

BRADFORD DOULAS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

CONTEXT

Bradford Doulas is a charity organisation providing a service with trained volunteers at the forefront, supported by staff caseworkers. We work with pregnant women/people and new parents with babies. We undertake home visits and often encounter other children and people living in the household. Occasionally we also support pregnant teenagers under the age of 18. It is therefore essential that staff and volunteers are fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and that we have appropriate policy and procedures in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. A child is defined as 'anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday'.

SAFER BRADFORD STATEMENT

'Safeguarding means protecting a child's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about working together to support children and young people to make decisions about the risks they face in their own lives, and protecting those who lack the capacity to make these decisions. We all share responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, whether as a parent or family member; a friend or neighbour; a teacher or carer; or as a paid or volunteer worker.'

<https://saferbradford.co.uk/children/>

POLICY

- 1.1 Bradford doulas acknowledges that safeguarding is everyone's business. This policy outlines the safeguarding roles and responsibilities for Bradford Doula staff and volunteers.
- 1.2 All practitioners working for Bradford Doula's are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities whether in a paid or a volunteer role.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The Service Manager fulfils the role of Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
- 2.2 The DSO will receive appropriate training which includes:
 - recognising and responding to safeguarding issues
 - understanding relevant legislation and guidance
 - local child protection procedures
 - developing and implementing safeguarding policies and procedures
 - building a safe organisational culture
 - safe information sharing
 - safer recruitment
- 2.3 The DSO is responsible for ensuring all staff and volunteers know how to recognise and respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary.
- 2.4 The DSO is responsible for identifying the training requirements for all staff and volunteers, supporting ongoing learning and development in relation to safeguarding children.
- 2.5 The DSO will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities through training and regular supervisions.
- 2.6 The DSO will review the effectiveness of the Bradford Doula's safeguarding arrangements annually.
- 2.7 The ACL Board of Trustees will support the Service Manager to fulfil their DSO role effectively by ensuring they have the time and training necessary to fulfil this role.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

- 3.1 Bradford Doulas will follow safer recruitment procedures to ensure that staff and volunteers are recruited safely and fairly, and that children's safety is being considered at each step in the recruitment process.
- 3.2 All staff and volunteers complete a written application, attend an interview, provide two references and undergo an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check with barred list checks.
- 3.3 Staff recruitment is conducted by a panel of at least two people comprised, as appropriate, of: the Service Manager or Team Lead, a member of Bradford Doulas Steering Group and a trustee for Action for Community Limited. This panel jointly hold responsibility for ensuring that all checks are carried out thoroughly and are satisfactory before work with families commences.
- 3.4 Volunteer recruitment is carried out by staff members and overseen by the Service Manager. The Service Manager is responsible for ensuring that all checks are carried out thoroughly before volunteering commences.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

- 4.1 All staff and volunteers should be alert to indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation. For categories and definitions of abuse, neglect and exploitation please see appendix A.
- 4.2 Staff and volunteers should be aware of the potential impact that domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health could have on parental capacity and the ability to safely care for their child/children.
- 4.3 Practitioners should be alert to the impact and influence of the wider family network and any other adults living in the house as well as community and environmental circumstances.
- 4.4 Staff and volunteers should be alert to parents and carers who may not be acting in the best interests of their child/children.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

- 3.1 Staff must raise any concerns they have about the welfare of any children with their line manager as quickly as possible. They should keep detailed notes, including times and dates of any disclosures or observations. If for any reason the appropriate staff member is not available the DSO should be approached directly.
- 3.2 Volunteers must raise any concerns they have about the welfare of any children with the member of staff who is supervising them at the time as quickly as possible. Volunteer and staff member should both keep detailed notes, including times and dates of any disclosures or observations. If for any reason the appropriate staff member is not available the DSO should be approached directly.
- 3.3 Any paper notes must be kept within the red or black file and in a safe and secure place to maintain confidentiality.
- 3.4 The DSO will be informed of all concerns raised.
- 3.5 The DSO will work within the guidance set out by our Local Authority in all cases where there are safeguarding concerns. Resources and information for Bradford Safeguarding are available at <https://www.saferbradford.co.uk>. Referrals to Children's Social Care are made through Bradford

- Children's Services' dedicated practitioners' advice and referral contact line on 01274 433 999.
The Emergency Duty Team take emergency out of hours calls on 01274 431010.
- 3.6 Any sharing of information with Children's Social Care or other services will be done with consent from the parent/ carer unless a child is perceived to be at significant risk of harm.
 - 3.7 In instances where there is any doubt about the best course of action advice will be sought from Bradford Children's Services' dedicated practitioners' advice and referral contact line on 01274 433 999 or from the NSPCC on 08088005000 anonymising details of individuals involved until the pathway forward is clear.
 - 3.8 The Designated Safeguarding Officer will inform Bradford Doulas Steering Group of any safeguarding situations where it is deemed necessary to make a referral to Children's Social Care without consent from the family.
 - 3.9 If a volunteer or staff member has an **immediate and urgent** concern for the safety or welfare of a child they should contact the police prior to informing the appropriate staff member within Bradford Doulas.
 - 3.10 If the DSO is not contactable and a concern is felt to be too urgent to wait for their availability, advice can be sought by calling Children's Social Care or the NSPCC on the numbers above and asking for advice without sharing family details until the best course of action becomes clear.
 - 3.11 If at any point a concern is raised about a member of staff, volunteer or any other related professional working with a family, the DSO will report it to the Bradford Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who manages allegations against adults working in a position of trust with children within one working day of when the allegation is raised and prior to any further investigation taking place. The contact details for the LADO in Bradford are 01274 435600 or LADO@bradford.gov.uk.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023)

Child Criminal Exploitation	Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.
Child Sexual Exploitation	Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) 230 Serious Violence Strategy 155 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.
Child	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18 th birthday.
Controlling or Coercive behaviour	Controlling or coercive behaviour is a pattern of abuse (on two or more occasions) that involves multiple behaviours and tactics used by a perpetrator to (but not limited to) hurt, humiliate, intimidate, exploit, isolate, and dominate the victim. It is an intentional pattern of behaviour used to exert power, control, or coercion over another person.
County Lines	A term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.
Domestic Abuse	<p>Domestic abuse may be a single incident or a course of conduct which can encompass a wide range of abusive behaviours, including a) physical or sexual abuse; b) violent or threatening behaviour; c) controlling or coercive behaviour; d) economic abuse; and e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse.</p> <p>Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children (0 to 18), as victims, if they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse.</p>

<p>Emotional Abuse</p>	<p>The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.</p>
<p>Extremism</p>	<p>Extremism is defined in the Prevent strategy as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces.</p>
<p>Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)</p>	<p>FGM is illegal in the UK. FGM comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.</p>
<p>Financial Exploitation</p>	<p>Financial exploitation can take many forms. In this context, we use the term to describe exploitation which takes place for the purpose of money laundering. This is when criminals target children and adults and take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive them into facilitating the movement of illicit funds. This can include physical cash and/or payments through financial products, such as bank and cryptocurrency accounts.</p>
<p>Neglect</p>	<p>The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.</p> <p>Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) • protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger • ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) • ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment • provide suitable education It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs
<p>Physical Abuse</p>	<p>A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</p>
<p>Sexual Abuse</p>	<p>Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for</p>

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	<p>example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.</p>
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