

**BEFRIENDERS HIGHLAND LIMITED**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

<b>Last Review Date</b>	<b>August 2019</b>
<b>Current Version</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Approved by Board</b>	<b>August 2019</b>
<b>Next Review due</b>	<b>May 2021</b>

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As required by the local Safeguarding Board or regulatory body
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

## 1. Policy Statement

1.1. BHL acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements.

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

- Have a positive and enjoyable experience of befriending at BHL in a safe environment.
- Are protected from abuse whilst participating in the befriending relationship or in BHL group activity.

1.3. BHL acknowledges that some children, young people and vulnerable adults, including disabled children, young people and adults or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

1.4. As part of our safeguarding policy BHL will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunity to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose a concern.
- Ensure that confidential, details and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

1.5. The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in BHL. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1. BHL makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.
- 2.2. BHL comes into contact with vulnerable adults through the following activities: delivery of befriending service. BHL may also come into contact with children through the delivery of befriending service, and general contact when meeting in public places.
- 2.3. The types of contact with vulnerable adults will be frequently over the course of a month, either face to face, via telephone or letter/e-mail. Contact with children will be infrequent, but may happen through the course of a meeting in a public place, or when contacting the vulnerable adult via telephone at home.
- 2.4. This policy seeks to ensure that BHL undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of children and 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 organisation's expectations.

## **3. Legislation**

- 3.1. BHL The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:
  - Working together to safeguard Children 2010
  - The Children Act 1989
  - The Adoption and Children Act 2002:
  - The Children act 2004
  - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
  - Care Standards Act 2000
  - Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
  - The Police Act – CRB 1997
  - Mental Health Act 1983
  - NHS and Community Care Act 1990
  - Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

## **4. Definitions**

- 4.1. Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children and / or vulnerable adults wherever possible. In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.
- 4.2. Abuse is 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.

4.3. It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying
- Neglect
- Financial (or material) abuse

4.4. Definition of a child - A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

4.5. Definition of Vulnerable Adults - A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

## **5. Responsibilities**

5.1. The Executive Director is the designated safeguarding person for BHL.

5.2. All staff (paid or unpaid) have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

5.3. BHL expect all staff (paid or unpaid) to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

5.4. Additional specific responsibilities

- Trustees have responsibility to ensure: the policy is in place, appropriate and regularly reviewed. Trustees have responsibility to ensure sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated so that the policy can be effectively implemented.
- The Executive Director will ensure the policy is implemented, reviewed and monitored with Trustees. The Executive Director will make sure staff access to appropriate training/information. The Executive Director will receive staff concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately.
- Coordinators will receive volunteer and friend concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately. Coordinators will ensure volunteers have access to appropriate training/information.

- A nominated Coordinator will keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and PVG requirements.
- Coordinators will equally take a role in maintaining effective links with relevant agencies (e.g through contact with nominated health professionals, relevant improvement meetings etc).
- All staff and volunteers will promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

## 6. Implementation of Safeguarding Policy

6.1. The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within BHL. These include, but are not exclusive to:

- Data Protection Policy
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Confidentiality Statement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Lone working Policy
- Dignity at Work (Anti-bullying) Policy
- Staff Support, Supervision and Matches Policy
- Volunteer Selection, Assessment and Training Policy
- Referral, Assessment and Management Policy MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE
- Referral, Assessment and Management Policy MEMORY & CARERS
- Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- Media Consent Policy
- Business Continuity Management Policy

6.2. BHL recognises the importance of suitability in Recruitment and Selection, and expands on the above reference here:

- Shortlisting is based on formal application processes/forms and not on provision of CVs.
- Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification
- PVG/Disclosure checks will be conducted for specific roles for all staff (paid or unpaid) working with children and vulnerable adults.
- No formal appointments to positions (paid or unpaid) are made until after checks for suitability are completed (including PVG and 2 references).

6.3. BHL is committed to complying fully with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (the PVG Scheme) as introduced by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and to its later amendments. BHL conducts Enhanced PVG checks on everyone it is required to. This currently includes staff, volunteers and

Board members who are directly involved in working/supporting 'vulnerable adults'. This is to ensure that they are not barred from working with children or 'vulnerable adults'. BHL adheres to all relevant Codes of Practice in this regard.

6.4. BHL recognises the importance of protecting data pertaining to vulnerable individuals, and expands further on the above:

- All BHL laptops are password protected, a further password is required to login on to the cloud based team site of BHL, and then a further password to access the BHL database.
- Physical confidential files are kept in a locked filing cabinet, in a locked office.
- Data is not retained any longer than is necessary and is destroyed when no longer required.

## **7. Communications, training and support for staff**

7.1. BHL commits resources for induction, training of staff (paid and unpaid), effective communications and support mechanisms in relation to Safeguarding.

7.2. Induction of paid staff includes:

- Completion of a Confidentiality Statement
- Reviewing the Policies and Procedures Handbook
- Meeting with the Executive Director

7.3. Training all staff and volunteers who, through their role, are in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level. Sources and types of training will include:

- Completion of necessary training books (including review meetings to discuss).
- Completion of Vital Skills Training for new Coordinators (a course offered by Befriending Networks).
- Any appropriate training course/information session as assessed and discussed with the staff member and the Executive Director.

7.4. Communications and discussion of safeguarding issues, commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

- Quarterly Board Meetings
- Bi-monthly team meetings
- Regular caseload discussions with other Coordinators
- One to one meetings (informal and informal)
- Support and supervision contact with volunteers

7.5. BHL recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. Regular support and supervision sessions are offered to both staff and volunteers. Risks are closely monitored at these sessions, along with at the start of any potential match and at 6 monthly intervals, at point of a reviews of a match.

## 8. Professional Boundaries

8.1. Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a worker (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. BHL expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation.

8.3. The following professional boundaries must be adhered to: (insert rules)

- Gift Giving – BHL has a policy that forbids routine gift giving since this can cause embarrassment. On special occasions such as birthdays a small gift may be given, but only if 1) the gift costs no more than £5 and 2) both parties have agreed and discussed gift giving with the Coordinator.
- Personal Relationships between a member of a staff (paid or unpaid) and a friend who is currently a service user is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as facebook, Instagram etc. It is also prohibited to enter into a personal relationship with a person who has been a service user over the past 12 months.
- Abusive language and behaviour of any kind is not tolerated, and any inappropriate behaviour/language will be dealt with by following the BHL Complaints Policy.
- BHL does not offer home visits, as part of its service. Volunteers and friends are not allowed to visit each other's homes.
- BHL recognises it is not appropriate to accept responsibility for valuables for a friend or to lend any money to a Friend.
- Personal relationships with a third party related to or known to friends, once matched are prohibited. Should such relations exist prior to a match they should be disclosed to the Coordinator/or Executive Director, in terms of a Conflict of Interest, in order to protect and address any confidentiality issues. Conflicts of interest should be immediately discussed with a Coordinator or an Executive Director, depending on where the conflict lies.

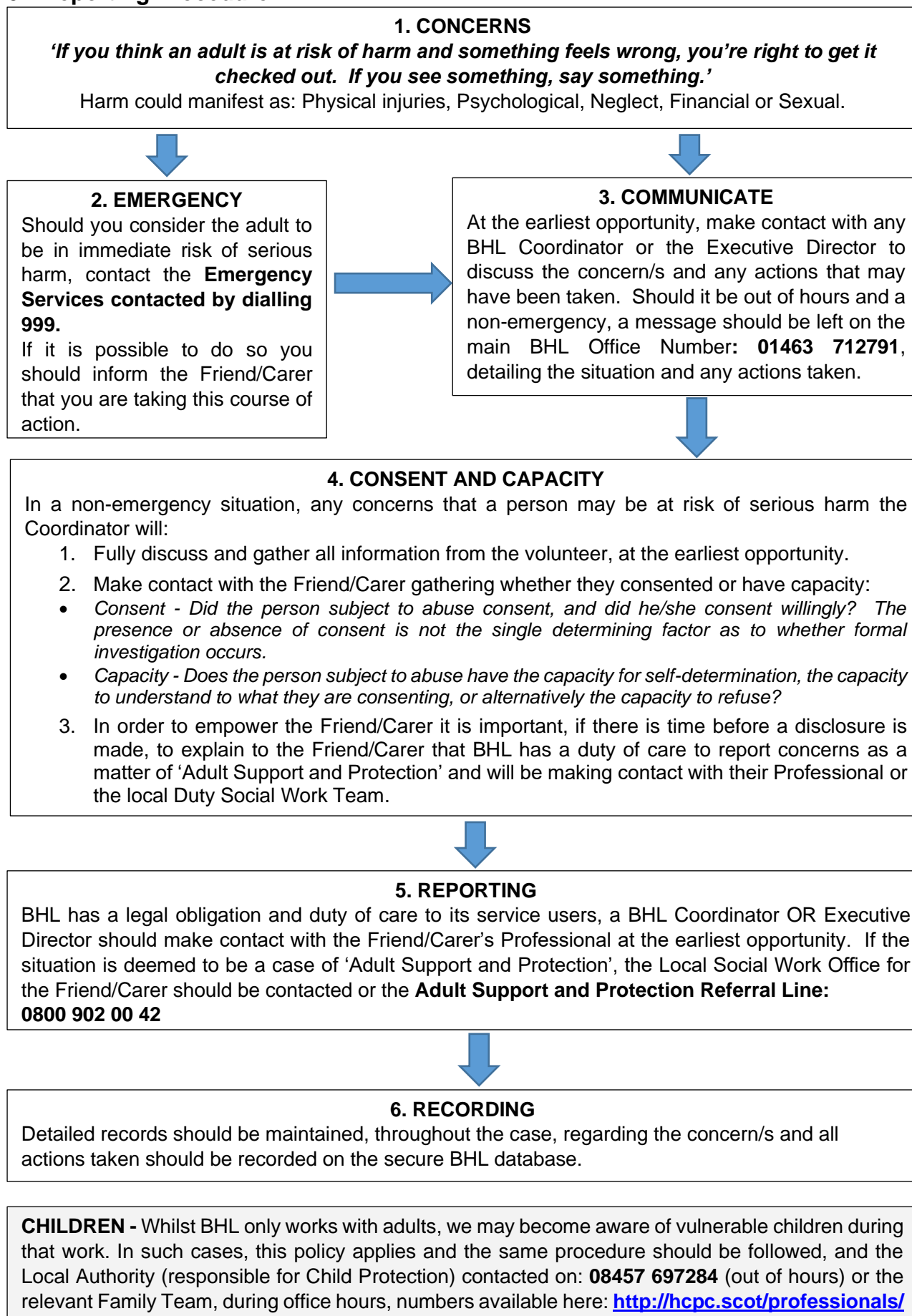
8.4. The following policies also contain guidance on staff (paid or unpaid) conduct:

- Complaints Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Confidentiality Statement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Dignity at Work (Anti-bullying) Policy
- Volunteer Selection, Assessment and Training Policy
- Referral, Assessment and Management Policy MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE
- Referral, Assessment and Management Policy MEMORY & CARERS

Please also see the: Friend, Carer and Volunteer Agreements, for reference to Professional Boundaries, as well.

8.5. If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures

## 9. Reporting Procedure





## **10. Allegations Management**

- 10.1. BHL recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff (paid or unpaid) within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation. BHL recognises its legal duty to report any concerns about unsafe practice by any of its paid or unpaid staff to the 'Protection Unit at Disclosure Scotland'. The process for raising and dealing such matters is covered in the BHL 'Protection of Vulnerable Groups and Referrals Policy'.

## **11. Monitoring**

- 11.1. BHL will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:
- Safe recruitment practices
  - PVG and Referrals
  - References applied for new staff (paid and unpaid)
  - Records made and kept of supervision sessions
  - Risk Assessments
  - Training – register/ record of staff training on child/ vulnerable adult protection
  - Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
  - Checking that policies are up to date and relevant
  - Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place
  - Presence and action of Designated senior manager responsible for Safeguarding is in post

## **12. Managing Information**

- 12.1. Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the following policies (Data Protection Policy, Confidentiality Procedure and Confidentiality Policy).
- 12.2. All staff are aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the Executive Director.
- 12.3. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that they will keep secrets.

## **13. Communicating this policy**

- 13.1. BHL will make friends and volunteers aware of the Safeguarding Policy by uploading this policy to the BHL website. This policy is also referred to in the Friend/Carer Agreements and the Volunteer Agreement. It is also raised and discussed during the volunteer training process.

**Confirmation of reading**

I confirm that I have been made fully aware of, and understand the contents of, the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Befrienders Highland Limited.

**Please complete the details below and return this completed form to *Executive Director (Befrienders Highland Limited, 42 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1JT)***

**Employee/Volunteer Name :**.....

**Employee/Volunteer Signature:** .....

**Date:**.....