

WBAR Safeguarding Policy (includes Vulnerable Adults and Children)

Key Contacts

Safeguarding Lead	Fiona Coulam	07971 919507
For children	CAAS (Contact Advice Assessment Service at West Berks Council)	<u>01635 503090</u> <u>child@westberks.gov.uk</u>
For Adults	Safeguarding Adults Board	<u>01635 519056</u> <u>safeguardingadults@westberks.gov.uk</u>
<u>Emergency contacts for children and adults</u> (evenings, weekends and bank holidays)	EDT	<u>01344 351999</u> <u>edt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk</u>
Prevent Referrals (part of the UK Counter Terrorism Strategy)	Police	101 or <u>https://www.westberks.gov.uk/safeguarding-practice-guidance-prevent</u>
FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)	Police	101

Purpose

WBAR (West Berkshire Action for Refugees) helps refugees, both new arrivals and settled families, as well as asylum seekers, to rebuild their lives by providing teaching, social activities, one-to-one support and general advice. It is our aim to help people feel safe and welcome in West Berkshire and to encourage local people to welcome refugees and asylum seekers.

We focus our work with adults over the age of 18. We do not take referrals of children but recognize that some clients may have children. We take seriously our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all, especially vulnerable adults, young people and children.

A vulnerable adult or 'adult at risk' is defined by Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 as

- A person 18 years or over; and
- Has care and support needs; and
- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

Our clients may be vulnerable i.e. have care and support needs because they have been experiencing abuse in the countries they have fled and may have no support on arrival in the UK.

Types of Abuse and Neglect (based on definitions from the Care Act 2014 Section 14)

Physical: assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, restraint

Sexual: rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing, sexual photography, sexual assault, sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting, pornography or witnessing sexual acts (includes online)

Psychological: emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, bullying and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Neglect: not providing food, clothing, attention or care

Includes: ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs and failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services

Financial: theft, fraud, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions

Domestic violence: is defined as : ‘any incident of threatening behaviours, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship together, or between family members, regardless of gender or sexuality, ‘ and can include many of the above.

Modern Slavery including slavery, human trafficking, forced labour (working against your will) and domestic servitude

The main categories that apply to children under the document KCSIE 2025 (Keeping Children Safe in Education) are Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect.

Volunteers should never see children without a parent or carer present.

We have a legal responsibility as an organisation and as individuals to look out for signs of abuse for both adults and children as defined above and log concerns, refer concerns to the Local Safeguarding Board or, when a client is in immediate danger, inform the police.

In addition to these types of abuse and neglect, we must also take into account:

Prevent: Under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Local Government Authority has due regard to the need to prevent individuals being drawn into terrorism.

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part/all external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The procedure is typically performed on girls between 4 and 13, but may be performed on babies and young women. Girls may be circumcised or genetically mutilated by doctors or health workers in the UK or sent abroad for the operation. This is illegal in the U.K.

For Prevent and FGM, our responsibility as volunteers, trustees and staff is to be aware of issues and report concerns if necessary to the Police.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

1. We recognise that it is the responsibility of each one of our trustees, volunteers and staff to be alert to and take action to prevent where possible the abuse of vulnerable adults, young people and children and to take action in accordance with agreed procedures.
2. We recognise it is the trustees' and safeguarding lead's responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review the WBAR policy and procedures that are designed to be alert to and prevent such abuse.
3. We are committed to supporting, resourcing, training and supervising all our trustees, volunteers and staff who work with vulnerable adults, young people and children.
4. All those working with vulnerable adults, young people and children are checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service and comply with the requirements of the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Implementation of Safeguarding Policy

Recruitment

Potential Volunteers (who could have direct contact with vulnerable people) attend an initial meeting to assess whether the role is a good fit. Issues concerned with working with vulnerable people are discussed. All volunteers, trustees and staff are then checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service for previous convictions.

Induction

New volunteers and staff are given training covering all aspects of the work, including safeguarding and a set of WBAR policies, which includes this Safeguarding policy.

Also, those taking up a befriending role will be given a befriender's handbook. It covers topics such as Volunteer Vetting and Training, Befriender introductions, Support, Reporting Procedures and Personal Safety. Initial visits are supervised. Volunteers then work individually with a client. Either there is a back-up Volunteer or the caseworker who also knows the client and is available to discuss any issues or alternatively two volunteers might work with a family.

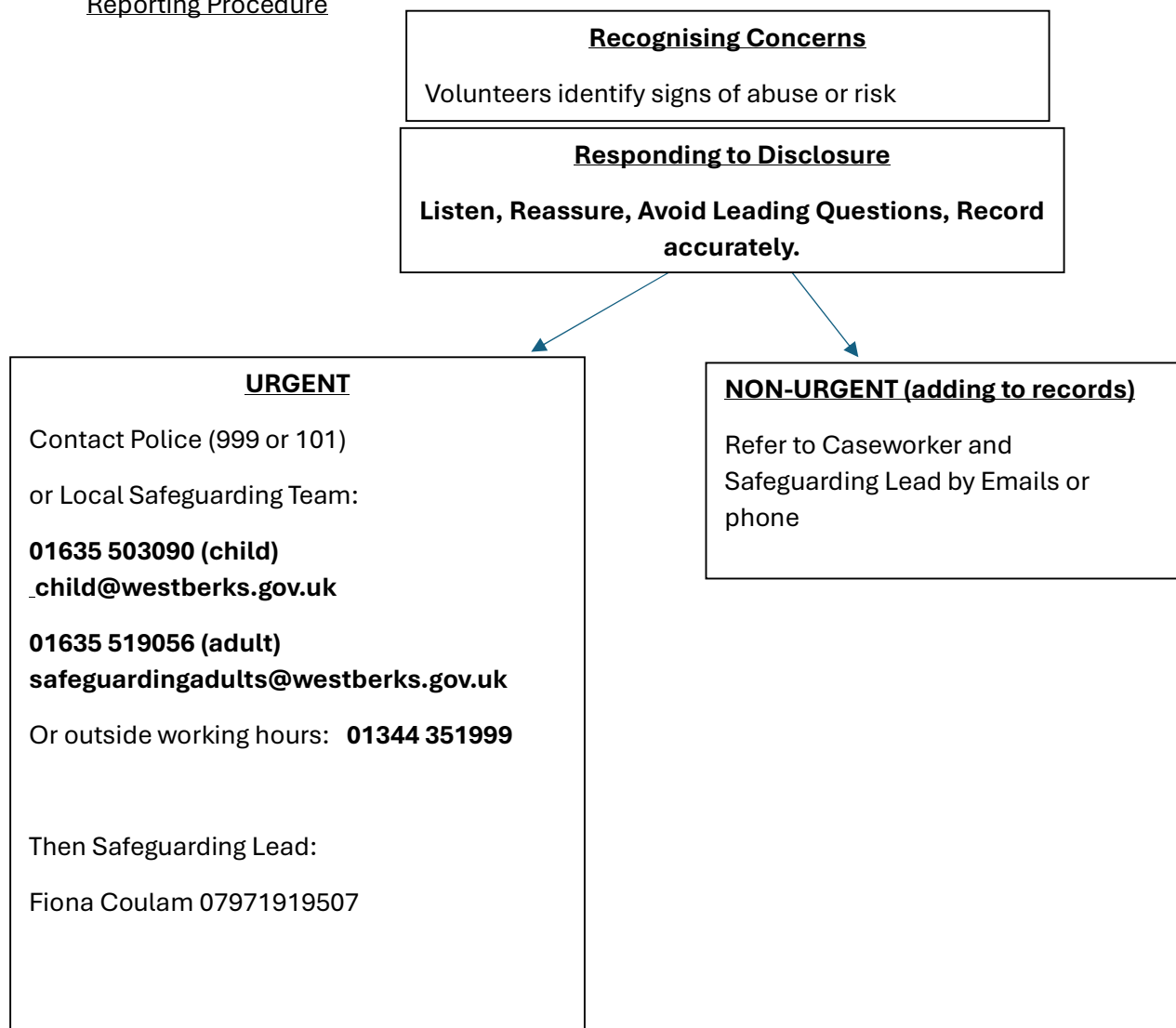
All Volunteers are given and asked to sign the WBAR Volunteer Code of Conduct to confirm that they understand the points raised in the training and handbook mentioned above.

When working with clients

- Volunteers are expected to abide by the WBAR Volunteer Code of Conduct at all times.
- Volunteers should never see children without a parent or carer being present
- Clients must be given the contact details of a volunteer and the WBAR Caseworker.

- Regular volunteer meetings and support provide the forum for volunteers to discuss issues that arise from their work.
- The Volunteer Team Leader with the Caseworker will make every effort to match the skills of the volunteer with the needs of the client, e.g. by gender.
- Volunteers are encouraged and expected to discuss issues with another volunteer if applicable (e.g. when working in a team of 2 to support a family) or the Caseworker.
- If a volunteer or a member of the WBAR team suspects abuse or has serious concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, they must use the URGENT reporting procedure to report their concerns directly to the Local Safeguarding Team or the Police.
- If a volunteer has concerns about the welfare of a client, or a member of a client's family, but does not suspect abuse or have serious concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult they will report this as a Non-Urgent concern to the Caseworker and the Safeguarding Lead.
- If a volunteer or a member of the WBAR team (volunteers, trustees, caseworker) suspects a member of the WBAR team of causing harm or risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, they will immediately inform the Local Safeguarding Team who will take appropriate action, including following Independent Safeguarding Authority Referral Guidance and inform the chair of WBAR.

Reporting Procedure



CONFIDENTIALITY, CONSENT and INFORMATION SHARING

Safeguarding requires a culture of openness, trust and responsibility. Safeguarding concerns must be shared with the Caseworker and Safeguarding Lead without delay. Information is only shared with those who need to know. We follow statutory advice on information sharing, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. Where appropriate, we seek consent to share information; however, where a child is at risk of harm, we may share information without consent.

Please refer to the GDPR Policy for more details.

Accurate record-keeping is essential to effective safeguarding. The client record is available only to the Caseworker, Safeguarding Lead and befriender as allocated. All concerns are logged, according to WBAR's agreed reporting procedures (see above.)

The Trustees are committed to monitoring the effectiveness of this policy.

They do so by email and phone contact between volunteers, the Caseworker and the Volunteer Team Leader and by regular meetings and support.

July 2016; amended Nov 2021 and October 2026

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Trustees		Initial draft approved	Annually
2.0	Trustees	5/10/26	Updated version approved	Annually

FC Gordon
(Chair WBAR) 5/10/26