

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Overview

Being Alongside is the working name of The Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health.

As at the last review date of this document (August 2023), the charity has no operational designated branches (i.e. branches that are not separate charities in their own right, and are overseen by the national committee), and no future plans to create such branches.

As at the last review date of this document (August 2023), the charity has links to three operational affiliate organisations:

- Battersea Befriending Network – which runs a volunteer befriending network;
- APCMH Croydon – which offers a variety of community mental health services;
- The Cellar Café in Godalming – which as part of its wider works runs an occasional drop-in event for those experiencing mental health difficulties.

Affiliate organisations are operated as separate charities and all responsibility for safeguarding matters lies with their respective trustees and staff. While the national charity will always seek to share best practice and assist affiliates where necessary, as separate legal entities beyond the control of the national charity's trustees, affiliates are entirely responsible for developing their own policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding.

At *Being Alongside* we recognise that the welfare of adults at risk is paramount and that they have equal rights of protection. We have a duty of care to ensure those serving on the national committee, whether as trustees or other members, have the information and support they need to offer support to vulnerable adults.

We also recognise that our volunteers may require support and understanding. We aim to provide this by providing clear communication amongst all the different networks associated with *Being Alongside*.

1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 *Being Alongside* acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring its safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements.

1.2 This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or belief, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all vulnerable adults:

- shall have a positive and enjoyable experience of volunteering at *Being Alongside* in a safe environment
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in any national *Being Alongside* activity.

1.3 As part of our safeguarding policy, *Being Alongside* will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable adults with whom *Being Alongside* is working;
- ensure everyone involved with *Being Alongside* understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse and other safeguarding concerns relating to vulnerable adults;
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support is provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose a concern;
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals;
- ensure robust and appropriate safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

1.4 This policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in *Being Alongside*, whether they are paid employees, volunteers or suppliers of services. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation or a withdrawal of support from the organisation.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 *Being Alongside* makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the rights of every individual to stay safe.

2.2 Through its national work, *Being Alongside* comes into contact with vulnerable adults through the following activities:

- through befriending services, drop-in services or other initiatives delivered by its designated branches (when operational);
- the use of its national telephone service (when operational);
- general contact with the public at events organised by the charity.

2.3 This policy seeks to ensure that *Being Alongside* undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the national organisation's expectations of them.

3.0 Legislation

3.1 The principal pieces of legislation governing the Safeguarding Policy are:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- The Police Act 1997 – CRB checks authorised

- Mental Health Act 1983; 1985
- Mental Health Act 2007 – Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards was added
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Police Act 1997 and Regulations 2002, which incorporates the Disclosure and Barring Service
- The Data Protection Act 2018 – incorporating the General Data Protection Regulation

Further information concerning the above legislation can be found at www.gov.uk.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Safeguarding

Safeguarding, by definition, is a term used to describe a range of activities aimed at preventing and responding to harm and abuse of 'vulnerable adults' who are 'at risk of harm.' Safeguarding is concerned with embedding practices throughout an organisation to ensure, wherever possible, the protection of vulnerable adults.

4.2 Understanding Abuse

Abuse occurs when someone does something to another person that hurts them, damages their quality of life or puts them at risk of harm.

- abuse can be a criminal act, something done consciously or unconsciously;
- abuse can also be defined as a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority; this can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm;
- abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture:

Different forms of abuse and definitions:

Physical abuse

a person's body is being hurt or injured; this includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions

Sexual abuse

a person becomes involved in sexual activities or relationships which they do not want to be involved in (either verbally said or unable to consent) - sexual harassment is a form of sexual abuse;

Emotional abuse (also known as 'psychological abuse')

a person is made to feel worthless, unloved, uncared for - this includes bullying, threats or humiliation;

Neglect - 'failing to act'

the inability to meet basic needs of food, fluids, warmth, medication, hygiene care and support;

Financial (or material) abuse

the use of a person's funds and belongings without their consent; this could be theft; pressure on someone to change their will or misuse of legal powers;

Discriminatory Abuse

this refers to an individual or group being treated unequally due to a person's values, beliefs, culture etc;

Institutional/Organised Abuse

this happens where services provided for adults who are at risk of harm are focused on the needs of the organisation;

Spiritual Abuse

attempts to exert undue power and control over someone using religion, faith, or beliefs.

4.3 Definition of a Vulnerable Adult and the Safeguarding Groups Classified

A vulnerable adult is a person 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to look after themselves, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.

The Safeguarding Groups Act 1986 classifies the different types:

- an adult at risk is anyone aged 18 and over who is in receipt of 'any form of care';
- frail and elderly persons;
- people with learning disabilities;
- people with mental disorder, including dementia or a personality disorder;
- people experiencing a short period of illness or disability;
- a person with severe physical illness;
- a person in residential accommodation;
- a person in sheltered housing;
- any unpaid carer who may be overburdened, under severe stress or isolated;
- a homeless person;
- a person who receives domiciliary care;
- any person living with someone who abuses drugs or alcohol;
- women may be particularly vulnerable as a result of isolating cultural factors; victims of domestic violence;
- a person with impairing and significant sensory disability;
- a person detained in lawful custody;
- a person who requires assistance in the conduct of his/her own affairs

The classification above includes the main, but not all the different types in the Vulnerable Adults List in the 1986 Act. Individuals or groups involved with Being Alongside will be expected to be aware of the classification and to recognise when abuse is being perpetrated or have suspicions around it.

5.0 Organisational Responsibility

- 5.1 The Safeguarding Lead is the Chair of *Being Alongside* and/or a designated person from the national committee who can advise and support any designated branches in safeguarding concerns.
- 5.2 All those involved with *Being Alongside*, whether volunteer or remunerated, or providing services, at national level or within any designated branches have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any safeguarding concerns using the *Being Alongside* safeguarding procedures.
- 5.3 The Chair of *Being Alongside* shall ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed with the national committee annually. He/she may appoint any member of the national committee to take this role in his/her place to ensure the annual review, that it is signed by each Trustee and that an appropriate record is kept by the Administrator.
- 5.4 Each designated branch is responsible for monitoring, assessing any safeguarding alerts. (Currently, there are no operational designated branches and the charity has no plans to create these in future.)
- 5.5 Any designated branch shall maintain effective links with relevant agencies in its location:
 - through contact with the local health professionals;
 - the Local Safeguarding Board of the Borough where each local branch is located.

6.0 Implementation of Safeguarding Policy

6.1 Recruitment and Selection

Being Alongside recognises the importance of suitability in the areas of recruitment and selection. Recruitment to any national role shall include:

- a formal application process, not solely on the provision of a CV and/or references;
- interviews or training conducted according to equal opportunity principles, where interview questions and criteria for selection are based on the role;
- disclosure checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), to be conducted for any person - volunteer, paid or providing services – who will represent *Being Alongside*; this shall include all Trustees, Committee Support members and *Being Alongside* staff (paid, unpaid or providing services), including in designated branches.

No formal appointments to any of the above positions shall be made until after checks for suitability are satisfactorily completed.

6.2 Data Protection

Where safeguarding issues are concerned:

- *Being Alongside* recognises the importance of protecting data pertaining to vulnerable individuals to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998;
- all laptops on which *Being Alongside* information is stored are password protected;
- all physical confidential files are kept in a locked filing cabinet, in a locked office or room;
- data is not retained any longer than is necessary and is destroyed when no longer required.

7.0 Communications, Training and Support for Paid Staff and/or Volunteers

- 7.1 The national committee shall ensure that any designated branches provide those involved in working with vulnerable adults access to appropriate training/information.
- 7.2 Induction of Trustees, Committee Support and staff shall include training on abuse, harm and safeguarding.
- 7.3 Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:
- the provision of a regular agenda item at national committee meetings;
 - support and supervision for those directly involved with vulnerable adults.

8.0 Appropriate Boundaries

- 8.1 Appropriate boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a member of staff (paid or unpaid) and a client. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.
- 8.2 *Being Alongside* expects everyone who is working for the charity, whether paid or unpaid, to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the charity.
- 8.3 *Being Alongside* prohibits routine gift giving since this can cause embarrassment or uneasiness on the part of the recipient except:
- on special occasions, such as birthdays, when a small gift may be given, but only if both parties have agreed and discussed gift giving with a third party within the charity who knows the nature of the relationship.
- 8.4 Personal relationships between a member of a staff (paid or unpaid) and one who is a recipient of services offered by *Being Alongside*, including through its designated branches – e.g. a befriender – are prohibited. Should such relations exist prior to the establishment of a support relationship, they should be disclosed, discussed and resolved with the relevant designated branch/national Chair, as a conflict of interest.
- 8.5 Abusive language and behaviour of any kind is not tolerated, and any inappropriate behaviour/language will be dealt with under the *Being Alongside* Complaints Policy.
- 8.6 Through its designated branches, *Being Alongside* may offer home visits. Such visits must be in accordance with the designated branch's lone working policy.

9.0 Reporting Procedures

- 9.1 Within the context of *Being Alongside* and the service it provides,
- ‘If you think a client/befriender is at risk of harm and something feels wrong, you’re right to get it checked out. If you see something, say something.’
- 9.2 Anyone with a safeguarding concern shall:
1. at the earliest opportunity, make contact with the Safeguarding Lead (or designated branch Chair/safeguarding contact, if appropriate), to discuss the concern/s and any actions that may have been taken;

2. if they are a national or designated branch committee member or the concern relates to a national or designated branch committee member, discuss the concern/s with the Safeguarding Lead;
3. in the context of a designated branch, follow local policies in assessing and investigating according to the level of concern/s that are raised;
4. if appropriate, and only if it does not risk the further harm of a vulnerable adult, inform the vulnerable adult of the course of action that is being taken.

Should the vulnerable adult concerned be considered to be at immediate risk of serious harm, or the circumstances constitute an emergency, immediate contact should be made with the Local Adult and Social Care Team or the police.

- 9.4 In a non-emergency situation, any concerns that a person may be at risk of serious harm, the Safeguarding Lead/branch Chair/safeguarding contact will:
- fully discuss and gather all information at the earliest opportunity;
 - ensure that contact is made with the friend/carer/next of kin.
- 9.5 As noted in (4) above, in order to empower the person who is the subject of the alleged abuse, it is important (if there is time before a disclosure is made) to explain to them that *Being Alongside* has a duty of care to report concerns and that contact is being made with the relevant Safeguarding Lead/contact.
- 9.7 The keeping of detailed, accurate and contemporaneous records should be maintained throughout the case, identifying all concern/s.

A flow chart representing this process can be found in Annex A.

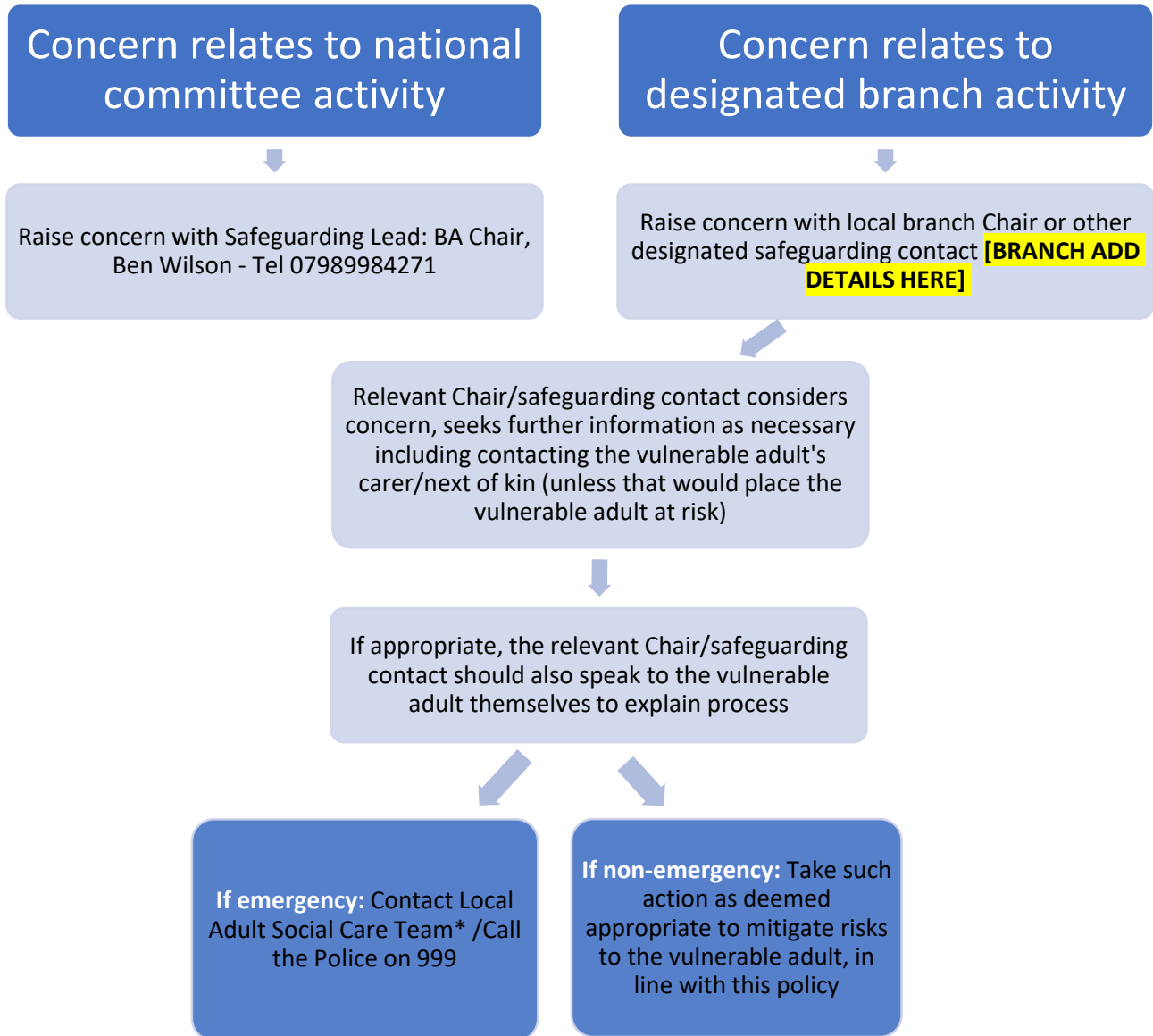
10.0 Children

- 10.1 Whilst *Being Alongside* only works with adults, we may become aware of vulnerable children during our work.
- 10.2 Where abuse of children has been observed or is suspected by any volunteer, any concerns must immediately be raised with the Safeguarding Lead, so that a process similar to that outlined in section 9.0 can be appropriately initiated.

11.0 Managing Information/Record Keeping

- 11.1 Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with *Being Alongside's* Data Protection Policy.
- 11.2 All staff (paid or unpaid) are aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by the Safeguarding Lead.
- 11.3 All staff (paid or unpaid) must be aware that they cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that they will keep secrets, if they are relevant information in matters of safeguarding.

ANNEX A – Reporting concerns flowchart



***Contact details for Merton and Sutton local Adult Social Care Teams**

LB Merton:

First Response Team Phone: 020 8545 4388 (9am to 1.30pm, excluding bank holidays)

Crisis Line Phone: 07903 235 382 (1.30pm to 5pm Monday to Friday)

Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours – after 5pm and bank holidays)
Phone: 020 8770 5000 or 0345 6189762

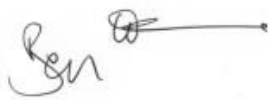
LB Sutton:

Phone: 020 8770 6770 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
Outside of working hours: 020 8770 5000



SAFEGUARDING POLICY – National Committee Confirmation of Reading

I confirm that I have been made fully aware of, and understand the contents of, the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for the Association of Pastoral Care in Mental Health, whose working name is 'Being Alongside'.

National Committee: September 2023		
Full name	Position	Signature
Ben Wilson	Chair	
	Vice-Chair	
	Trustee	
	Trustee	
	Trustee	
	Trustee	
	Trustee	
	Trustee	
	Trustee	
	Committee Support	
	Committee Support	
	Committee Support	

Date completed:

Date of next review: **September 2024**