

Child Safeguarding Policy & Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Age UK Blackburn with Darwen believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that:-

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- all children regardless of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse including physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the policy is:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who come into contact with Age UK Blackburn with Darwen's services including the children of staff members, volunteers or service users and customers.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm or abuse

This policy applies to the Board of Trustees, all paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone delivering services, activities or working on behalf of Age UK Blackburn with Darwen.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents, carers (with parental responsibility) and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

3.2 This policy applies to all children and young people aged under 18.

3.3 We are committed to reviewing our policy regularly and at least bi-annually

4. Code of Conduct

You must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Be aware that any physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- For activities, operate within the host organisation's principles and guidance and any specific child protection procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse to the nominated person within the host organisation and your senior manager within Age UK Blackburn with Darwen.

You must NOT

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour by the child or young person
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on your good name or that of Age UK Blackburn with Darwen to protect you
- Believe "it could never happen to me"
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

5. Organisational Activity

5.1 Age UK Blackburn with Darwen does not provide direct services and activities specifically to children and young people; however we may work in partnership with other organisations to deliver such activities. For the purposes of this Policy and Code of Conduct these partner organisations will act as the 'host' for these activities. In arranging all such activities it will be agreed in advance with the host organisation who their contact is for safeguarding issues.

5.2 We also recognise that in the course of delivering our services, our staff and volunteers may come into contact with children e.g. on home visits and may be informed that or suspect that a child is at risk.

6. People in a Position of Trust (PiPoT)

- 6.1 Where an allegation of abuse or a safeguarding issue is made against a member of the organisation's personnel/people in a position of trust (PIPOT) the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing (Safeguarding Lead) will assess any potential risk to children at risk whom they come in to contact with in the course of their work and, if necessary, to take action to safeguard those children.
- 6.2 Examples of such concerns could relate to a PiPoT/personnel who has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
 - behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
 - their conduct has raised concern as to their suitability to a role in a position of trust
- 6.3 The Head of Prevention & Wellbeing will carry out a full internal investigation into any allegation received through any potential route, including a safeguarding alert, complaint, regulatory inspections, audits and quality systems, staff grievances, whistleblowing, social media, disciplinary and performance procedures, gathering evidence and accounts of the alleged abuse. Immediate action will be taken to remove the risk of any further harm which may include the removal of the member of staff
- 6.4 A full investigation into an alleged abuse will be carried out by the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing (or Chief Executive, or other Senior Manager in their absence), or if the allegation is made against the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing the Chief Executive will take the lead. The investigation will be conducted within a 72-hour period to carry out interviews and gather evidence.
- 6.5 Age UK will provide effective support for any PiPoT/personnel facing an allegation and offer the employee a named contact if they are suspended. Any concern of abuse made against a PiPoT/personnel will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time, supports the person who is the subject of the concern.
- 6.6 The Head of Prevention & Wellbeing will liaise with the organisation's HR Advisors, BwD Safeguarding Team and the Police as appropriate to determine the actions to be taken as part of and separate to the safeguarding enquiry, for example any criminal investigation that may take precedence over internal disciplinary processes initially. This will be determined on a case by case basis

7. Procedure

- 7.1 If a child or young person indicates possible abuse
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else – do not promise confidentiality
 - Accept at face value what the young person says
 - Ensure that the young person is given the opportunity to talk to you, or an independent person
 - Listen to the young person without interruption and do not ask questions about what you may suspect
 - Do not pass judgement on what is said but do try to alleviate any fears or guilt which the young person may have
 - Provide support as appropriate, but do not make false promises

- Let the child know what you are going to do next
- Do not approach a suspected abuser yourself
- You must always refer, you must NEVER investigate
- Write down the facts, as you know them as soon as possible – record dates and times of events, when you were told about them and when you made the record. Sign the notes and always keep a copy for yourself in a secure place, give the original copy to the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing

7.2 If an allegation is made whilst delivering partnership activities

- Contact the nominated person within the host organisation and the Age UK Blackburn with Darwen Head of Prevention & Wellbeing or another senior manager in their absence

7.3 If an allegation is made during the delivery of Age UK Blackburn with Darwen Services e.g. on a home visit

- You must utilise the organisations procedure for reporting adult safeguarding concerns, and report the allegation to the Head of Prevention & Wellbeing or another senior manager in their absence

Adopted October 2009

Last reviewed Sept 2023

Next review due Sept 2025

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