

# Child Safeguarding Policy

## Children's Social Care

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## **Accessibility**

This document can be made available in large print, Braille, audio or in electronic format.

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# 1 Background

This policy is approved by the member agencies of the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board, including:

- Bracknell Forest Borough Council (BFBC) Department of Social Care and Learning, including Children's Social Care, Access and Inclusion, Learning and Achievement, and all BFBC schools and educational establishments,
- Thames Valley Police, Bracknell Forest,
- The Probation Service,
- The Youth Offending Service,
- The Berkshire East Primary Care Trust,
- The Strategic Health Authority,
- Connexions Berkshire,
- CAFCASS,
- Broadmoor Hospital,
- BFBC Environment, Culture & Communities
- Environment and Leisure,
- Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action,
- Berkshire Women's Aid.

These requirements also apply to all other agencies in Bracknell Forest providing services to children and young people or their families.

The child protection standards in this procedure are consistent with the Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards' Child Protection Procedures <http://berks.proceduresonline.com/index.htm> and the Government publications: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)' and 'What To Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused (2006)'. Please note that this strategic policy is designed to complement and provide a context for the more detailed Child Protection Procedures and does not replace them. Please refer to those for full guidance on child protection investigations and all multi-agency safeguarding procedures. See: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/living/liv-children-and-families/liv-child-protection/liv-child-protection-policies-and-procedures.htm>

## 2 The Role of all Agencies

The role for all member agencies in safeguarding children who may be in need of child protection services is in identifying children or young people who may be at risk and alerting the appropriate service.

- All staff in member agencies must ensure that they know the child protection procedures that are in force within the establishment and which staff member is responsible for child protection issues.

Within Children's Social Care all staff routinely seek advice from their line manager in relation to safeguarding children they are working with. An assessment must be undertaken if any child:

- Is suffering or has suffered abuse and/or neglect
- Is likely to suffer abuse and/or neglect
- (With agreement of a person with parental responsibility) would be likely to benefit from family support services.

If the child is an open case to a particular social worker they will do the assessment. New cases will be referred to the Duty and Assessment Team.

## 3 Support within Children's Social Care

Practitioners and support staff should raise all child safeguarding concerns with their line manager. Line managers must be informed of all child protection issues.

## 4 Principles

The following Principles are key for all staff:

- The interests of the child are paramount.
- In cases of suspected child abuse all staff have a responsibility to take action in the ways set out in this procedure.
- Immediate action, to refer or consult, is required where there is suspicion of abuse.
- Investigation is always the responsibility of the Children's Social Care Service and the Police. These agencies have to balance the necessity for action to protect the child with the potential adverse effects of an investigation on the family and/or others.
- Record keeping is essential at each stage and all documents should be kept to the standards outlined in Children's Social Care recording procedures.

- This procedure also covers disclosures made in electronic communications (e-mail or text messaging).

## **5 Procedure**

### **5.1 Responding to a Disclosure**

In all circumstances the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures are to be followed. See: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/living/liv-children-and-families/liv-child-protection.htm>

### **5.2 Acting on Concerns Regarding an Adult's Behaviour**

If you have any concerns about an adult or young person's behaviour towards children or other young people (not an employee or volunteer working for the agency) discuss your concerns with your line manager. The Children's Social Care Service will take any concerns very seriously.

### **5.3 Acting on a Disclosure from an Adult that they are involved in the abuse of a child or young person**

If someone not employed by the agency discloses that they are involved in the abuse of a child or young person, YOU MUST TAKE ACTION:

- Believe what they are saying and take the allegation seriously.
- Record details of what you have been told as soon as possible on the appropriate form.
- Take action in accordance with the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures, i.e. discuss the matter with your line manager.

### **5.4 Acting on Allegations against any Employee or Volunteer**

If you think that an employee or volunteer in Children's Social Care has or may have harmed a child or behaved in a way that means they are unsuitable to work with children the allegation or concern should be reported to the Team Manager Conference Review and Quality Assurance, who is nominated as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)<sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Authority Designated Officer acts for the LSCB agencies to monitor allegations and ensure that the actions in response to the allegation are in accordance with the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures. The TM Conference Review and QA is the LADO for the Bracknell Forest LSCB.

who may in some cases discuss the matter with the Named Senior Officer<sup>2</sup>. You should also inform your line manager<sup>3</sup>. In most cases, a meeting will be called to discuss how to proceed with regard to police investigation, child protection enquiries and/or disciplinary investigation. Berkshire Child Protection Procedures<sup>4</sup>, Chapter 12.

## 6 Staff Conduct

The following guidelines apply to all employees and volunteers in Children's Social Care whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity

- Always avoid unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person.
- Carry out a risk assessment before taking a child alone in a car, however short the journey.<sup>5</sup>
- Carry out a risk assessment before taking a child to the toilet. Consider the vulnerability of both yourself and the child.
- Do not divulge personal contact details such as email address or telephone number.
- Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.
- If a child or vulnerable adult makes any kind of accusation regarding a member of staff, you should report this immediately to your line manager and to the LADO.
- Participate in any training which is available to you to support you in your work with children. Managers should ensure that staff understand and are updated on the expectations of the agency with regard to safe working practice, and that induction includes an explanation of safe working practice requirements.
- Remember that those who abuse children and vulnerable adults can be of any age (including other children and vulnerable adults), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate

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<sup>2</sup> The Named Senior Officer (NSO) for Children's Social Care is the Chief Officer. All LSCB member agencies have a Named Senior Officer, who is responsible for ensuring that the agency has effective procedures in place for all aspects of child protection work.

<sup>3</sup> If the allegation concerns your line manager speak first to the LADO or the NSO, whichever is available.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/living/liv-children-and-families/liv-child-protection.htm>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/oha6-generic-risk-assessment.pdf> for generic risk assessment guidance and form.

action taking place.

- Good practice includes valuing and respecting children and vulnerable adults as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct - which would exclude bullying, aggressive behaviour, racism, sectarianism or sexism<sup>6</sup>.

## 7 Training

All staff must ensure that they attend child protection training in accordance with the requirements and standards of Children's Social Care<sup>7</sup>.

To meet the requirements of the LSCB Partnership Agreement, the LSCB statutory member agencies will ensure that single agency and multi-agency training on safeguarding and promoting welfare is provided in order to meet local needs. This covers both the training provided by single agencies to their own staff, and multi-agency training where staff from different agencies train together. The partner agencies will support the LSCB in evaluating the quality of this training, ensuring that it is provided within individual organisations, and checking that training is reaching the relevant staff.

Training will be organised and delivered in accordance with the requirements of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. The training will be informed by the Berkshire multi-agency Child Protection Procedures and prospectus of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge of the Children's Workforce of which safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is one of the six key areas. Learning and development will also incorporate the Common Assessment Framework, and successor guidance such as 'What To Do If you're Worried A Child is Being Abused' (DfES 2006).

Staff with responsibility for child protection training within individual agencies will monitor attendance at relevant training to ensure all relevant staff are aware of the procedures and have received relevant training. Attendance at training events will be reported to the LSCB via the training sub group.

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.gsc.org.uk/cmsFiles/CodesofPracticeforSocialCareWorkers.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/living/liv-children-and-families/liv-local-safeguarding-children-board/liv-lscb-training-page.htm>

## 8 Recruitment and Selection

For information regarding procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff managers should refer to the Bracknell Forest Social care and Learning Department Policy, 'Safeguarding Children - Safer Recruitment and Selection'. A copy of the policy is available from the Human Resources Section (01344 354060).

## 9 E-Safety

Children and young people can be vulnerable to exploitation or abuse through the medium of Information Technology. It is important that staff and volunteers are alert to potential risks children or young people may be exposed to, and that steps have been taken to mitigate the risk of this occurring, with specific reference to:

- **Content** - e.g. exposure to age inappropriate material, inaccurate or misleading information, socially unacceptable material (e.g. inciting violence, hate or intolerance) and illegal material (including images of child abuse)
- **Contact** - e.g. grooming using communication technologies leading to inappropriate behaviour or abuse;
- **Commerce** - e.g. exposure to inappropriate advertising, online gambling, identity theft and financial scams;
- **Culture** - e.g. bullying via websites, mobile phones or other communication technologies, or inappropriate downloading of copyright materials (i.e. music, films, images); exposure to inappropriate advertising, online gambling and financial scams;

If there is any indication that a child or young person known to Children's Social Care is experiencing difficulties in this area (for instance if they are reported to be spending long periods of time using a PC on their own or if they appear unnecessarily defensive, secretive or anxious about their PC use), then this must be taken seriously and acted on.

NB. If foster carers are concerned they should discuss the matter with their supervising social worker, or with the social worker for the child.

For more detailed information about E-Safety please refer to:

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/e-safety> and <http://boris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/ict-security-policy.pdf>

## 10 Risk Assessment

There is a range of relevant guidance available within BFBC to promote the safety of both children and staff. See below.

- If groups of children and young people are being taken on external visits the guidance published for schools should be used as the model for risk assessment and planning.  
See <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/offsite-and-hazardous-activities-manual.pdf>
- For general guidance on risk assessment and child/young person behaviour management within establishments and foster homes see Behaviour Management Policy Statement and Guidance, sections 12 to 15 at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/behaviour-management-policy-statement-and-guidance.pdf>
- Guidance to assist staff who may face aggressive or violent behaviour, sexist, racist or other forms of verbal abuse can be found at page 86 of the BFBC Employee Handbook.  
See <http://boris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/corporate-services/human-resources/human-resources-employee-handbook.htm>
- The lone working policy for staff based at Time Square is available at <http://boris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/lone-working-policy-time-square.pdf>
- The lone working policy for staff based at Larchwood is available at <http://boris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/lone-working-guidance-larchwood-2006.pdf>

