

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

Purpose of the Policy

This policy gives a framework for all staff and volunteers within BeyondAutism within which to prevent and reduce the risk of abuse to adults who use BeyondAutism services or come into contact with staff or volunteers.

Background and Need

This policy and its associated procedure are mandatory for all staff, volunteers, governors, advisory board members and trustees as they must be aware of their individual and collective roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting adults at risk from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

At BeyondAutism we recognise our responsibilities as set out in The London Multi Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (as agreed at the Dignity, Capacity and Safety Group meeting 2nd December 2015).

The legislative and regulatory requirements that BeyondAutism has to comply with in their safeguarding policies and procedures regarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect are set out in the Care Act 2014, the Care Act factsheets and specifically factsheet 7: (Safeguarding) and in Chapter 14 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014.

Link to BeyondAutism's Vision

BeyondAutism's vision is to ensure autistic children and young adults access an education which empowers a life full of choice, independence and opportunity. This can only be attained if children and young adults are safeguarded and protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation and prevented from becoming at risk of abuse.

Outcomes

As a result of the policy and associated procedure being followed, adults at risk will be better protected from the impact of abuse, neglect and exploitation. The staff, volunteers, governors, advisory board members and trustees will take the necessary steps to safeguard and protect adults at risk, where outlined in procedures, contacting statutory agencies and/or if appropriate, discussing concerns with the adult at risk team (and on occasions when appropriate their parents/carers or advocates). If a crime may have been committed, the police will be informed.

Key Principles

This policy and corresponding procedures aim to achieve a culture within BeyondAutism in which a proactive approach is taken to safeguarding, promoting and protecting the rights of autistic adults. It is paramount to read the Safeguarding Adults at Risk Procedure alongside this policy.

- All adults that use BeyondAutism services have the right to live a life free from abuse, harm, neglect and exploitation regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- All allegations, concerns or suspicions of abuse, neglect or exploitation are taken seriously and responded to within the steps laid out in the corresponding procedure.
- To work in partnership with adults who receive a service as much as is possible and appropriate.
- To work in partnership with the local Safeguarding Adults Boards and comply with the local multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Procedures.
- All staff have a responsibility to ensure they are informed, trained and understand their duty to operate within this policy and procedure.
- All staff and volunteers have a shared responsibility to take appropriate steps to protect adults at risk.

The Policy Statement

- This policy and associated procedure applies to all staff, volunteers, governors, advisory board members, trustees and representatives of BeyondAutism, including agency staff and temporary staff.
- BeyondAutism is committed to the prevention of, and protection from, abuse, neglect and exploitation of all adults who come into contact with the organisation through its staff, volunteers or representatives, in whatever capacity that contact occurs.
- BeyondAutism is committed to taking all necessary steps to stop abuse happening inside or outside the home, including online, whether that abuse is perpetrated by staff, volunteers, family members, peers, members of the public or other service users.
- BeyondAutism is committed to working together to improve school attendance. Attendance concerns will be reported and monitored to identify risks early and help to prevent an adult at risk from going missing from education. BeyondAutism is committed to its duty of care to all adults it has contact with. If there are concerns about staff, volunteers or representatives perpetrating abuse, it will facilitate any action required to address this without delay. This will include actions required to address abusive behaviours and attitudes. In these cases, the Safeguarding Adult at Risk Procedures must be followed to ensure that there is no investigation undertaken until initial fact finding has been done and the local authority and police have been

contacted. No BeyondAutism investigation can take place until the police have completed their enquiries. On occasions, when staff have been dismissed because of concerns about abuse or neglect, they will be referred by BeyondAutism to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and professional bodies.

- BeyondAutism is committed to ensuring that adults at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation are given information, advice and support in a form that they can understand and also have their views included in all forums where decisions are made about their lives.
- BeyondAutism is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers of service users. In respect of adults who use the services of the charity, that partnership will be with their consent, when this is required and appropriate.
- BeyondAutism will publish online the Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. In addition, it will inform, in an appropriate format, all adults who use their services, that BeyondAutism has a duty to contact the local authority Adult Social Care department if there are concerns that an adult at risk may be being abused.
- All parents/carers will be reminded annually that our services have a duty to contact the local authority Adult Social Care department if there are concerns that an adult at risk may be being abused.
- BeyondAutism is committed to providing information, advice and support that enables adults and other users of its services to learn to keep themselves safe and how to raise concerns if they do not feel safe in all aspects of their lives. BeyondAutism is committed to ensuring that senior members of the organisation will be fully briefed and consulted by service staff regarding any concerns about abuse, neglect and exploitation without delay: the process for this is detailed in the procedure. The Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead is the Alerting Manager (Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead). The Alerting Manager has lead responsibility for responding to concerns about the abuse of adults at risk within BeyondAutism services. In the absence of the Alerting Manager (Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead), the Designated Adult Safeguarding Person must manage the concern. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for all safeguarding matters within the charity as a whole.
- BeyondAutism is committed to working within the London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (as agreed at the Dignity, Capacity and Safety Group meeting 2nd December 2015) and the procedures of any other local authorities where any adult at risk may reside.
- BeyondAutism services are committed to working with the London Borough of Wandsworth Safeguarding Adult Board and the police if there are any concerns about, or perceived risks, in respect of staff or volunteers at the service.
- BeyondAutism is committed to ensuring all staff, volunteers, governors, advisory board members and trustees receive appropriate levels of safeguarding training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) at induction, and then at regular intervals.

Risk Assessment

Should this policy and associated procedure be ignored or disregarded, the possible outcomes are:

- **For adults at risk of abuse or neglect** – placed at further risk of harm and neglect.
- **For staff and volunteers** – may be subject to inquiry, investigation internally or externally for failing to take appropriate steps, internally may then be subject to a disciplinary process.
- **For the Alerting Manager, the Chief Executive, Board of Trustees, Advisory Board and the Governing Bodies** – possible inquiry and report from the Charities Commission and regulators or recommendation from local authorities to regulators.
- **For BeyondAutism** – possible risk of public scrutiny and ultimately risk of prosecution and/or additional inspections from regulators and ultimately deregistration. All of the above can lead to negative media attention and damage to the reputation of the charity and its services.

Definitions

Abuse and Neglect: Refers to: 'ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment that are not physical); the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development'(Who Decides?" Law Commission, 1997).

Abuse was defined by 'No Secrets' (2000, DH and Home Office) as: '...a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons'. In KCSIE 2025 the definition of 'abuse' has been clarified that harm can include witnessing the ill-treatment of others and that this is particularly relevant when domestic abuse and its effects are seen, heard or experienced.

Adults at risk are defined in the Care Act 2014 as people over 18 years of age who have needs for care and support, who are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of their care needs- are unable to protect themselves.

Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need.

Alert is a concern that an adult at risk is or may be a victim of abuse or neglect. An alert may be a result of an indirect or direct disclosure, an incident, or other signs or indicators.

Alerter is the person who raises a concern that an adult is being, has been, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. This could be the person themselves, a member of their family, a carer, a friend or neighbour or could be a member of staff or a volunteer.

Alerting manager is the person within an organisation to whom the alerter is expected to report their concerns. They may also be the Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead within an organisation. It is the alerting manager who will in most cases make the referral and take part in the Safeguarding Adults process. At BeyondAutism Post-19, the Designated Adult Safeguarding Lead is the **Alerting Manager (Safeguarding Adults Lead)** and as such has lead responsibility for responding to concerns about the abuse of adults at risk within BeyondAutism services. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for all safeguarding.

Best Interest – is a principle in the Mental Capacity Act which states that any act done or decision made on behalf of an adult lacking capacity must be in their best interests. This can cover financial, health and social care decisions.

Capacity is the ability to make a decision about a particular matter at the time the decision needs to be made.

Case conference is a multi-agency meeting held to discuss the outcome of the investigation and to put in place a protection or safety plan.

CIDs (Criminal Investigation Departments) are the units within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) that deal with the investigation of crime that requires investigation by a detective but does not come within the remit of Community Safety Units (CSUs) or other specialised units.

Consent is the voluntary and continuing permission of the person to the intervention based on an adequate knowledge of the purpose, nature, likely effects and risks of that intervention, including the likelihood of its success and any alternatives to it.

Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS), Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 are measures to protect people who lack the mental capacity to make certain decisions for themselves. They came into effect in 2019 using the principles of the Mental Capacity (Amendment) 2019 and apply to people in care homes or hospitals where they may be deprived of their liberty. This also relates to situations in which adults at risk are unlawfully restrained. In situations in which restraint may need to be used with an adult, the measures implemented must be in the best interests of the individual and the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

Duty social worker is on duty at all times out of hours to meet urgent needs that cannot wait until the next working day. In the absence of a named social worker, the duty social worker is who is called in the case of an urgent matter.

EDO (Emergency Duty Officer) is the social worker on duty in the emergency duty team (EDT).

EDT (Emergency Duty Teams) are social services teams that respond to out of hours referrals where intervention from the council is required to protect a child or adult at risk, and where it would not be safe, appropriate or lawful to delay that intervention to the next working day.

IMCAs (Independent Mental Capacity Advocates) were established by the Mental Capacity Act 2005. IMCAs are a legal safeguard for people who lack the capacity to make specific important decisions, including making decisions about where they live and about serious medical treatment options. IMCAs are mainly instructed to represent people where there is no one independent of services, such as a family member or friend, who is able to represent the person.

Mental capacity refers to a person's ability to make their own choices and decisions. Under UK law, someone's capacity is judged according to the specific decision to be made, so a person may have sufficient capacity to make simple decisions but not more complicated ones.

Online Harms in KCSIE 2025 the definition of online risk has been updated to explicitly include exposure to "misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories" as part of harmful content.

Referral an alert becomes a referral when it is passed on to a Safeguarding Adults referral point and accepted as a Safeguarding Adults referral.

Safeguarding Adults is used to describe all work to help adults at risk stay safe from significant harm. It replaces the term 'adult protection'.

Safeguarding Adults Coordinator – this is the typical title of the manager in a local authority who supports the work of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB) and advises on adult safeguarding cases in the borough. The role varies from borough to borough and may have a different title.

Safeguarding Adults Lead is the title given to the member of staff in an organisation who is given the lead for Safeguarding Adults. The role may be combined with that of alerting manager, depending on the size of the organisation.

Significant harm is not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health, and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Strategy discussion is a multi-agency discussion between relevant organisations involved with the adult at risk to agree how to proceed with the referral. It can be face to face, by telephone or by email.

Strategy meeting is a multi-agency meeting with the relevant individuals involved, and with the adult at risk where appropriate, to agree how to proceed with the referral.

Team Teach - provides training to staff groups in children's and adult services and Health Care Trusts in behaviour supports and interventions. The training combines both theory and practice, emphasising the need for staff to show restraint rather than apply it. Providing a risk assessment structure to the selection of physical interventions that best allow the employer to provide a safer workplace for service users and staff. New statutory guidance requires schools to record and report every "significant" use of force and prioritise de-escalation strategies.

Vital interest is a term used in the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation to permit sharing of information where it is critical to prevent serious harm or distress or in life threatening situations.

Wilful neglect or ill treatment is an intentional or deliberate omission or failure to carry out an act of care by someone who has care of a person who lacks capacity to care for themselves. Section 44 of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 makes it a specific criminal offence to wilfully ill-treat or neglect a person who lacks capacity.

The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not a local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, neglect and exploitation; 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, neglect or exploitation.

Most adults that use BeyondAutism services are likely to fall within these definitions should they be at risk of abuse or neglect, generally, though not always, as a result of a lack of capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Other related policies

This policy has clear links to other policies in our services, in particular to any policies concerned with the protection of all children and young people from various kinds of harm. These policies are listed below:

- Anti-bullying
- E-safety
- Behaviour
- Positive handling and physical intervention
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety
- Data Protection
- Pupil information (DfE guidance)
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Procedure
- Safer recruitment
- Intimate care
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Start and End of Day Procedure

5. Legislation, Regulatory Requirements and Guidance.

For BeyondAutism to meet their regulatory and statutory responsibilities, the following legislation and associated guidance are of significance (N.B. This is not an exhaustive list).

- The principle source (since 2015) is the Care Act 2014 (section 42). This defines abuse and sets out the statutory duties and the institutional responsibilities for those duties.
- The (Care Act) Care and Support Statutory Guidance provides the detail in relation to both the meaning of wellbeing and safeguarding. Chapter 14 sets out in detail the duties found in sections 42 to 47 and 68 of the Care Act 2014, including definitions of the aims and objectives of adult safeguarding activity and a representative range of types of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (it is intended that these will be replaced by the Liberty Protection Safeguards although the introduction of these has been deferred).
- The London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (updated April 2019)
- SCIE (the social care institute for excellence) has published a range of advice on Safeguarding, specifically guides on the care act 2014, and e learning resources on

adult safeguarding. **Assessment and eligibility resources** under the Care Act were updated in **December 2022**

BeyondAutism services that are regulated must comply with service-specific regulations, which include ensuring there are measures in place for the prevention of abuse.

- Use of Reasonable Force (in Schools): Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (DfE January 2025).
- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties (September 2003)
- Disclosure and Barring Service guide, applicant guide recent; manual ID guidance launched April 2025.

Also relevant:

- the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (because it defines the limits on DBS checking)
- the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 and the MCA Code of Practice 2007 (the only complete source on best interests decisions)
- the regulated activities regulations 2014 (because it defines, broadly, when you must DBS check on employees)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (because schools and colleges must have regard to it when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk)

Last review: August 2025

Date of next review: August 2026

Approval group: Trustees and Advisory Board