

## **Bridgend County Borough Council – Contractor Safeguarding Protocol**

### **Introduction**

Safeguarding vulnerable people is one of Bridgend Council's (the 'Council') main corporate priorities. The Council's [Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#) makes clear **that safeguarding children and adults at risk from harm is everybody's responsibility.**

As a Contractor providing goods, services or works on behalf of the Council you are required to play your role in ensuring the Council meets its safeguarding commitments.

### **Objectives**

This Protocol provides guidance to Contractors so that they understand their role in supporting the Council to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk from abuse or neglect Harm. It is about ensuring that Council contractors' workforce know:

- What Safeguarding is;
- What abuse/harm looks like, and;
- What to do if they think somebody is being abused or at risk of being abused.

This Protocol should be used in conjunction with any of the contractors own safeguarding policies, procedures along with relevant codes of conduct for the organisation or their professional/regulatory bodies. Safeguarding training identified by contractor as an organisation and/or required by relevant bodies should also be undertaken by all relevant employees.

### **Who is covered by this Protocol?**

All contractors, sub-contractors or other organisations funded by the Council are responsible for arranging checks through the safe recruitment process and for ensuring that their 'workforce' comply with regulatory and contractual arrangements relating to their safeguarding responsibilities. All contractors, sub-contractors and other organisations are responsible for informing relevant Managers within the Council of any safeguarding concerns they may have.

For this Protocol 'workforce' is defined as those engaged by any Contractor funded by the Council, including permanent and temporary employees, students, volunteers, workers employed by employment agencies, sub-contractors and consultants.

All the 'workforce' undertaking duties on behalf of a Contractor who come into contact with children or adults at risk are expected to understand their responsibility and where necessary take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable people.

## Definitions of Children and Adults at Risk

**Children and Young People at Risk** - is defined in law as anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. An extension of this age exists in terms of some statutory provision for children who have been in the care of the Council. Section 130(4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a “child at risk” is a child who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm and
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the Council is meeting any of those needs).

**Adult at Risk**— is defined as anyone aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves is limited. This might be because of age and frailty, mental or physical illness, sensory loss or physical or learning disability. It might be someone who is usually able to manage but is temporarily unable to do so because of an accident or illness. An “adult at risk” is an adult who: -

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the Council is meeting any of those needs); and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

## What do we mean by safeguarding?

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances are. Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and adults at risk from harm. All Council contractors have a responsibility to ensure that they are doing all they can to protect the most vulnerable members in our society; safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

Safeguarding includes:

- Preventing abuse, neglect and harm
- Recognising the different types of abuse, neglect and harm
- Reporting abuse, neglect and harm
- Having arrangements in place within organisations to ensure that children and adults are protected for example – DBS policies, codes of conduct.

## What does abuse look like?

Abuse can be the result of an action or the failure to act in an appropriate manner. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts and can occur across all social groups. Abuse and neglect can be described in the following five categories: Just provide

### Physical Abuse

- May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or adult.

### Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child or adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. This may involve:

- physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts;
- non-contact, such as involving a child or adult in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities; or
- encouraging children or adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## **Neglect**

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.
- It may involve a parent, family member or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child or adult from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or adult's basic emotional needs.

## **Emotional Abuse**

- The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional and behavioural development.
- It may involve telling the child or adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may involve causing children or adults to feel frightened or in danger, for example witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or by exploitation or corruption.

## **Financial Abuse**

- Money or property stolen
- Being defrauded e.g., scams
- Being put under pressure to pay for things for someone else's benefit
- Someone else using their money as their own
- Children who earn money via entertainment events not having the money placed in trust
- There are other forms of abuse that could take place such as bullying, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), modern slavery, sexual exploitation and radicalisation

Abuse can occur in any relationship – personal, professional or institutional. An abuser might be a family member, friend or neighbour. It could be someone who is paid to deliver care or other professional services, a health worker or someone working as a volunteer. There are also people who befriend vulnerable adults and gain their trust in order to exploit or abuse them. In an institutional setting, such as a care home or day service, the abuse could be by someone working there or someone else living in or using the service.

## **Contractors' roles and responsibilities**

It is not the Contractor's responsibility to determine whether abuse/harm is taking place, however, it is the Contractor's responsibility to pass on concerns raised by workforce. Contractors need to make sure that their workforce are aware of the types of abuse.

Contractors must raise any concern or allegation, without delay in accordance with this Protocol. Concerns must not be ignored and must be reported to the Council without delay. Indications of abuse or neglect include but are not limited to:

- unexplained injuries;
- being withdrawn;
- signs of fear or distress;
- personal belongings missing;
- poor living conditions and appearance.

If you believe that a child or adult is at immediate risk of harm you must **phone the Police on 999**. You should never assume that someone else will report the concerns and if it is agreed that someone else will report the concerns, it is your responsibility to check that they have done this.

It is the responsibility of Contractors to ensure that their workforce undertake their duties in a manner which safeguards and promotes the wellbeing of children and adults. The workforce must behave in a way which protects them from false allegations of abuse as far as is possible and in accordance with this Protocol, the Council's Safeguarding Code of Conduct but additional training and information is the responsibility of the Contractor.

### **How to raise concerns or report allegations of abuse**

A person may see or hear something which causes them to have a concern or someone may tell an employee that they or someone else is being allegedly abused. **The Contactor has a responsibility to provide the following information to its workforce so that they have basic information about how to respond and who to contact.**

If a child, young person or adult alleges that they are being abused, Contractors should:

- reassure them they were right to tell you;
- do not ask leading questions;
- as soon as is possible after being told make a written record of what they said in their own words
- Do not promise a child, young person or adult that something they have said or done will be kept confidential.

### **Children**

If you think a child is at risk, not being looked after properly, or you have concerns about their welfare, please contact us on: **01656 815808/01656 642320**.

Alternatively email: **mashcentra@bridgend.gov.uk**

### **Adults**

If you think or believe an adult is being abused, please contact the Adult Safeguarding Team on: **01656 642477**. Alternatively email: **AdultsafeguardingMASH@bridgend.gov.uk**

### **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Emergency Duty Team**

If any concerns are outside of office hours after 5.00pm, Monday to Friday and on weekends and Bank Holidays then call the Emergency Duty Team on **01443 743665**.

### **What will happen if I report a concern to Social Services?**

When you contact Social Services, the staff member will take as many details as needed to see whether the referral needs to go through the safeguarding process or how the person can be helped which might involve another service.

Social services will assess whether the referral needs to go through the safeguarding process and will follow national policy and procedures.

The action following the assessment will depend on individual circumstances, but it might be the person getting a different kind of service or support or in exceptional circumstances a court taking legal action. Action will be taken to ensure the person is protected immediately and in the future. In

the interests of confidentiality, it is highly unlikely you will be notified of the outcome of the assessment.

**What if you are mistaken and there is no abuse taking place?**

If you are not sure, it is better to have discussed your concerns with somebody who has experience and responsibility to make an informed decision than to ignore a situation which may result in someone vulnerable being harmed.