

## BVDA Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

**Reviewed: 22.03.20**

<b>Current Trustee Safeguarding Lead</b>	<b>Current Secondary Trustee responsible for safeguarding</b>
Celestine Weegenaar	Sarah Malina

### The purpose and scope of this policy statement

This policy has been drafted considering safeguarding in the widest possible sense. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding includes:

- Protecting people's rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- People and organisations working together to mitigate the risk of abuse or neglect, and to prevent any form of abuse or neglect from taking place.
- Making sure people's wellbeing is promoted, taking each individual's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs into account.

As a charity, BVDA works with children and young people, primarily abroad but also occasionally in the UK. Safeguarding is about putting procedures in place to identify individuals who may be experiencing abuse, to minimise the risk of abuse and to respond appropriately to concerns about, or allegations of, abuse. BVDA believes that these principles are of the utmost importance.

This policy has been developed with the aim of ensuring that all charity activities are safe. We believe that all volunteers and beneficiaries engaging with the charity deserve to be safe and secure in their activities.

BVDA has put in place safeguards to protect beneficiaries. BVDA has also put in place safeguards to avoid putting their volunteers and trustees in positions where harm might be alleged, and to ensure that all volunteers and trustees know exactly what to do should harm be suspected.

Safeguarding is considered within the charity at two levels:

- To protect beneficiaries who receive BVDA's services. This includes the children or adults who benefit from our services.
- To provide volunteers, committee members and trustees with the overarching principles that guide our approach to ethical support practises.

This policy statement applies to anyone working or volunteering on behalf of BVDA.

### Principles:

This policy is based on the following principles:

- Beneficiaries should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all beneficiaries, to keep them safe and practise in a way that protects them
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All trustees, committee members and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns to the Safeguarding Lead.
- Trustees, committee members and volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

#### Definitions

- A child/young person is defined as anyone under 18.
- An adult at risk is defined in the 'No Secrets' government report as a person over 18 "who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."
- A beneficiary is any individual engaging with BVDA's activities and projects. Beneficiaries abroad are often children and young people. BVDA does not usually work with adults at risk.

#### **We will seek to keep beneficiaries safe by:**

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing an appropriately trained and informed individual to be the person with whom safeguarding concerns are discussed initially, a Trustee Safeguarding Lead
- Developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practices
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- Recruiting volunteers safely, ensuring all checks are made (e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- Providing effective training and mentoring of all volunteers on safeguarding issues.
- Ensuring volunteers travel, interact and work in pairs
- Implementing a code of conduct for volunteers, committee members and trustees.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Ensuring we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

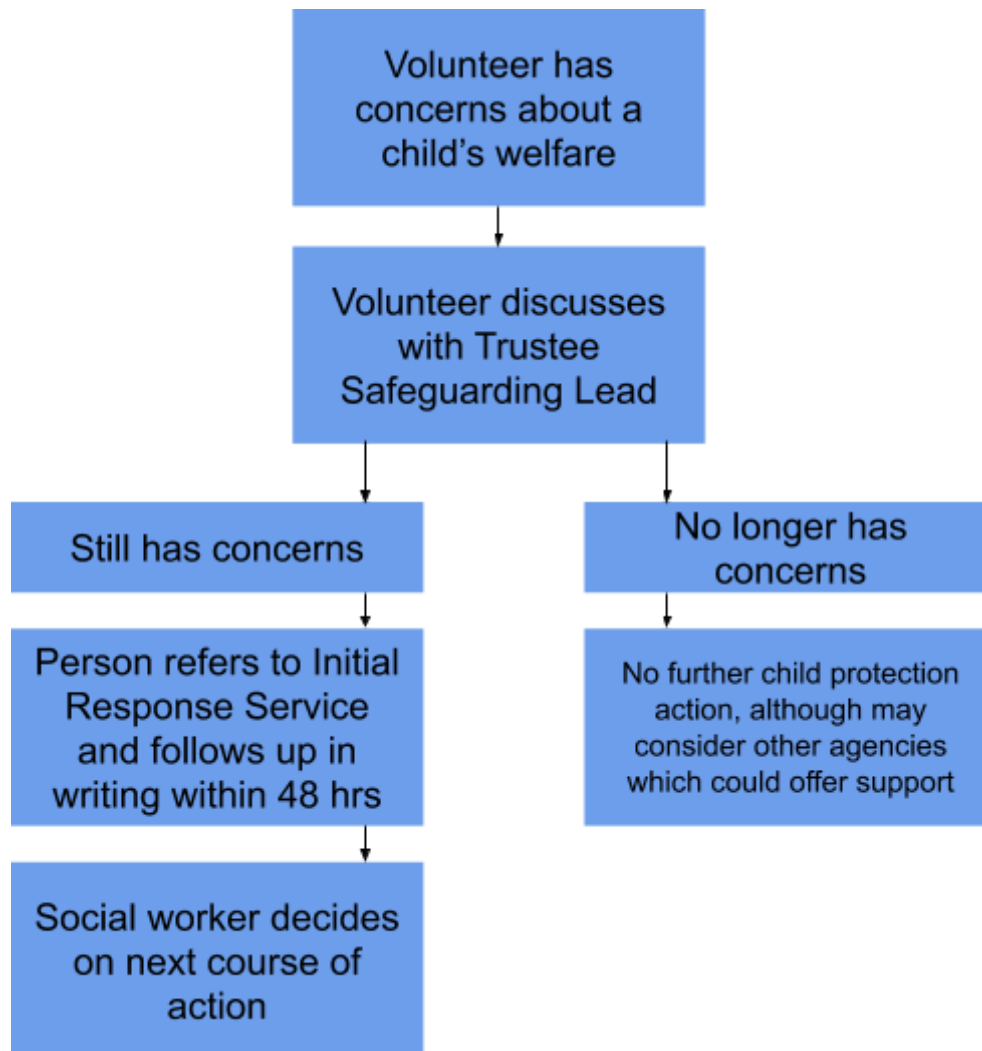
#### **Recognising abuse**

Abuse can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual must always be considered. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts.

The following is a list of examples of the different types of abuse:

- Physical – includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, unlawful or inappropriate restraint and inappropriate physical sanctions.
- Sexual – is unwanted sexual activity or behaviour that happens without consent or understanding
- Psychological – is emotional abuse which causes distress and can be verbal and non-verbal.
- Financial and material – includes theft, fraud, exploitation and pressure in connection to wills, property, inheritance and financial transactions, or inciting an adult at risk to do any of these things on another individual's behalf; it may also involve the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions and benefits of an adult at risk
- Discriminatory- includes abuse based on an individual's race, gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation, or age; and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment or hate crime/incident
- Neglect or self-neglect - includes a wide range of behaviours such as neglecting to care for one's own personal hygiene or health.
- Domestic Abuse – is “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”

## Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing in the UK:



A volunteer may have concerns about a child because of something they have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to them. If a child discloses information to a volunteer, they should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling them.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others. Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all time avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer. Any leading questions can negatively impact later prosecutions.
- Explain what will happen next and who they have to talk to
- Take notes or write up their conversation as soon as possible afterwards and use the words used by the child
- Record the date and time in their notes.
- Follow up verbal referrals within 48 hours

They will not

- Reassure or alleviate guilt
- Interrogate the child
- Ask leading questions
- Ask the child to repeat the information to someone else

Helpful statements to make:

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the vulnerable person says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will do my best to help you

Things not to say:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure that this is true?
- Why? Who? When? Where?
- Never make false promises

### **Recording and reporting disclosures**

Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told). Write down exactly what the beneficiary / volunteer said and what was said in reply and what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered). Record the dates, times and when the record was made.

All records should be forwarded to the Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Safeguarding Lead will store records securely. Report the discussion to the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. If this person is implicated, report to the Committee Liaison Trustee.

If they or the Trustee Safeguarding Lead still has concerns, they should refer these to the Bristol First Response Team  
Phone number: 0117 903 6444

## Procedures for responding to concerns about a beneficiaries wellbeing internationally:



## Whistleblowing

In certain circumstances, volunteers may feel they are unable to follow the organisation's reporting procedures identified above. This may be because they feel their position in the organisation would be in jeopardy, they would be subject to intimidation or that the person of concern is the designated Trustee Safeguarding Lead. In this instance, concerns should be communicated to secondary trustee responsible for safeguarding.

## Managing allegations against committee members and volunteers

BVDA is committed to having effective recruitment procedures, including checking all volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with our beneficiaries. However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a committee member or volunteer. The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour whilst volunteering, at home or in another setting.

BVDA assures all committee members/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a volunteer or beneficiary. Where there is a complaint against a committee member, there may be two types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Any suspicion that a beneficiary or volunteer has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer must be taken seriously and should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the individual in question and any other individuals who may be at risk.

Where relevant, the Safeguarding Lead will refer the allegation to the social services department (Bristol First Response Team) who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

### **Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

The Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or police inquiries, the organisation will assess all individual cases to decide whether a committee member or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organisation must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true.

Any allegations will also need to be reported to the Charity Commission.

### **Trustee Safeguarding Lead**

The Trustee Safeguarding Lead should:

- Ensure that the BVDA's safeguarding policy is known, understood and used appropriately
- Be available for consultation with volunteers raising safeguarding concerns
- Ensure that safeguarding alerts are raised as appropriate
- Ensure the alleged victim is made safe and preserve any evidence relating to the abuse
- Ensure that the BVDA's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and the organisation is compliant with local and national safeguarding policy.
- Ensure that the BVDA's safeguarding policy is available publically
- Maintain an ongoing training programme for all BVDA volunteers
- Monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of all records
- Be subject to a DBS record check by BVDA.

The Trustee Safeguarding Lead will:

- Advise and act upon all concerns reported to them

- Keep the Chair of Trustees and secondary trustee responsible for safeguarding informed of all actions

### **Related policies and procedures:**

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures including:

- BVDA DBS Policy and Procedure (safer recruitment)
- Code of conducts
  - Volunteers
  - Committee
  - Trustee
- Photography and image sharing guidance.
- Complaints procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Training plans

### **Contact details**

#### **Trustee Safeguarding Lead**

Name: Celestine Weegenaar

Role: Projects Trustee

Email: trustees@bvda.org.uk

#### **NSPCC helpline**

0808 800 500