



## **BATTERSEA BEFRIENDING NETWORK** **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK POLICY**

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### **1. Introduction**

Battersea Befriending Network (henceforth called BBN) are aware that safeguarding adults from harm is everyone's business and we work in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations to prevent and stop abuse and neglect. We aim to ensure the wellbeing of adults at risk and their supporters is promoted throughout our organisation. This policy lays out the responsibilities and processes of BBN designed to ensure excellent safeguarding practice and governance within our service.

All BBN volunteer befrienders undergo basic training, including in safeguarding, and are required to sign a copy of this Safeguarding Policy. Before they can be assigned to a "befriender", they are required to provide or obtain an enhanced DBS certificate. They are also required to provide the names of two referees from whom BBN then secures references which are carefully checked to confirm their suitability for befriending.

BBN will seek to ensure that all befrienders understand their responsibility to raise safeguarding concerns when they arise and the process for informing the appropriate agency. BBN will also attempt to ensure that befriendees feel able to raise safeguarding concerns with befrienders and that if befriendees have any concerns regarding the befriender themselves, that they would know who to contact to raise such concerns.

### **2. Legislation**

The BBN policy is in accordance with statutory guidance of section 14 of the Care Act which came into force in April 2015. This sets out a code of practice for the protection of adults at risk.

See Department of Health factsheet 7: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets)



### 3. Definition of adult at risk

An “**Adult at Risk**” as defined by the Department of Health is any person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation. This includes all the befriendees referred to BBN.

### 4. Definition and Types of Abuse

Abuse is the mistreatment of an individual by another individual. It can be carried out by anyone and it can happen in any location, it can be deliberate or unintentional. It can happen once or it can happen repeatedly. It can affect one individual or several.

Types of abuse are categorised as follows:

- **Physical abuse** – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- **Discriminatory abuse** – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organisational abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one-off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.



- **Neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Self-neglect** – where there are concerns about the befriender putting themselves at risk of harm this should be referred to the statutory authorities.

## 5. Identifying Safeguarding Concerns and Reporting Them

BBN will ensure that all befrienders are provided with information and training and continuing support on identifying safeguarding concerns and how to report them.

BBN will ensure that befrienders are aware that they have a responsibility to raise safeguarding concerns, should they arise. If befrienders have any concerns at all that abuse is taking place, they should do the following:

- If the befriender is in immediate danger or requiring urgent medical attention call 999 immediately and ask for the appropriate service.
- If this is not the case, but you do have a concern, contact your mentor as soon as possible and let them know. Even if you think that it's not serious or are worried that you might have got it wrong, *discuss it with your mentor, so that together you can consider* the most appropriate action. They may ask you to report your concern to the BBN Safeguarding Lead, or the person's referrer / care coordinator, or directly to the Wandsworth Adult Social Care Access Team on 0208 871 7707.
- If the mentor has any concerns about a befriender they should contact the Safeguarding Lead for further discussion.
- If the befriender has any concerns about a child being at risk of abuse they should follow the same procedures and refer the issue to Wandsworth Children's Social Care.

Once a mentor has become aware of a potential safeguarding concern either directly from a volunteer or through other means, and they feel that the concern is justified, they should:

- Inform the befriender's referrer / care coordinator as soon as possible, or ensure that the befriender does so, provided they feel comfortable enough to do so
- If the befriender does not have a referrer / care coordinator, the mentor should contact the Wandsworth Adult Social Care Access Team on 0208 871 7707, again the befriender could make the referral should they feel able to
- If the information is from a befriender, provide them with appropriate emotional and practical support, including reassuring them that they have taken the right action to safeguard the befriender
- If the mentor suspects a crime has been committed they should contact the police.
- If necessary, the mentor may choose to seek advice from other mentors



Should a mentor have any concerns that a befriender may have carried out any sort of abuse, that befriending relationship will be suspended whilst the concerns are looked into. If the concerns appear justified, the mentor will make a referral to the Wandsworth Adult Social Care Access Team, who should investigate the safeguarding concern. If the mentor suspects a crime has been committed they will contact the police.

#### **6. Named Person(s) Responsible for Safeguarding Issues**

The safeguarding lead within BBN is Peter Wright who can be contacted at [wrightpetere@gmail.com](mailto:wrightpetere@gmail.com).

#### **7. Compliments and Complaints**

To ensure that befriendees are aware of who to contact should they have any concerns or positive feedback about their relationship with their befriender, BBN will ensure that all befriendees have the contact details for the referrer / care coordinator who they can contact should they need to.

#### **8. Monitoring of Relationships**

To help ensure that befriending relationships are going well and that any issues are identified, BBN encourages all referrers / care coordinators to regularly discuss with befriendees how the relationships are progressing. Befrienders are expected to attend bi-monthly supervision sessions and are to contact their mentor if ever they have concerns. If new befrienders have not contacted their mentor within a month the mentor will make contact. Non-attendance at bi-monthly supervision sessions will always be followed up by a phone call from the mentor.

#### **9. Signed Agreement to Safeguarding Policy**

New befrienders, having completed a training course, should read, sign and date their agreement to the terms of the safeguarding policy. Where possible, the initial introduction of the befriender to the befriender should involve the mentor and the referrer / care coordinator to establish a clear understanding of responsibilities and lines of communication.

#### **Draft Agreement**

I ..... confirm that I have read and understand the Battersea Befriending Network Safeguarding Policy.

Signature: ..... Date: .....