

BCPC Safeguarding Policy

Introduction and Purpose

At the Bath Centre for Psychotherapy and Counselling (BCPC), we are committed to creating a safe and secure environment for all individuals accessing our services. This safeguarding policy outlines our commitment to promoting the welfare and protecting the rights of adults at risk and children who may be affected by our activities.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote a safe learning environment for all students and a safe environment for all therapy clients
- Prevent and reduce the risk of harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Provide guidance and procedures for safeguarding within our organisation and to ensure that everyone at BCPC is clear about their safeguarding role and can report their concerns promptly, proportionately and with care and feels confident in their responsibilities
- Ensure prompt and appropriate action is taken in response to any safeguarding concerns that arise.

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the proactive measures taken to protect vulnerable individuals, including children and adults at risk, from harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. It encompasses the prevention, detection, and response to concerns or incidents related to their well-being.

Responsibility for Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and this policy applies to:

- Staff and faculty members
- Trustees
- Students
- Third party tutors, trainers and contractors
- Graduate members
- Volunteers and visitors

Legal and Ethical Framework

BCPC recognises its legal and ethical obligations to safeguard individuals in line with relevant legislation, including but not limited to:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Roles and Responsibilities: Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) *

The DSL will be appointed from amongst the staff and will have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues and relevant legislation.

The DSL will act as a point of contact for all safeguarding concerns, providing advice and guidance to staff, students, third party tutors, trainers, volunteers and contractors.

All staff, students, third party trainers, contractors and volunteers are responsible for and encouraged to report any safeguarding concerns promptly to the DSL. It is better to discuss a possible concern, then dismiss a safeguarding concern. After a conversation with the DSL no action may be the appropriate decision.

Clients of the BCPC Low-Cost Counselling Service are encouraged to share any safeguarding concerns with their counsellor or the Placement Manager (who will contact the DSL), knowing that their concerns will be taken seriously and handled confidentially.

Risk Assessment

BCPC will conduct regular Risk Assessments to identify potential safeguarding risks and take appropriate actions to mitigate them. This includes assessing risks related to the environment, activities, and individuals involved. An assessment of the Risk Register will be discussed in Trustee Board meetings twice yearly.

Safer Recruitment and Vetting

BCPC will follow safe recruitment practices, including conducting thorough background checks, obtaining references, and ensuring relevant qualifications and registrations are in place. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks will be carried out where relevant in accordance with legal requirements.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

BCPC recognises the importance of maintaining confidentiality and will handle all safeguarding concerns sensitively and in accordance with relevant legislation.

Information sharing will be carried out on a need-to-know basis and in line with Data Protection regulations.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Any safeguarding concern reported to the BCPC DSL will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken promptly.

Acknowledgement of receipt of the concern will be made within 5 working days.

If a BCPC employee wishes to raise a serious concern regarding suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to BCPC's activities, they are encouraged to do so as soon as possible with the BCPC Director. Should your concerns relate to the actions of the BCPC Director then please contact the BCPC Chair of Trustees on trustees@bcpc.org.uk. For further information, please access the [BCPC Whistleblowing Policy](#).

BCPC, via the DSL will follow established reporting procedures and work in collaboration with relevant authorities, such as local social services or the police, to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at risk.

Record Keeping

BCPC will maintain accurate and secure records of all safeguarding concerns, actions taken, and relevant communications.

Records will be stored in compliance with data protection regulations and securely destroyed when no longer required.

Reporting, Review and Promotion

Reporting to the BCPC Board of Trustees: A full Safeguarding Update will be given by the Director and Finance Manager to the BCPC Board of Trustees annually in the November meeting. Safeguarding will be a standing item on the Trustee meeting agenda throughout the year.

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with changing legislation.

Safeguarding will be promoted within the organisation and raised bi-annually at staff team meeting days.

Communication and Accessibility

BCPC will ensure that this safeguarding policy is readily accessible to all staff, students, third party tutors, trainers, volunteers and contractors.

Safeguarding will be discussed at each of the twice-yearly staff meetings to ensure there is high awareness.

The Policy will be communicated through appropriate channels, including our website, staff meetings, enrolment and induction processes.

Users of the BCPC estate for non-BCPC activities will be given a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and should confirm to the BCPC Office that they have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place.

*** The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the BCPC Director:**

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Ownership:	Reviewed & Updated:	Next Review Due:
Director	July 2023	July 2025
Director and Senior Team	November 2025	November 2027