hard copy which is kept at the office in the Meadows Bridgeway Centre.
- 1.5. The purpose of TBCT is to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of inhabitants of The Meadows, Nottingham, and in particular the relief of poverty, suffering or distress; the advancement of education; the promotion of health; the provision of recreation and leisure facilities in the interests of social welfare; and the improvement of efficiency of charities and community organisations in direct pursuit of their charitable objects by the provision of education and training.
- 1.6. The organisation does not often undertake activities with children in the absence of their parents/carers, however should this occur then we know that being a young person makes them vulnerable to abuse by adults. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by the organisation are transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people.
- 1.7. If any parent or young person/child has any concerns about the conduct of any member of the organisation, this should be raised in the first instance with the designated child protection officer.
- 1.8. The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis with other policies of the Trust or immediately if changes in national policy occur. Any review will be undertaken by the Safeguarding Officer and/or the Child Protection Lead before being ratified by the board.

- 1.9. Child Protection concerns in line with policy will be made by the Safeguarding Officer and/or the Child Protection Officer in cooperation with the relevant line management

2. Principles

- 2.1. The Bridges Community Trust's child protection policy is based on the following key principles:
 - The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount.
 - The welfare of families will be promoted.
 - The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to.
- 2.2. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989).
- 2.3. Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the policy outlined below.
- 2.4. Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals will be treated with respect.
- 2.5. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- 2.6. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns to the designated child protection officer.
- 2.7. Staff and volunteers will receive appropriate training and supervision to adopt and abide by the appropriate codes of conduct and child protection policies. TBCT will work towards providing Training every two years for those who require it.
- 2.8. The Bridges Community Trust is committed to promoting good practice.

3. Recognition of Child Abuse or Neglect

- 3.1. Abuse or neglect of a child is caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.
- 3.2. **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 feigns the symptoms, or, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as, fabricated illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.
- 3.3. **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature

age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

- 3.4. **Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- 3.5. **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

4. Procedures

- 4.1. The responsibility for managing this policy lies with the designated child protection officer. All concerns should be viewed as serious and will be referred to the designated child protection officer. The designated child protection officer will ensure that all workers, through training and discussion are familiar with the categories of abuse and the signs and symptoms for recognising abuse.
- 4.2. It is the responsibility of all workers to report any concerns (Children's Act 1989). The designated person will maintain records relating to child protection issues, this information will be held confidentially and in a secure location.
- 4.3. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks will be carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children/young people when deemed appropriate by The Bridges Community Trust designated child protection officer.
- 4.4. Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of the organisation. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.
- 4.5. What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect: It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations you must:
- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child
 - the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away Give the child time and attention
 - Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
 - Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record as it may later be needed as evidence.

- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that:
 - ✓ you are glad they have told you
 - ✓ they have not done anything wrong
 - ✓ what you are going to do next
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.
- **Complete a referral form as soon as possible after speaking to the child, ideally within an hour.**

Note: Following guidelines set out by the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Children Boards' Safeguarding Children Procedures, where there is a CAF open on a child this should be used as the referral form. Where there is no open CAF use NCC Multi Agency Referral Form.

4.6. Referral

- ALL concerns must be reported to the designated child protection officer through the use of the *Child Protection Referral Form (P13A)*.
- The Child Protection Officer may then broaden the consultation internally and externally.
- The concern will be clarified and a decision will be made on whether social services/the police should be contacted.
- If external agencies are not contacted then the child will continue to be monitored and observed and any further issues recorded.
- If external agencies are contacted then the designated child protection officer will liaise with the external agencies on the matter.
- If the concerns relate to an employee/volunteer of the trust then the issue should be reported to the police to investigate further. The employee/volunteer should be closely supervised while any concerns are being investigated.
- The only exception to this procedure will be if the designated child protection officer is not available (on holiday/sick etc.) or named as having some involvement in the abuse. In this case the first contact will be the deputy child protection officer of The Bridges Community Trust.
- There will be a 'child protection file' held at the trusts office. This file will contain a copy of the child protection policy, referral forms and contact details for both the child protection officer and the deputy child protection officer with an explanation of what to do with the form and method of contacting the child protection officer. All staff and volunteers will be made aware that this file exists and told where the file is kept. They will be reminded of it's location on an annual basis.
- ***The employee or volunteer reporting the abuse should not discuss this matter with anyone other than the designated child protection officer (or their deputy as in the circumstances stated above).***

5. Risk assessment

Before undertaking any activity with young people, a risk assessment will be carried out. This will be carried out in line with our *Risk Assessment Policy (P19)*.

6. Confidentiality

In line with The Bridges Community Trusts *Confidentiality Policy (P16)*, all records made in relation to a referral will be kept confidentially and in a secure place. Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a “need to know” basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child’s need for protection.

7. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers working with Children

7.1. Staff and volunteers should:

- Play their part in helping to develop an ethos where all people matter and are treated equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the care, welfare and safety needs of a child first.
- Respect a child’s right to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them.
- Listen attentively to any ideas and views a child wants to share with you.
- Respect a child’s culture (for example their faith and religious beliefs).
- Respect a child’s right to privacy and personal space.
- Respond sensitively to children who seem anxious about participating in certain activities.
- Speak to a member of staff immediately if they suspect that a child is experiencing bullying or harassment.
- Be aware of the vulnerability of some groups of children to being isolated and hurt (for example, children with disabilities and learning difficulties; children from Gypsy & Traveller communities; Black and Minority Ethnic children).
- Ensure that when working with children they are at least within sight or hearing of other adults.
- Listen carefully to any child who ‘tells them’ (sometimes through drawings and behaviour as well as words) that they are being harmed and report what they discover immediately to the designated child protection officer.
- Report immediately any suspicion that a child could be at risk of harm or abuse.
- Never dismiss what a child says as ‘lies’ or exaggeration.
- Only restrain a child who is at imminent risk of inflicting harm to themselves or others or is at risk of damaging property.
- Never underestimate the contribution that they can make to the development of safe communities for children.

7.2. Staff and volunteers should not

- Exaggerate or trivialise another worker’s concerns about a child or ignore an allegation or suspicion of abuse in the hope that it will either ‘go away’ or that ‘someone else will deal with it’.
- Discuss personal issues about a child or their family with other people except with the child protection officer, when they are concerned about a child’s well being.

- Be drawn into any derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people.
- Allow a child, young person or adult to be bullied or harmed by anyone in the organisation.
- Allow children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.

7.3. Staff and volunteers should never

- Engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow themselves or others to engage in touching a child in a sexually provocative manner,
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun,
- Engage in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of a game or sports activity or conforms to the guidance on appropriate physical restraint.
- Form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with children.
- Harass or intimidate a child or worker because of age, 'race', gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, socio economic class or disability.
- Invite or allow a child to stay with them at their home.

8. Allegation of abuse made against TBCT staff

Any allegation of abuse made against a staff member at TBCT (including both paid and voluntary in reference to this policy) must be taken seriously.

- 8.1. A staff member receiving the allegation must notify the relevant line manager.
- 8.2. The worker who is subject of the allegation must NOT be informed.
- 8.3. The Line Manager will notify the Finance and Operations Manager who will work in partnership with the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) – Nottingham City Council LADO based at Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NG.
- 8.4. All allegation management procedures are informed by the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Children's Board Safeguarding Children Procedure – Chapter 7 (pages 125 – 150)

Overview of the Nottingham City and County allegation management process

