



# Safeguarding Children Policy

## KEY INFORMATION

<b>Policy prepared, reviewed or amended by:</b>	Suzanne Hilton - Chief Executive Reviewed 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2017 Reviewed Paul Davies (2020) Reviewed 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
<b>Policy approved by Board of Trustees on:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
<b>Policy became operational on:</b>	16 May 2014
<b>Next Review Date</b>	March 2028

## **Purpose**

It is a sad fact that every child can potentially be hurt, put at risk of harm or abused, regardless of their gender, religion or ethnicity. Although the focus of Age UK Bolton's work is with older people, we regularly come into contact with children and young people through activities such as training, volunteering, apprenticeships and internships. Concerns about the abuse of children and young people may also arise through our contact with the wider family and social networks of older people.

In most cases our primary role in child safeguarding will be to signpost those raising concerns to appropriate sources of support. However, there may be times when we need to take other kinds of action. This may happen when a concern is raised about someone working or volunteering for Age UK Bolton, or where there may be a need for Age UK Bolton to pass information directly onto appropriate authorities in order to prevent abuse.

This guidance & procedure provides information and guidance for all staff on what to do in all such circumstances and should be read in conjunction with the Age UK Bolton Safeguarding Policy, and Age UK Values which we embrace.

For the purpose of this guidance & procedure a child is defined as any person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

**By following the steps in this document we can help children to achieve better outcomes and avoid harm caused by abuse.**

## **Scope**

This guidance & procedure should be used by all Age UK Bolton staff, irrespective of their role. Throughout the document the term 'staff' is assumed to include paid staff, volunteers, interns and apprentices, unless otherwise indicated.

In some cases external services commissioned, sponsored or otherwise supported by Age UK Bolton will be required to comply with these procedures. Those responsible for commissioning should ensure that this is considered and, where required, specified within any contractual arrangement.

*If the safeguarding concern relates to someone over 18 years of age the Age UK Bolton Safeguarding Adults Policy should be consulted.*

## **Age UK Partners**

Age UK Bolton is a brand partner of Age UK and as such is also asked to report information regarding any substantiated allegations of abuse relating to their personnel to the Quality & Transformation team. Quality & Transformation will work with Age UK Bolton to ensure that any substantiated allegations are appropriately reported and followed up. They will also share this information with the Designated Person for Safeguarding for monitoring and learning purposes.

Partners can contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding for support if they are concerned about the incorrect application of local Children's Safeguarding Board policy and procedures in relation to their organisation or staff.

## **Designated Person for Safeguarding at Age UK Bolton**

The Designated Person for Safeguarding across the Age UK Bolton is the Chief Executive. The Information & Advice Officer is the Safeguarding Adviser. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer deputises for the Chief Executive when they are unavailable and is determined by the Chief Executive, ratified by the Trustees and subject to regular review but is normally the Deputy Chief Executive. In the absence of the Information & Advice Officer, the Corporate Services Manager will act as the Safeguarding Adviser and support the Chief Executive or their designated deputy in any safeguarding matters.

Some incidents and allegations of abuse must be reported to the Designated Person. These requirements are set out in the Procedures.

If you have a concern which you are unable to address through discussion with your manager, or through consulting these procedures, you should contact one of the people above for further advice and guidance without delay.

If an urgent concern arises outside of office hours advice should be sought from the Police (via 999) or children's social services in the area where the abuse is alleged to have taken place.

## **Child Safeguarding - Our duties**

In England the law states that people who work with children have a duty to keep them safe<sup>1</sup>. This is also known as 'safeguarding'.

Government guidance<sup>2</sup> describes child 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

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<sup>1</sup> The Children Act (1989) and (2004), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)

<sup>2</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)

- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

In addition the Charity Commission sets out specific duties for charities that work with vulnerable groups, including children.

*“Safeguarding children is vital for charities ...Having safeguards in place within an organisation not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but also it enhances the confidence of trustees, staff, volunteers, parents/carers and the general public”.<sup>3</sup>*

## **What is child abuse?**

Child abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18.

*'Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take.'*

– *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

Child abuse can take many forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child. These forms of abuse can often overlap, so in some cases a child may suffer from more than one type of abuse.

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered

## **Physical Abuse**

This is when a child is hurt or injured by a child or an adult. Physical abuse includes hitting, kicking, punching and other ways of inflicting pain or injury such as poisoning, drowning or smothering. It also includes giving a child harmful drugs or alcohol.

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<sup>3</sup> Protecting children in your organisation - (Charity Commission March 2009)

**Emotional abuse**

This is when adults deny children love or affection, or constantly threaten or humiliate them. Sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child are also forms of emotional abuse and undermine a child's confidence and sense of self-worth. Bullying, racism and other types of discrimination are forms of child abuse.

**Sexual Abuse**

This is when a child is used sexually by an adult. Sexual abuse can include kissing, touching the child's genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines/images or videos is also sexual abuse.

**Neglect**

This is when a child's basic need for love, food, warmth, safety, education and medical attention is not met by parents or carers.

**Online safety**

All staff and volunteers who come into contact with young people should be aware of the risks of abuse linked to the use of digital technology.

Most children and young people use the internet positively. However, sometimes they may be placed at risk by the behaviour of others or their own behaviour online. In some cases the risks do not necessarily arise from the technology itself but result from offline behaviours that are extended into the online world, and vice versa.

If concerns arise about potential abuse linked to digital communications they should be considered and reported in the same way as face to face concerns. Additional advice can be obtained from the Designated Persons for Safeguarding.

**Recognising the signs of abuse**

A child may be experiencing abuse if he or she is:

- Frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed
- Left in unsafe situations or without medical attention
- Constantly 'put down', insulted, sworn at or humiliated
- Afraid of parents or carers
- Severely bruised or injured
- Displaying sexual behaviour which doesn't seem appropriate for their age
- Growing up in a home where there is domestic violence
- Living with parents or carers involved in serious drug or alcohol misuse.

This list does not cover every possible sign of child abuse. You may have observed other aspects of a child's behaviour or circumstances, or have been told about issues, that cause you concern. In all such cases you should not keep these concerns to yourself and ensure that you follow the steps set out in 'How to respond to signs, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse' below

## How to recognise an abuser

There is no simple way to identify someone who will hurt children. People who pose a threat of sexual abuse to children can be skilled at making sure no one knows. However, there are some warning signs to look out for:

You may want to be aware of anyone who:

- Pays an unusual amount of attention to a child or groups of children, and provides presents, money, or favours
- Seeks out vulnerable children, for example, deaf or disabled children
- Tries to spend time alone with a single child or particular group of children on a regular basis
- Takes a child or small group of children to places where activities are not usually held, such as at their home
- Is vague about where they have worked or when they were employed
- Avoids co-working or supervision of his or her work
- Encourages secretiveness about his or her activities with children
- Talks or behaves inappropriately towards children.

If you do have any concerns about somebody's behaviour, you should follow the steps outlined in the next section.

## Procedure

### How to respond to signs, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse

"Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action." – Working Together to Safeguard Children

There are a number of different ways in which a concern may arise:

- A child may tell you about something that has upset or harmed them
- Someone else might report that they believe that a child has been or is being harmed
- A child might show signs of physical injury or neglect for which there appears to be no explanation
- A child's behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused
- The behaviour or attitude of an adult towards a child may worry you

When this happens you should do the following:

- 1. Listen**
- 2. Record**
- 3. Refer**

1. Listen	2. Record	3. Refer
<p><b>If a child tells you that they, or another child, is being abused:</b></p> <p>Stay calm &amp; let them tell their whole story.</p> <p>Reassure them that telling someone was the right thing to do.</p> <p>Tell them that you will now do what you can to keep them (or the child concerned) safe.</p> <p>Let them know what you will do next &amp; who will need to know.</p> <p>Ask the child what they would like to happen, but don't make promises you can't keep.</p> <p>Provide the ChildLine phone number (0800 1111).</p> <p>Follow the steps in 'Record' &amp; 'Refer'</p> <p><b>If an adult provides information about abuse:</b></p> <p>Advise them to share their information with an appropriate agency (see 'Refer').</p> <p>If they are unable or unwilling to take the matter forward themselves: Explain that it may hinder an investigation if the person who has the most information does not</p>	<p>If you receive information about or witness an incident of possible abuse, a written record must be completed as soon as possible.</p> <p>Sensitively explain that you will be making a note of the discussion &amp; incident.</p> <p>Explain that this may be shared - but only with appropriate people/organisations</p> <p>Record any decisions made &amp; actions taken (&amp; any decision <i>not</i> to act)</p> <p>Record the time, date, location &amp; those involved in any communication.</p> <p>Wherever possible record the actual words spoken in addition to key points - aim for accurate &amp; objective recording</p> <p>Interpretation or personal observations should be clearly differentiated.</p> <p>Include any relevant background information</p> <p>Share this information with the Designated Person for Safeguarding.</p> <p>Do not make contact with the person alleged to have carried out the abuse at this time.</p>	<p><b>Helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention:</b></p> <p>Try to stay with them - Call 999 &amp; ask for the police. If a child needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance via 999 &amp; try to get help from a first aider.</p> <p>If the child is elsewhere, contact 999 &amp; explain the situation.</p> <p>Let your manager and the Designated Person for Safeguarding know what is happening as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Helping a child where there is no immediate danger or need for medical attention:</b></p> <p>Concerns should be instantly referred to your line manager, who will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss your concerns</li> <li>- Consult these procedures for further guidance</li> <li>- Consult immediately with the Designated Person for Safeguarding.</li> </ul> <p>Where it is not possible to obtain further advice from these sources advice should be sought from; The local children's social services team</p>

<p>contact the relevant authorities themselves. Advise the person that they can make an anonymous referral to the Police or social services.</p> <p>If they still will not pass on their concerns explain that you have an obligation to take the matter further, in accordance with Age UK's Child Safeguarding Policy &amp; Procedures &amp; follow the relevant steps in 'Record' &amp; 'Refer' above.</p> <p><b>If you are concerned about the behaviour of an adult follow the relevant steps in 'Refer'.</b></p>	<p>Further guidance can be found in 'Confidentiality and recording'.</p>	<p>The Police via 101 (non-emergency) The NSPCC may be a helpful organisation to contact where you have concerns, but only limited information, about a situation. The LSCB where there is a statutory response (e.g under section 47 of the Children's Act)</p> <p>Contact details can be found at the end of this document. <i>Record any discussion with external organisations</i></p>
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### **Informing the parents/guardians of a child at risk**

The parents/guardians of a child should be informed of concerns about abuse and any intention to refer a concern as soon as possible, unless there is any reason to believe that doing so may place the child at greater risk. If there are concerns about the impact of such a disclosure for the parents/guardian, or for the child, then the referral should be made to the police or social services and advice sought from them about the most appropriate way to provide information. If it is not clear which member of staff should share this information then the Designated Person for Safeguarding should be consulted.

### **Responding to child welfare concerns (not related to abuse)**

Sometimes concerns about a child may not be about abuse. You may be concerned that a child or family need some help in making sure all the child's needs are met. Examples of this might be where a child may need support because of illness or disability. In these instances you can help by informing them of their right to an 'assessment of need' from their local children's social services department.

Further information can be found in Greater Manchester Safeguarding procedures: <https://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>

### **Confidentiality and recording in cases not related to allegations involving Age UK Bolton staff**

In any decision-making process regarding information sharing, the child's best interest must always be the overriding concern.



Where there are concerns that a child is at risk of abuse it is vital that these concerns are shared with an appropriate authority. Where concerns are disclosed by an adult or child, promises of absolute confidentiality cannot be given, although it should be made clear that information will only be shared with organisations who need to know, and who are able to protect and help children.

Children's Social Care services, the Police and the NSPCC will accept a referral about a child regardless of whether consent has been given for the onward disclosure of that information.

Once an allegation is being investigated every effort should be made to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality. This is in order both to protect those involved and to ensure that the focus of any investigatory action is not lost.

## **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR allows personal information to be stored and shared for the purposes of safeguarding children and adults at risk. This can be without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk

Information may only be shared without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the interests of the safety and well-being of the child and others who may be at risk of abuse.

You should also ensure that information:

- Is shared only with those people who need to have it
- Is accurate and up-to-date,
- Is shared in a timely fashion,
- Is shared securely.

## **Recording information**

Age UK Bolton will record information in all cases where we have received a disclosure of abuse or an allegation of abuse comes to our attention.

The manager of the service involved will need to consider the most appropriate way for information to be stored, in consultation with the Designated Person for Safeguarding. As a minimum standard all written records should be stored securely and in a locked cabinet. All key holders who have access to this information should be known, and kept to a minimum. Electronic records should be stored in a drive with limited access controlled by username. Any loss or potential breach of sensitive data should be reported at once via the risk reporting frameworks for the department concerned. Good practice guidance has been produced by the NSPCC about the length of time such records should be kept, and this is summarised below.

Type of Concern	Retention Period
Child welfare concerns that Age UK Bolton refers on to the NSPCC, children's social care or the police	Six years
Child welfare concerns that Age UK Bolton decides, after consultation, do not necessitate a referral to children's social care, the NSPCC or the police	One year after the child concerned ceases to have contact/use an Age UK Bolton service.

***Further information can be obtained from the Designated Person for Safeguarding***

## **Safe recruitment**

Age UK Bolton's Recruitment Policy puts in place procedures to ensure that appropriate checks are made prior to appointment of staff, volunteers and external/agency personnel, in order to prevent, as far as is possible, anyone from using their position at Age UK Bolton to abuse a child.

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 it is also an offence for an employer to knowingly employ someone in a "regulated" position (one which involves spending regular unsupervised time working with children) if they are barred from doing so. It is also an offence for the individual who has been barred to apply for a regulated position. The list of those persons barred from such activity is kept and maintained by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and is referred to as the 'barred list'.

Advice should always be sought from the Relevant People & Performance Adviser or DBS if there is any doubt about whether a role could be considered to include "regulated activity".

## **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act**

In certain circumstances, individuals who are convicted of offences are regarded as "rehabilitated" after a defined period of time. At that point, their conviction is said to be "spent". Normally, once a conviction is spent, the convicted person does not have to reveal or admit its existence and the conviction is treated as though it had never occurred.

However, where an individual is required to work with children, in accordance with the exceptions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, disclosure of *all* convictions (i.e. both spent and unspent) will occur through application to the DBS. DBS guidance on roles which would constitute exceptions to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act should be considered in any recruitment planning.

## **Managing allegations of abuse against Age UK Bolton staff, volunteers or other workers**

Despite all efforts to work and recruit safely, allegations about the conduct of Age UK Bolton staff (including volunteers) may arise.

The steps outlined below should be consulted when there is an allegation or concern that any person who works at Age UK Bolton has, in connection with their employment or voluntary activity:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse outlined above (i.e. physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect).

Any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff working for Age UK Bolton must be dealt with quickly, fairly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Where there is a concern about the treatment of a child by staff, but the concern does not constitute any form of 'abuse' then the child and/or their parent/guardian should be informed of the concern, offered the opportunity to complain and/or raise their concerns with relevant agencies and be kept informed, as far as possible, of any disciplinary or other remedial actions taken by Age UK Bolton as a result of the concern.

### **Basic Procedure**

To be used when an allegation is made or concern raised (via any source) about a paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual, agency or self-employed worker within Age UK Bolton harming a child in the course of their work.

- a) If there is an immediate concern about the risk to a child contact the emergency services or local authority children's social services team without delay. Contact details can be found at the end of this document.
- b) Report the concern to your line manager of the service in which the person alleged to have caused the harm works or to the Chief Executive
- c) The line manager will consult with the Designated Person for Safeguarding and consider suspension pending further investigation. Suspension at this point will be a neutral act and should be considered in any case where:
  - a. There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm; or
  - b. The allegation warrants investigation by the police; or
  - c. The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal

- d) If there are concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff, but the need to immediately involve the Police or Children's Social Services is not clear, then the manager of the relevant service and the Designated Person for Child Safeguarding will agree whether referral is required to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the area where the abuse is alleged to have happened. **This decision must be made within 24 hours of a concern being raised.**
- e) If contacted the LADO will liaise with the relevant Age UK Bolton senior manager to obtain further details of the incident and circumstances. Where necessary the LADO can refer to children's social care or involve the police. The LADO should keep the referring manager at Age UK Bolton updated on progress.
- f) A clear record should be made of any discussions, decisions and actions and this should be stored in accordance with departmental standards and the 'Record keeping in cases of allegations against staff' section below.
- g) Any concerns about the way in which relevant authorities have responded to issues involving Age UK Bolton should be raised with them without delay. If their initial response does not alleviate these concerns then the Designated Person for Child Safeguarding will provide additional support.

## **Agency staff**

Allegations against agency staff placed at Age UK Bolton will be responded to in the same way as any other member of staff. However the following additional steps should be taken.

The placing agency should be informed of any allegations relating to staff that they have placed (where they are still under contract to that agency). This information will usually be passed on by the Chief Executive.

This is in order to ensure that the agency can support those that they have placed, be aware of any concerns about staff that they have placed and, where required, play a part in any investigation, disciplinary process or referral to the DBS.

## **Concerns about staff originating outside of their work with Age UK Bolton**

If an allegation or concern arises about a member of staff, *outside* of their work with Age UK Bolton, and this may indicate a risk of harm to children for whom the member of staff is responsible, the general principles outlined in these procedures will still apply.

Line managers should seek advice in such instances from the Designated Person for Safeguarding and, where agreed, the LADO. The LADO may be able to link

information from a number of sources relating to the risk level that an individual may pose.

## **Supporting those involved**

There are two issues to consider:

1. Support for the child (or children), parents or carers involved
2. Support for the person who is the subject of the allegation

The statutory agency leading the investigation process will advise on appropriate actions and communication with the parents/carers of a child/children affected by allegations of abuse. Where it is agreed that Age UK Bolton will carry out disciplinary or investigatory processes in relation to staff, regular updates should be provided to the lead statutory agency by a nominated manager.

Age UK Bolton as an employer, should also keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case, and arrange to provide appropriate support while the case is on-going. If the person is suspended, Age UK Bolton should also make arrangements to keep the individual informed about the progression of the case, with advice from the LADO, the police and / or local authority children's social care.

If there are concerns that a member of staff, or the organisation, is not being treated fairly and in accordance with statutory guidance these should be raised with the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

## **Confidentiality & record keeping for allegations against Age UK Bolton staff**

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated, and information should be restricted to those who have a need to know. This is in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries and assist the management of any disciplinary processes.

Advice should be sought from the LADO, the police and / or Local Authority children's social care about the sharing of any information with the child, their parents/guardians and the accused person. Specific advice should be sought in regard to the accused person's rights of access to information contained on their personnel record.

Age UK Bolton, as the employer, must keep a clear and comprehensive summary of:

- Any allegations made
- Details of how allegations were followed up and resolved
- Any action taken
- Decisions reached.

This information should be retained on the accused person's confidential personnel file, including the files of people who leave the organisation. This should be retained

at least until the person reaches normal retirement age, or for 10 years if that is longer.

The file should be clearly marked to indicate why it is being held for an extended period. When information is ready for deletion it must be disposed of in a secure manner. This applies to both paper and electronic records. (This guidance is based on good practice guidance on record retention produced by the NSPCC<sup>4</sup>).

Allegations regarding staff conduct will be reported, in anonymous, form to the Trustees.

## **Resignations and 'compromise agreements'**

The fact that a person tenders his/her resignation, or ceases to provide their services to Age UK Bolton, must not prevent an allegation being followed up. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations relating to the safety or welfare of children, including those where the person concerned refuses to co-operate with the process.

'Compromise agreements' - whereby a person agrees to resign, the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference - will not be used by Age UK Bolton in these cases.

## **Referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)**

Employers in organisations working with children have a legal duty under The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 to make a referral to the DBS in cases when an employer has dismissed or removed a person from working with children or vulnerable adults (or would or may have if the person had not left or resigned) because of concerns over their behaviour towards children.

## **Charity Commission Reportable Incidents**

When a serious incident, including some safeguarding incidents, has occurred at Age UK Bolton it must be reported to the Charity Commission.

A serious incident is one which has "resulted or could result in a significant loss of funds or a significant risk to a charity's property, work, beneficiaries or reputation" Serious incidents in relation to safeguarding could include (but are not limited to):

- Links with terrorism - the charity (including any individual staff, trustees or volunteers) has any known or alleged link to a proscribed (banned) organisation or to terrorist or other unlawful/criminal activity.
- Suspicions, allegations and incidents of abuse or mistreatment of beneficiaries and, in particular, vulnerable beneficiaries, which has caused significant harm and/or distress.
- The incident is also reported to the police or other statutory agencies (unless it is a technical or minor issue that poses little or no risk).

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<sup>4</sup> Guidance on child protection records retention and storage (NSPCC 2007)

- The charity having been subject to a criminal investigation, or an investigation by another regulator or agency, or where sanctions have been imposed or concerns raised by another regulator or agency such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Care Quality Commission or Ofsted.
- Incidents which present a serious or significant risk to the charity, its beneficiaries or reputation.
- The charity not having a policy for safeguarding its vulnerable beneficiaries, such as children and young people.

Decisions to report a safeguarding issue as a serious incident to the Charity Commission will be taken in accordance with the Age UK Serious Incident Management Procedures.

## **Learning lessons**

Where things do go wrong, and our staff are involved, Age UK Bolton will strive to be open about what has happened, conduct thorough investigations, cooperate with relevant agencies, provide support for those involved and learn lessons so as to avoid future repetition.

Where an allegation has been substantiated, the managers of the relevant service should consider the wider lessons of the case and how they should be acted on to reduce the risk of repetition. This should include consideration of any organisational issues that may have contributed to, or failed to prevent, abuse occurring.

In some cases a Serious Case Review may be arranged by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board - this is where the case is reviewed by all agencies involved - to consider whether there are any lessons to be learnt and actions to be taken that should be shared more widely, to improve child safeguarding practice.

## **Anti-bullying**

Age UK Bolton is committed to maintaining and developing safe working environments in which there is zero tolerance of bullying.

## **Whistleblowing**

All staff should be aware of Age UK Bolton's Whistle-blowing policy'.

If a member of staff believes that a child safeguarding allegation or concern is not being dealt with appropriately, and they have exhausted all other reasonable approaches, this policy can be used to escalate those concerns.

## **Media interest**

It can be helpful to have a planned media response (e.g. an agreed press release) in case of a breach in confidentiality and consequent media interest. The Chief Executive is designated as the first point of contact for all enquiries from the media concerning Age UK Bolton, its staff, volunteers, policies and business. Where it

appears that media interest may result from any child safeguarding issues connected to Age UK Bolton this should be raised in the first instance with the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive will assess the nature of the enquiry, identify any areas of concern and if necessary prepare an appropriate response in conjunction with relevant senior managers, the Safeguarding Adviser and other organisations (such as social services and the police), where appropriate.

## **Aftercare - Staff and volunteers**

Receiving a disclosure of abuse, or witnessing abuse, can be a troubling and stressful experience. Where staff are concerned about the impact of such events they can seek support from their manager, the Corporate Services Manager or Chief Executive.

## **Useful contact information**

**Designated Person for Safeguarding:** Lauren McKechnie Chief Executive  
Tel: 01204 382411/ 07903 290549 Email: [laurenmckechnie@ageukbolton.org.uk](mailto:laurenmckechnie@ageukbolton.org.uk)

**Safeguarding Adviser:** Chiara Knott Information and Advice Manager  
Tel: 01204 382411 Email: [chiaraknott@ageukbolton.org.uk](mailto:chiaraknott@ageukbolton.org.uk)

**Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding:** Pat Kitchen Deputy Chief Executive  
Tel: 01204 382411/ 07904 266252 Email: [patkitchen@ageukbolton.org.uk](mailto:patkitchen@ageukbolton.org.uk)

**Local Authority child safeguarding teams:** They have the lead role in coordinating responses to concerns about children and can be contacted on 01204 331500.

**NSPCC:** 24 hour helpline giving advice and information about child protection concerns. Tel: 0808 800 5000 Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). If you are not sure about whether your concern should be taken forward, this may be a good starting place to get support.

**Police:** For emergencies Tel: 999. For non-urgent concerns Tel: 101

**Ambulance:** Tel: 999

**Disclosure & Barring Service:** Helpline: 0870 90 90 811 Email: [customerservices@dbi.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@dbi.gsi.gov.uk)