**Safeguarding Policy for The Bournemouth Above And Beyond Trust**

The Bournemouth Above And Beyond Trust (BAABT) is committed to supporting the right of adults at risk to be protected from abuse and to making sure all staff and volunteers work together, and act promptly when dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse. The Rights and Values of all will be considered in all safeguarding matters. ( see Appendix.1)

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. We will work together to prevent and minimise abuse. If we have concerns that someone is being abused our loyalty to the vulnerable person comes before anything else – our group, other service users, our colleagues and the person’s friends and family. If we know or suspect that a vulnerable adult is being abused, we will take immediate action to deal with the situation and record all concerns and actions in a Safeguarding Log.

**What is a vulnerable person?**

The definition of a vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 years who:

* Is or may be in need or eligible for Community Care Services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.
* Is unable to take care of him / herself or to protect him / herself from significant harm or exploitation.

**A vulnerable person** may fall into any one of the following groups:

* Older or frail people.
* People with a mental health need or learning difficulty.
* A physical impairment.
* A sensory impairment.
* Those who are substance or alcohol dependent.
* Family carers providing assistance to another vulnerable adult.

**Abuse** is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other persons(s) or group of people. Abuse may be single or repeated acts. It can be:

* + - Physical abuse - Hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, scalding, or burning, the use of inappropriate restraints, or inappropriate sanctions, also self inflicted injury, Misuse of medicine – inappropriately giving medication, overdosing and withholding.
    - Psychological abuse including emotional abuse - Intimidation, threats, humiliation, extortion, racial abuse, verbal abuse, blackmail, deprivation of contact, coercion, harassment and other forms of psychological abuse
    - Sexual abuse/assault - Sexual assault, unwanted sexual attention, rape, sexual innuendo, sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent, or was pressurised into consenting
    - Financial abuse– monies being withheld, bills not paid, prevention of the appropriate purchase of care, property transfer, property misappropriated, theft, fraud, pressure in connection with Wills, property or inheritance
    - Discriminatory abuse – any discrimination against the person on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, race or religion which results in harm in any way.

When considering incidents of potential or actual abuse of adults, certain values and the rights of individuals are of particular relevance and these are listed in the Appendix 1.

**Underlying principles**

Employees/volunteers should not wait until an incident occurs to put these principles into practice. Acting positively may prevent risks arising. Where employee/volunteers are aware of risk they must be aware that doing nothing is not an option.

All BAABT Trustees, employees and volunteers working with vulnerable adults require an understanding of Multi-Agency Adult Protection Procedures on the Protection of Vulnerable Adults. All Trustees, employees and volunteers, will have annual Safeguarding Training. This will also provide a brief summary of action to be taken if abuse is suspected. All Trustees, employees and volunteers will undertake full enhanced DBS checks and the Chair and Treasurer will have undertaken specific Safeguarding Training to support their role as designated Safeguarding Officers.

There is an expectation that Trustees employees and volunteers providing services to vulnerable adults will co-operate fully in any adult protection investigation/assessment and comply with any recommendations of an adult protection plan.

Sometimes, it will not be obvious or clear whether a situation could be considered abusive or criminal or meet other definitions of concern. The important thing is that a discussion takes place about whether action is warranted. This discussion should always involve one of the two designated Safeguarding Officers for the charity, This is the Chair or Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. It is understood that the interests of the carers and service users are not necessarily the same and that different perspectives may have to be respected and if possible reconciled if satisfactory solutions to particular problems are to be formed.

Service users have the right to be treated with respect by employees/volunteers, part of whose task is to encourage users to express views and consider the implications of their action or choices. Within the limitations of their personal circumstances, service users should be helped to arrive at their own solution to problems. However, where direct intervention is required in response to identified risk, this should be at the minimum level necessary to give the individual protection – in other words it is important not to over react.

Where an investigation is required, BAABT will inform Social Services, who will gather, record and analyse information as part of that investigation. Communication between the agencies and teams involved is recognised as essential to proper care planning and management of cases involving people at risk. It is important that the Trustee, employee or volunteer who identifies or receives the complaint/concern knows what action to take and explains this and what is likely to happen next to the service user, where this does not put the vulnerable adult at risk. It should not be assumed that in any set of circumstances where predisposing factors are present, there is actual harm occurring. The important point is that a discussion takes place or a referral leads to gathering of information and then a detailed assessment to define the risk and agree necessary action.

**Competency and confidentiality**

Adults have the right to make their own decisions and to exercise choice. These rights are however not unfettered and must be viewed with regard to the freedom of others and the risks others may be exposed to. Sometimes there are legal constraints (e.g. mental health legislation), where an individual cannot safely exercise choice for themselves.

It is the responsibility of the Trustee, employee or volunteer to ensure that the proper account is taken of the individual’s capacity to evaluate risk for him or herself and to decide whether the individual is able to act appropriately having evaluated the risk. It must be recognized that the right to autonomy can involve risk and where the service user chooses to stay in risky situations, these will be discussed with Social Services so that they can decide how to proceed.

When an individual has the capacity to make an informed decision regarding their personal circumstances, and where risk has been identified but the individual does not wish to accept the intervention, then that individual’s wishes will generally be respected. It is the responsibility of Social Services to make this assessment and where there is any doubt, they should be consulted.

Where there appears to be such elements of serious crime, risk or harm to the individual or to others, there is an overwhelming responsibility to intervene and set aside the fact that the information was provided in confidence. The decision to pass on information without the consent of a service user will not be taken lightly. Decisions about breaching confidentiality need to be discussed with the Chair of the Trustees or another nominated Trustee before any action is taken. They will take into account the capacity of the individual to understand the consequences of his/her action or inaction and the reasonableness of the decision with regard to the circumstances. If it should be necessary to breach confidentiality, every effort should be made to inform the service user beforehand where this does not put the vulnerable adult at risk.

**Actions checklist when a concern or allegation is disclosed**

**3 BAABT will coordinate an investigation.**

If necessary BAABT will hold a strategy meeting to decide what action to take next.

They might decide to call the police.

You might need to give a statement to BAABT or the police,

Social services or the police will decide what to do next.

**2 Bringing the concern to the attention of Your Safe Guarding Officer who in turn will contact Adult Social Care or the Police.**

The Safeguarding Officer discusses the concerns with the Trustees or contacts the local authority referral agency or the police straight away.

**1 You think abuse has or may have occurred. Act immediately.**

Make sure the person is safe.

Inform the Safe Guarding Officer immediately.

Contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed.

Record details of the allegation in the Safeguarding Log.

Everyone has a duty to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse or potential abuse of a vulnerable adult to the Chair of the Trustees. The Safeguarding Log should be completed.

Any disclosure or suspicion of abuse should be dealt with in such a way that evidence is not compromised – investigations should be led by Social Services and the police, not BAABT Trustees, staff or volunteers. Our responsibility is to pass concerns on to the appropriate authorities quickly.

If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, urgent action should be taken to ensure their safety including calling the appropriate emergency services. If there is reason to believe a crime has been committed then the police should be contacted immediately. In cases involving physical or sexual abuse, care must be taken to preserve evidence. This includes not only abuse identified within a service (e.g. between service users) but also abuse carried out by someone else with whom the vulnerable adult has a personal or professional relationship.

If the alleged abuser is also a service user then a member of staff will need to be allocated to attend to their needs and ensure that they do not pose a risk to other vulnerable adults.

If the alleged abuser is a Trustee, member of staff or a volunteer, consideration must immediately be given protecting the vulnerable adults(s) from the possibility of further abuse until the issues have been investigated. The Chair of Trustees will suspend the member of staff until a full investigation has taken place. If necessary the perpetrator will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

If a member of staff or volunteer has sufficient reason to believe that any member of the organisation is colluding in the abuse, they should report their concerns directly to the nominated trustee. Failing that again they should report their concerns directly to the relevant appropriate body.

Initial rejections of help by the vulnerable adult, or an unwillingness to disclose abuse should not always be taken as final. It may, for example, make a substantial difference to how an individual feels about disclosing abuse if they are provided with a safe place where they know they will be free from the risk of intimidation or coercion.

Trustees, staff or volunteers should not normally alert or confront the alleged abuser. They need to be mindful of their own safety, the safety of others. However in a minority of circumstances, intervention may be necessary to protect the vulnerable person.

**Recording**

If an adult protection referral is made to Social Services, details of the allegation should be recorded in the Safeguarding Log as soon as possible. The recording should include an accurate detailed record of what was said to the Trustee, employee or volunteer as well as the vulnerable adult or the person reporting their concerns. The person raising the concerns should be informed in writing of the Chair of Trustee’s decision within 28 days.

**Contacts**

The BAABT nominated Safeguarding Officer is Blair Crawford, who can be contacted on 07785286623 or in his absence the Deputy Safeguarding Officer is Gina Angiolini, who can be contacted on 07887653743

**Review of this policy**

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the trustees of BAABT not less than once a year.

Adopted by Board of Trustees Feb 2025

Review Feb 2026

**APPENDIX I**

**Rights and values**

All people have the right to:

1. Be treated with dignity and respect as equal human beings.
2. Have personal freedom to determine their own actions unless there are good reasons for imposing restrictions, or where individuals cannot take decisions to protect themselves, their assets or bodily integrity.
3. Live safely in a home environment without fear of physical or emotional violence or abuse in any form.
4. Move freely about the community without fear of physical abuse or emotional violence or harassment.
5. Have personal money, goods and possessions treated with respect.
6. Receive equal protection for themselves and their personal property through the law.
7. Be given access to knowledge and information in a form which can be understood to help make informed choices about how life is lived.
8. Have individual sexual needs and orientation accepted and respected (where it does not infringe on the rights of others) without fear of harassment or discrimination.
9. Be shown respect and given support when making a complaint or seeking help as a consequence of mistreatment.
10. Receive appropriate medical treatment and provision.
11. Confidentiality and to know in advance on what basis any information might be shared with others (employee/volunteers should refer to our policy on confidentiality).
12. Access to information held on file subject to any restrictions under Access to Health Records and Data Protection Act 1998.
13. Make choices and come to decisions, and have those decisions respected.
14. Full information of the range of support services available from all agencies and to be given access to those services when needed.
15. Be free to express concerns in confidence about abuse of others without fear of adverse consequences, providing allegation is not made maliciously.
16. Be presumed innocent until proven otherwise where allegations of abuse are made against them.
17. The support of a representative/advocate to speak on their behalf if so desired.
18. Access to an effective complaints or grievances procedure.
19. Protection and help where they are unable to take their own decisions and/or protect themselves, their assets or bodily integrity.