

Safeguarding Children Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Safeguarding children may also be known as child protection.
- 1.2. All public-facing staff and volunteers, will come into contact with children as part of their work. This may be incidental contact, where a client is accompanied by children, a client may be a child, or the bureau may deliver services targeted at children.
- 1.3. Working with child clients may require prolonged contact and case work. It is essential that the service reassures these clients that when they use a bureau they will be safe, that any details they reveal will be kept confidential, and that they can trust the service.
- 1.4. Equally, it is essential that proper guidelines are in place to ensure that advisers deal appropriately with situations in which children may be at risk. While client confidentiality is paramount to the advice-giving process it is not absolute and there are circumstances under which it is appropriate for bureaux to breach client confidentiality. The decision to breach confidentiality must be made by a bureau manager or equivalent, and in consultation with the Bureaux Direct helpdesk.

2. Guidance underpinning this policy

- 2.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with [Citizens Advice guidance](#). The Citizens Advice service follows guidance on child safeguarding issues set out by the NSPCC. The NSPCC identifies several situations where children may be at increased risk of harm:
 - Deaf or disabled.
 - Drug or alcohol misuse.
 - Running away.
 - Domestic violence.
 - Mental health problems.
- 2.2. In addition the NSPCC have identified specific forms of abuse which may be perpetrated against a child. These are:
 - Bullying.
 - Emotional abuse.
 - Physical abuse.
 - Child trafficking.
 - Neglect.
 - Sexual abuse.

3. Recruitment, selection and screening of staff and volunteers

- 3.1. **Anyone with a conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult, whenever it was committed, is not considered suitable to work within the service and must not be taken on by a bureau.**
- 3.2. Any other convictions must be considered on an individual basis.
- 3.3. The bureau must have sound recruitment practices in place to ensure that anyone considered to be a risk to children does not enter the service. The following precautions will reduce this risk:
 - Anyone applying to work or volunteer for the bureau will be interviewed and asked to provide two references from former employers.
 - If an applicant is unable to provide employer references, they will be asked to provide references from alternative sources, such as volunteer managers, community leaders or other appropriate people.
 - Anyone who is selected for interview or to begin training within the bureau will be asked to disclose details of any unspent convictions.
 - The bureau must get an enhanced DBS check for all eligible roles.

4. Supervision

- Thorough induction training will be provided to ensure that staff / volunteers are aware of the service's core values, confidentiality and good practice in working with the public.
- Staff and volunteers will be given regular supervision and have their training needs assessed.
- Regular case checking will take place and any unusual or excessive contact with a child client will be investigated.

5. Screening

- 5.1. Advisers whose work is specifically targeted at children will have an enhanced DBS check. In addition, the following roles will be DBS checked:
 - Advisers who undertake solo home visits.
 - Those with **direct** line management responsibilities for the above.
 - Any adviser whose role changes to incorporate any of the above conditions.
- 5.2. Re-screening will take place every three years.

6. Procedure where allegation of abuse is made against a third party

- 6.1. **The person responsible for dealing with allegations of abuse against a child is: George Williams, Quality Manager george@cabgwynedd.org.uk. If he is not available, the allegation should be directed to Tal Michael, Chief Executive tal@cabgwynedd.org.uk**
- 6.2. In the event that neither responsible person can be contacted, the adviser must speak to their supervisor and contact the Bureaux Direct helpdesk.

- 6.3. When an allegation is made, the adviser should take careful notes of what is said and must not ask any questions which seem to be "leading". The adviser should tell the person making the allegation that the adviser will discuss this with the bureau manager. He or she should also be told that, although the manager will not automatically report the allegation, this may happen.
- 6.4. The adviser must make a note of the time and date that the allegation was made, who made it and the nature of the allegation.
- 6.5. The adviser must record only the facts, preferably in the language / words used by the person making the allegation.
- 6.6. The adviser must then report the allegation to their manager immediately.
- 6.7. If the person making the allegation indicates that they are willing to report the allegation to social services or the police, then the bureau should offer to assist the individual to make contact with the relevant authorities.
- 6.8. The bureau must not participate in any form of "investigation".
- 6.9. Where the person making the allegation (whether they be a child client, or an adult alleging third-party abuse) refuses to allow disclosure of the allegation, the bureau manager must contact Bureaux Direct who will discuss all the information available to you in context of this policy .
- 6.10. Bureaux Direct will then contact the NSPCC to determine whether there is a real risk which should be referred to the statutory authorities.
- 6.11. If the NSPCC advises that the allegation of abuse should be reported to the relevant authorities, and the bureau manager and / or Bureaux Direct Consultant have concerns about the NSPCC decision, Bureaux Direct will refer to the confidentiality panel and confirm the final decision to you. Citizens Advice will make this decision within one hour of the contact from Bureaux Direct.
- 6.12. If the bureau is subsequently required to take part in a criminal investigation or a Serious Case Review, the manager must contact the Bureaux Direct helpdesk.

7. Procedure where child abuse is suspected

- 7.1. Staff and volunteers may come across instances where they suspect that a child may be being abused. The child may be the client. Alternatively there may be a suspicion that an adult client is perpetrating child abuse, or a client may disclose this.
- 7.2. The person responsible for dealing with suspicions of abuse against a child is George Williams, Quality Manager george@cabgwynedd.org.uk . If he is not available, the allegation should be directed to Tal Michael, Chief Executive tal@cabgwynedd.org.uk**
- 7.3. In the event that neither responsible person can be contacted, the adviser must speak to their supervisor and contact the Bureaux Direct helpdesk.
- 7.4. The bureau will follow this procedure:
 - Ensure that all the information that the adviser would usually collect in the course of dealing with the presenting issue is collected and recorded.

- Be clear why you think child abuse may be happening.
 - Be clear who the client is if they are accompanied by a third party.
 - Consider making contact with the client alone and asking them if there is anything else the CAB could do for them, or check they understood the advice provided.
 - Find out whether the client is supported by other agencies e.g. social worker.
 - Ensure that local information sources are comprehensive and up to date, so that appropriate referrals can be made.
 - Contact the Bureaux Direct Helpdesk to discuss the best option for the client or a child who may be being abused by the client. This discussion may include contacting the NSPCC for a “what if” conversation before making a final decision to report suspicions.
- 7.5. If there is a clear and immediate danger to a child, then priority must be given to the safety of that child, which may include reporting the suspicion without their consent, thus breaching client confidentiality.

8. Safeguarding behaviours

- 8.1. Cyngor ar Bopeth Gwynedd & De Ynys Môn Citizens Advice takes measures to ensure that all clients are protected from any form of harm or abuse and to minimise the risk of advisers having allegations made against them. The steps taken to do this will apply to working with all clients, but for clarity, examples specific to children are listed here:
- Staff will not look after children out of sight of a parent or carer who is seeking advice.
 - Be aware that a person under the age of 18 is legally a child, even if they look and express themselves like an adult.
 - Where possible, arrange for activities involving a child working with an adult to take place in a room which can be easily observed by others. This needs to be balanced with client confidentiality.
 - An adviser must always make their Advice Session Supervisor aware when a child is being interviewed alone.
 - An adviser must never visit a child in their home unaccompanied. The adviser must ensure that a parent or guardian will be present.
 - Staff and volunteers must never transport a child in their car unless prior arrangements have been made or in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency, where this is appropriate.
 - Anyone working on a project specifically aimed at those under the age of 18 must have had an enhanced DBS check.
 - Anyone working in a childcare setting, regardless of the target client group, must have had an enhanced DBS check.
 - Anyone undertaking home visits must have had an enhanced DBS check.

- Staff and volunteers must never make any comments which may be interpreted as sexual in nature, to a child
- A child must never be allowed into a staff member's home.
- Bureaux must adopt sound recruitment practices which aim to prevent anyone considered to be a risk to children from working within the service.
- Staff and volunteers must not engage in any physical games with a child – apart from structured sports activities which may be part of a community event etc.
- Staff and volunteers must not engage in sexually provocative games.
- Staff and volunteers must not allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- If a child is distressed, offer comfort with words rather than touching them.
- The content of conversations must be professional and pertinent to the advice giving process.
- Staff and volunteers must not let allegations that a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Staff and volunteers must not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- Do not take photographs of children

9. Training

9.1. The bureau will ensure that appropriate safeguarding training is available to all staff and volunteers. This may be in the form of:

- policy awareness sessions delivered internally
- briefing sessions by local authority or other relevant authority
- attendance at training arranged through partner agencies
- additional training.

10. Service development

10.1. Any new services in development will take account of the need to safeguard children. This may be achieved by:

- Risk assessing proposed activities.
- Agreeing safeguarding measures with partner organisations including information sharing protocols.
- Seeking specialist advice, for example from the local safeguarding children board.

11. Review of policy

11.1. The bureau's child protection policies and procedures will be reviewed annually. Necessary changes that are identified as a result of amendment to legislation, will be made as required.

**This version approved by Eve Butler, Chair & Tal Michael, Chief Executive
12 June 2015**

Reviewed by Fran Tate, Trustee 7/12/2015