

## Child Protection Policy Statement

The Bond Board acknowledges our responsibility, to help safeguard the welfare of every child and young person to whom we may come into contact with during the course of our work. We will work to provide a safe environment for all at The Bond Board and will at all times show respect for the rights, safety and welfare of children and young people.

A child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

We will do this by:

- Making sure all our staff, Board of Trustees, students and volunteers are carefully recruited, supported and trained.
- Ensuring that Health and Safety procedures are followed.
- Sharing concerns with agencies that need to know, involving children, parents and carers as appropriate.
- Giving information about what we do and what can be expected from us, to children, parents, carers, employees and volunteers as appropriate.

To help us do this, we have policies on Child Protection, Recruitment, Supervision, Data Protection, Equality and Diversity, Information Sharing and Whistleblowing, all of which are regularly reviewed.

This policy statement applies to all employees, Board of Trustee members, students and volunteers of The Bond Board.

Senior Leadership Team leads for Child Protection:

### **BOLTON**

Signed: *L Wakerley*

Print: **Louise Wakerley**

Named Person for Child Protection, The Bond Board

Date:22/06/23

### **ROCHDALE/WIGAN/OLDHAM/BURY/STOCKPORT**

Signed: *A Eastwood*

Print: **Alison Eastwood**

Named Person for Child Protection, The Bond Board

Date:22/06/23

## **Child Protection Policy**

Everyone of us has a responsibility to help safeguard the welfare of every child and young person to whom we may come into contact with during the course of our work. We will work to provide a safe environment for all at The Bond Board and will at all times show respect for the rights, safety and welfare of children and young people, inclusive of the unborn child.

It is imperative that this policy is read, understood and adhered to by all staff members of The Bond Board, members of the Board of Trustees, students and volunteers. This document includes procedures for responding to child safety concerns, which must be followed. Failure to do so will result in the implementation of the disciplinary procedure. Staff and volunteers are also encouraged to use the Whistleblowing Policy if they feel that this policy is being disregarded.

### **Introduction**

At The Bond Board it is possible that staff will come into contact with children, whether this is at the office, during home visits or other work related events. Advice on how these scenarios will be included are further on in this document.

The most likely implementation of this policy is where a member of staff has information about the offending history or intentions of a service user that raise concerns under child protection legislation.

Members of staff can become aware of previous offences against children by service users at any point in the organisation's involvement with that person. The Bond Board will behave responsibly and will pass on any information relating to child safety to the local ACPC (Area Child Protection Committee). It will remain the responsibility of the local Children's Services/Safeguarding Department to make the decision with regard to risk to children.

### **Recruitment of Volunteers and Employees**

As part of The Bond Board's commitment to Child Protection, whilst recruiting staff, we will:

- Carry out Disclosure and Barring Service Checks, if the position requires.
- Ask candidates to confirm their identity through official documents.
- Ask for two references and check them.
- Use an application form.
- Make appointments subject to a satisfactory disclosure and barring service check (if the position requires) and upon receipt of satisfactory references.
- Make all appointments subject to a probationary period.

### **Training**

All new staff and volunteers are inducted into the organisation via a 6 month's supported induction plan, which includes obligations and procedures regarding Child Protection. All staff and volunteers will be required to undertake Child Protection Training, this includes Child Protection Levels 1 and 2, Cultural Awareness in Safeguarding and, as a minimum, an annual refresher course.

## **The Law and Children's Right to Protection**

**The Children Act (1989) and 2004** states that the welfare of the child is paramount, and provision is made in order to protect children from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation. Support for children with respect to their welfare can be provided from pre-birth to age 18 years or older in the case of young people with disabilities (up to 25 years of age). Some children who have lived in care may also access additional support even if they are young adults.

The Children Act also states that children have the right to be involved in making decisions that may affect them and that account has to be taken of the child's racial heritage, language, religion, faith and disability.

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015** is government guidance which sets out how all organisations, including voluntary organisations, should work together to promote children's welfare and protect them from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in the guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

It states that every organisation which provides activities or services for children should have clear procedures in place for dealing with concerns or suspicions of abuse and that these should be in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

**The Protection of Children Act (1999)** stipulates legal compliance for all regulated 'child care' organisations and also advises other organisations within the voluntary sector, such as faith organisations, sport and leisure groups, uniformed groups and other youth activity groups to provide 'a comparable level of safety to children in their care as that afforded within the regulated child care sector'.

**The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** is a set of minimum standards protecting children's rights. It is an international treaty which the British Government signed committing itself to give children the rights and protection written in the convention.

## **Significant Harm**

Everybody shares some responsibility for keeping children safe and children have a legal right to be protected from harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept

of “**significant harm**” as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention into family life. Under the act local authorities have a duty to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

The Children Act 1989 defines

“**Harm**” as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development;

“**Development**” means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

“**Health**” means physical or mental health;

“**Ill-treatment**” includes sexual abuse, physical and emotional abuse and neglect.

### What is Child Abuse and How to Recognise It

Recognising child abuse is not easy and **it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not a child has been abused**. However, it is your responsibility to pass on concerns you may have.

#### **What is child abuse?**

Abuse and the potential for abuse can happen to a child at any age, from being in-utero, to birth to when they have left school. It can happen in well-off families and in poor families; it can happen to children from any ethnic and cultural background; it can happen to children with or without disabilities; it can be deliberate or unintentional.

Abuse can happen because of the way adults or other children and young people behave towards a child; it can also be a result from adults failing to provide proper care for the children they look after. One child may suffer different kinds of abuse at the same time.

#### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s development capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### Warning signs

- A child who is constantly blamed for things that go wrong
- A child who is made to carry out tasks inappropriate to their age

- A child who is not allowed to do usual childhood activities
- A child in a household where there are arguments and violence

### Physical Abuse

This is when someone physically hurts or harms a child. Hitting, squeezing, biting or twisting a child's arms or legs can cause injuries like bruises, grazes, cuts or broken bones. Physical abuse can cause long term damage.

Violently shaking a baby can cause brain injuries which can lead to permanent disability or even death. Poisoning a child, perhaps by giving them alcohol or drugs and deliberately making them ill or fabricating the symptoms of an illness, is also physical abuse.

### Warning signs

- Any injuries at all to young babies who are not yet able to move on their own
- Bruises in places where you would not normally expect to find them on a child
- Bruises which have a distinct shape or pattern, like handprints, grasp or finger marks or belt marks
- Burns or scalds with clear outlines
- Bite marks – bruises like 'love bites'
- Bruising in or around the mouth, especially in babies

### Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Vulnerable groups may include those with disabilities, children living away from home, asylum seekers, children and young people in hospital, children in contact with the youth justice system, victims of domestic abuse and those who may be exposed to violent extremism.

### Warning signs

- A child who always appears dirty and smelly
- A child who looks thin and ill
- A child with illnesses that have not been treated
- Inadequate or unsuitable clothing for the weather conditions
- A child who suffers repeated accidents
- A child who is not safely supervised

- A child who does not respond when given attention
- A child who craves attention and affection from any adult

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The abuser(s) may use different methods to persuade the child to co-operate and not to tell, like bribery, threats or physical force.

Sexual abuse can take many different forms from touching to intercourse and may also include involving children in looking at, or being forced to take part in, the production of pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse can happen to boys as well as girls, and often there will be no physical signs.

#### Warning signs

- Child displays sexualized behaviour when playing
- A child who is being encouraged into a secretive relationship with an adult
- A child who hints at sexual activity through words, play or drawings
- A child with a sexually transmitted infection
- Child has a sexual knowledge inappropriate to age
- Difficulty walking/sitting

It is important to remember that these warning signs do not always mean that a child is being abused, there may be other explanations such as the illness of a parent, a birth or death in the family etc, however it is important to remember that any concerns must always be brought to the attention of your line manager, the Chief Officer or in his/her absence, and The Bond Board's named person for Child Protection.

### Disabled Children and Child Protection

Some disabled children are more vulnerable than others, because of their mental or physical disability. They may also find it more difficult to recognise and report abuse. They may:

- Not be physically able to remove themselves from abusive situations
- Be afraid to challenge because of their dependence on others for personal support
- May not have a sense of ownership of their bodies because they are used to being physically examined/cared for as part of their ongoing care
- Have a low self esteem
- Not be able to report abuse because they are not able to communicate it
- Have limited life experience and so have not developed the social skills to understand what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Not have anyone they can trust and or/confide in
- Not be believed because others cannot accept that anyone would abuse a disabled child.

In addition to the four main types of abuse, children may also suffer:

#### Bullying:

This can include name calling, teasing, extortion, spreading malicious rumours etc. These acts can leave a child feeling lonely worthless and isolated. Bullies are often other children but can also be adults, and unfortunately, it has been reported to have been a factor in childhood suicide.

#### Racism

This can take the form of personal attacks, including violence, written or verbal insults and damage to personal belongings. A child may become withdrawn and resentful of their heritage. This could lead to truancy or even being too scared to leave their own home.

The Bond Board has an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy which all staff members, students and volunteers should be familiar and adhere to. This policy seeks to ensure that anyone who accesses our service is treated fairly and with respect.

#### Working With Children

##### **Service Users Under Eighteen Years of Age**

From time to time, The Bond Board will have service users aged sixteen and seventeen. Where service users are under eighteen years of age they must be supported by staff who have had a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. All staff who go on visits to the homes of under eighteen-year-olds also need to have had a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

#### Children in the home

Should a child be present in the home during a home visit, staff must ensure that they are not left alone with the child at any time, even for a very short period. If it is apparent that a child needs medical attention, this must be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. If a member of staff suspects that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, The Bond Board will refer these concerns to the Children's Services Advice and Assessment Team.

#### Children in the office

Due to the nature of our work, it is not unusual for children to be present in the office with their parents who are attending for interviews or a drop in. It is important that the child(ren) must not be left unattended by the parent. This safeguards the child and protects staff members from false allegations being made against them.

## The unborn Child

Due to the nature of our work, it is possible that we may have concerns about the Health and Safety of an unborn child. It is The Bond Board's responsibility to ensure that any concerns are reported in line with the Child Protection Procedure.

## Concerns about the offending History or intent of a service user

Members of staff can become aware of previous offences against children by service users at any point in the involvement with that person. It will remain the responsibility of the Children's Services Advice and Assessment Team to make the decision with regard to risk to children.

The Bond Board has a responsibility under Child Protection Legislation to ensure that any referral agency is aware when a service user with any convictions for sexual offences against children is being referred to them.

The Bond Board will inform the Children's Services Advice and Assessment Team when they are making a referral for a service user whom has previous convictions for offences against children. The Children's services Advice and Assessment Team will make the decision about whether to disclose information about any convictions to the referral agency.

Where a member of staff becomes aware of such offences he or she needs to notify the named person for Child Protection for their office. If that person is not available they must contact their line manager/ chief officer, or in his/her absence, a member of the Board of Trustees.

The named person will make themselves immediately available for consultation with staff. The named person should then inform the line manager and/or Chief Officer.

The named person for Child Protection will consult and assess the nature of concern with the staff member, and in addition will contact the Children's Services Advice and Assessment Team for guidance. The Chief Officer should be kept informed of the situation.

The service user should be informed that a referral has been made, however, it will need to be taken into account that in certain circumstances, particularly those of sexual abuse, consultation with the Children's Services Advice and Assessment Team will be necessary concerning the timing of the passing of this information.

Please refer to the Child Protection Procedure for guidance of what is required.



## Accusations of Abuse

### Allegations Against Staff of Child Abuse

Unfortunately there may be occasions when a member of The Bond Board staff is accused of abusing a child. In such cases it would not be appropriate to inform the named person for child protection; instead, concerns should be reported directly to the Chief Officer, or in his/her absence, the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

#### If an accusation is made by another member of staff

If a staff member has concerns about the conduct of a colleague in relation to a child, he/she should immediately discuss their concerns with their Line Manager or Chief Officer, or in his/her absence, the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Any members of staff involved should be spoken to individually to ascertain the detail of concerns/incidents identified. The Children's Advice and Assessment team should then be contacted by the manager for further guidance.

If it is believed that the member of staff in question has behaved inappropriately, they will be suspended on full pay whilst an internal investigation takes place.

#### If an accusation is made by a third party

If the Chief Officer is made aware by the Police that a staff member has been accused of abusing a child, the staff member should immediately be suspended on full pay.

If a parent makes an allegation against a staff member, and contacts the Chief Officer directly, The Children's Advice and Assessment Team should be contacted for further guidance. The staff may need to be suspended on full pay whilst the allegation is investigated.

There may be circumstances when a staff member believes that a client may make an allegation against him or her. In this instance, it is imperative that the staff member concerned discusses this immediately with the Chief Officer or the Chair of the Board of Trustees in his/her absence. This should be well documented and signed by both the staff member and the Manager.

In any of these instances, The Bond Board may dismiss a staff member if it becomes clear that there has been a breach of Bond Board Policy, regardless of any Police Investigation and its outcome. This is in line with The Bond Board's Disciplinary Policy.

**Please note that in certain circumstances, and in line with this policy, The Bond Board may have to suspend a staff member WITHOUT providing reason for doing so.**

### Sharing Information – Confidentiality and Data Protection

The Bond Board is committed to offering a service which is confidential and where all service users receive equal access to the service. However, The Bond Board recognises that there are times when concerns for the safety of children will override these principles.

In most cases we will only share information about people with their consent. However there may be occasions when our concerns about the welfare or safety of a child are such that we need to share our concerns with others.

Volunteers, students and employees must only discuss their concerns with the senior person on duty and the named person for child protection, who will make the decision to pass those concerns on to those agencies that need to know.

At such times, if it is appropriate, we will try to obtain the permission of the parents or carers, but if we feel it is in the best interests of the child's welfare we will share the information with or without permission.

**In all cases the safety and welfare of the child is paramount. Concern for the safety of the child will override the right of the service user to confidentiality within the organisation.**

## Child Protection Procedure

Information about possible child abuse may arise in a number of ways. For example, it can come from personal observation, the service user, the child, or other agencies. In the event of any member of staff, volunteer or student becoming concerned about a child or being informed that a child has been abused, the following procedures must be followed. You must discuss this with the named person for child protection who will seek advice from the Advice and Assessment team as to what information is shared, with whom and how this is done.

### Concern for a child

If you are concerned for a child, the one thing you **must not** do is do nothing. However, do not deal with this on your own.

Where a member of staff has concerns around child protection, he or she must inform the named person for child protection, or in their absence, his or her line manager, immediately. In the absence of the Line Manager they must notify the Chief Officer. If neither are available, staff must contact a member of the Board of Trustees.

The named person for child protection will assess the nature of concern with the staff member. This assessment will involve clarifying the situation and contacting the Children's Services Advice and Assessment Team for guidance. If the child needs urgent medical attention, obtain this first as a matter of urgency.

**Local Authority Duties:** Whilst everyone has a duty to protect children, there is a duty on local authorities to "safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need". The concept of "need" is defined very broadly, covering any child whose health or development will be impaired without support, or who has a disability. Local authorities also have a further duty to "take reasonable steps...to prevent children within their area suffering ill-treatment or neglect".

It is important to have to hand relevant details of the child, i.e. name, date of birth, language spoken, this will assist the Advice and Assessment team when making the referral.

The following details will be recorded at the first available opportunity and at each stage of the process:

- The reason for the referral
- A description of any observed injuries (i.e. site, size, colour etc.) and who has seen them - please record on a body map.
- A summary of information received and who from
- Any allegations made and who witnessed them
- Any discussions with the child or others
- Dates/times/places of any alleged incidents

- Any known witnesses to the alleged abuse
- Action taken and people contacted (including when the referral was made, to whom, their responses and any agreed action).

Use the child's actual words wherever possible. It may be required for evidence if the case goes to court.

The record must indicate the original source of all information received and passed on and must be clearly signed and dated by the author. This information must be stored securely and in accordance with the workplace procedures.

### Following the Referral / Record Keeping

Telephone calls should be accurately documented, detailing who you spoke to and the information/advice that was exchanged. This should be done within 24 hours.

Any telephone call should then be followed up with a letter addressed to the person you have spoken to, detailing the main points of the conversation, within the next 48 hours. It is the responsibility of the named person for Child Protection to ensure that this practice has been carried out.

### Concern for an unborn child

Any concerns for the Health and Safety of an unborn child should be reported and monitored in the same way as that of a 'born' child.

### What Happens Next

The Advice and Assessment Team are responsible for deciding what happens next. Further action may include undertaking an initial assessment, referral to other agencies, or no further action. This decision should be made within 1 working day and should be advised of the decision and the reasons for making it.

If you have not heard within 3 working days, contact them again. It is the responsibility of the named person for Child Protection to ensure that this is done.

It may be that after enquiries have been made, you will be invited to attend a child protection conference or a child in need meeting because you have vital information about the child or his/her family. The named person for child protection will decide who the most appropriate person to attend that meeting is.

### Impact on reporting concerns

It is The Bond Board's responsibility to ensure the well-being of staff reporting concerns. The Chief Officer/line manager should therefore have a debriefing session with any staff involved within 48 hours, or as soon as is practically possible.

Professional counselling should also be offered to staff members involved, at the expense of The Bond Board.

### **Useful contacts**

Elaine Draper	Chair of The Board of Trustees	07775 546 571 elaine.draper25@gmail.com
Sarah McCarthy	Board of Trustees Member	0785 164 3610 <a href="mailto:dmemail@tiscali.co.uk">dmemail@tiscali.co.uk</a>

### **Bolton**

Multi-agency Screening and Safeguarding Service (MASSS) 01204 331500

**Out of Hours** 01204 337777 For non-urgent matters, you can complete an online referral form at: <https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/worried-child>

### **Rochdale**

Early Help and Safeguarding Hub. Tel: 0300 303 0440

Email: [ehash@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:ehash@rochdale.gov.uk) (please do not send sensitive information via non-secure email address).

Emergencies and out of hours Tel: 0300 303 8875

### **Bury**

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub 0161 253 5678

0161 253 6606 (Out of hours)

### **Oldham**

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub 0161 770 7777

Email: [child.mash@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:child.mash@oldham.gov.uk) (please do not send sensitive information via non-secure email address).

Out of hours:0161 770 6936

### **Wigan**

Children's Health and Social Care Tel: 01942 828300 (24 hours a day)

### **Stockport**

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) Tel: 0161 217 6028

Tel: 0161 7182118 (out of hours)

### **Police**

**Greater Manchester Police non-emergency number: 101**

**NSPCC Child Protection helpline: 0808 800 5000**