



Safeguarding Policy

1. Preliminary

- 1.1 Better Lives Partnership understands that safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities, regardless of size, type, or income, *not just those charities working with children or vulnerable adults* therefore it is essential for Better Lives Partnership (BLP) Trustees to have and implement safeguarding policies and procedures and that they have to be adequate and appropriate for BLP's particular circumstances.
- 1.2 This Policy applies to all staff and volunteers of BLP. In this Policy, "volunteers" means and includes BLP's Trustees and all other volunteers.
- 1.3 This Policy supports BLP to adhere to the legislation and guidance set out in the following:
 - [Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
 - [Children \(Equal Protection from Assault\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#),
 - [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(PVG\) Scheme](#)
 - [Equality Act 2010](#)
 - [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
 - [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)

2. Commitment to safeguarding

- 2.1 Those Young People who receive services and participate in the activities provided by BLP or Young People who come onto BLP's premises are referred to in this Policy as its "Service Users".
- 2.2 Service Users may be at risk due to age, illness or disability. BLP is committed to working in their interests, to promote their welfare, and to put in place safeguards and measures to protect them. In providing services and activities for Service Users, BLP will endeavour at all times to minimise risk to them and to ensure that they are as safe as BLP can make them.
- 2.3 BLP aims to protect all of our Service Users from any act or behaviour of any member of staff or volunteer which, whether deliberately or unknowingly on the part of that member of staff or volunteer, gives rise to harm or ill treatment.
- 2.4 Such harm or ill treatment includes abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, discriminatory, institutional or organisational, financial or material), neglect, or impairment of the health or development of BLP's Service Users.
- 2.5 BLP also aims to ensure the provision to them of safe and effective support and to promote the well-being and welfare of our Service Users, staff, volunteers and visitors.
- 2.6 BLP recognises that we have a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse or neglect. We adopt a "zero-tolerance" policy of abuse and/or neglect within BLP.

- 2.7 BLP works in partnership with local/national agencies and has put in place appropriate procedures for reporting, making referrals, and accessing training and specialist support, if and when required.
- 2.8 BLP recognises that all individuals—regardless of background, identity, or vulnerabilities—have an equal right to protection from harm.

3. Safer recruitment

- 3.1 To aim to protect our Service Users, BLP will seek to recruit staff and volunteers using appropriate procedures, safeguards and checks.
- 3.2 BLP will take up two references for all staff posts and volunteer roles prior to appointment and has adopted the Care Inspectorate Safer Recruitment Guidelines.
- 3.3 BLP will provide an induction programme for all new volunteers and staff, and appropriate training and ongoing/refresher training for them at regular intervals, to enable all volunteers and staff to undertake their roles safely, effectively and confidently. The induction will make it clear to them that they have an obligation to implement this Policy and to learn about protection issues and their related responsibilities.
- 3.4 Where BLP should do so, it will use the PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) checks to help it to assess suitability of a candidate for a particular volunteer or staff role which is treated by the PVG as Regulated Role and is therefore subject to a barring list check. In relation to a post or role which is eligible for an enhanced PVG check, where it considers it appropriate it will carry out an enhanced PVG check. BLP will assess any criminal record information that is disclosed in line with its GDPR data protection policies and the Care Inspectorate Safer Recruitment Guidelines.
- 3.5 BLP will regularly review its recruitment and other human resources procedures in response to changes in legislation and systems external to BLP, e.g. PVG and barring list checks.

4. Volunteers

- 4.1 All volunteer roles will be supported by a member of the Management Team.
- 4.2 Volunteers will be treated equally alongside paid staff, and all volunteers will be offered the same opportunities for advancement, responsibility, training and gaining qualifications, and acknowledgement for their contribution to BLP.
- 4.3 In turn, volunteers will be required to adhere to the applicable parts of the BLP Staff Code of Conduct & Practice at all times as a representative of BLP. Before they take up their role, they will each be given a clear description of the requirements and responsibilities of their role and the member of staff or Trustee recruiting them will discuss their role with them, to ensure that they understand what is expected of them.

5. Safeguarding Officer

- 5.1 BLP's appointed Safeguarding Officer as from the 1st of August 2025 is Anne McEwan (amcewan@betterlivespartnership.org.uk) and they are supported by:
Karen O'Rourke (korourke@betterlivespartnership.org.uk) and

Debbie Templeton (dtempleton@betterlivespartnership.org.uk) as Deputy Safeguarding Officers. They will have access to appropriate training to support them in these roles.

- 5.2 They will be available to all staff, volunteers and Service Users to speak to when they have any concerns, issues, or complaints regarding the safety, well-being or conduct of Service Users, volunteers or staff.
- 5.3 The Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officers will liaise with appropriate local and national agencies, contribute to appropriate policies, maintain records, keep confidentiality, adhere to and promote this Policy within BLP, and support or provide access to support for individuals suffering harm or abuse.

6. Awareness of harm and abuse within BLP

- 6.1 All incidents of harm to any Service User will require an appropriate response to reduce risks and improve BLP's services and activities.
- 6.2 Harm is caused by accidents, deliberate abuse (physical, psychological, sexual, emotional, financial), neglect (deliberate or not) or factors such as bullying, prejudicial attitudes, or a failure to enable a person to participate in activities that are open to most of their peers. It can also include abuse via use of ICT facilities (e.g. grooming, bullying via the internet).
- 6.3 Deliberate acts of harm (physical, psychological, sexual, emotional and financial) and neglect are abuses against the person. Those acts will incur disciplinary proceedings and require reports and referrals to social services, the police, other professional bodies, and the PVG if the act is by someone in Regulated Activity. If a criminal offence is thought to have been committed by any staff member or volunteer, the police will be informed.

7. Confidentiality

All reports and logs (including personnel records) will be kept securely and confidentially according to BLP's GDPR Data Protection Policy. Information will be shared by BLP on a "need-to-know" basis only.

8. Reports of possible or actual harm

- 8.1 BLP supports and encourages all Service Users, volunteers and staff to promptly speak up and contact the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officer where there is a concern (i.e. a worry, issue or doubt about practice or about treatment of a Service User or colleague, or their circumstances), or a disclosure (i.e. information about a person at risk of or suffering from Significant Harm) or an allegation of an incident or a possibility that a volunteer or staff member has caused harm or could cause harm to a person in their care.
- 8.2 Staff or volunteers can report, and have a responsibility to report, something that they become aware of if they suspect or discover that it is not right or is illegal or if it appears to them that someone at work is neglecting their duties, putting someone's health and safety in danger or covering up wrongdoing. They may become aware of any of these things from what they see or hear or from something another person has disclosed to them.
- 8.3 In the first instance the staff or volunteer making a report should speak to their line manager who will then liaise with the Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Officer or BLP's Trustee with appropriate responsibility who is Andy Margerison. However, if the report implicates

their line manager, the staff member or volunteer making the report should instead speak directly to the Safeguarding Lead.

- 8.4 BLP prefers that anyone should use internal processes whenever possible to make a report as above, but this does not prevent them from making a report or referral, in their own right as a private individual, to statutory agencies such as social services or the police.
- 8.5 BLP cannot promise confidentiality to staff or volunteers making an internal report (to the Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Officer, BLP's Trustee with appropriate responsibility or their line manager) where it has to be shared with any statutory agencies.
- 8.6 BLP also supports its staff or volunteers to raise concerns or to disclose information, which they believe shows malpractice - whistle-blowing (disclosure in the public interest). BLP operates a separate Whistleblowing Policy and this policy should be read in conjunction with this.

9. Safeguarding Officer's action

Where there is risk of Significant Harm to any Service User, volunteers or staff, the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Officer have the power to act as necessary and, in particular, as follows:

- log all conversations regarding the issue
- sign and request signatures on reports and statements
- confidentially seek advice from expert sources
- share concerns (with consent where required and appropriate) internally with senior staff /Chair of the Board of Trustees
- share concerns and make referrals to external agencies such as social services or the police, as appropriate to the circumstances
- make a referral to the PVG regarding staff or volunteers whose conduct is harmful to Service Users.

10. Communication by BLP about safeguarding and this Policy

- 10.1 All staff and volunteers have an obligation to learn about protection issues and their related responsibilities.
- 10.2 BLP will communicate this Policy (using appropriate methods, formats and language to communicate the substance of it) to all of its staff, volunteers, and Service Users and their families / carers, and it will also make it available to the public. Anne McEwan will be responsible to the Board of Trustees for communicating this Policy to them.
- 10.3 To encourage everyone involved in BLP to understand that safeguarding is the business of everyone, and to assist all staff and volunteers to learn about protection issues and their related responsibilities, BLP will hold [meetings open to all staff and volunteers about safeguarding][presentations to staff and volunteers about safeguarding policy and procedures][place safeguarding on the agenda for meetings of the Board of Trustees] [and provide other opportunities] for discussion about issues and concerns, policy and

procedures to reflect, review and to continue to learn and improve in relation to BLP's safeguarding responsibilities.

11. Implementation of this Policy

- 11.1 This Policy must be followed by all staff and volunteers of BLP and must be promoted by all of its Trustees and senior staff. Failure to follow it will be treated as a very serious matter.
- 11.2 This Policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures of BLP:
1. Health & Safety Policy
 2. BLP Code of Conduct & Practice
 3. GDPR Data Protection Policy
 4. Equal Rights and Diversity Policy
 5. Complaints Policy
 6. Whistle Blowing Policy

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Date of update	April 2026 – change of deputy Safeguarding Officers
Date of update	May 2026 – clarification of volunteer support
Date of update and review	July 2026 – added links to relevant legislation, safeguarding officer contact details and equality statement
Date of next review	July 2027



Safeguarding Procedure

1. Handling Disclosure

A disclosure may be made verbally or through play or through the behaviour by a child, young person or a vulnerable adult.

If you are concerned about a child or a vulnerable adult it is important that this information is communicated to the site's Deputy Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Lead by filling out a Safeguarding Reporting Form (Appendix B).

You may become aware of suspected or likely abuse by:

- Your own observations and concerns
- Being told by another person that they have concerns
- The person tells you
- The abuser tells you

Remember:

- Do not delay
- Do not investigate
- Seek advice from the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officer
- Make careful recording of anything you observe or are told (Appendix B)

You can access more information about what is harm and local reporting here - <https://rightdecisions.scot.nhs.uk/adult-support-and-protection-dumfries-and-galloway/>

2. Reporting Guidelines

We ensure and emphasise that everyone in our organisation understands and knows how to share any concerns immediately with the site's Deputy Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Lead. Everyone including the person making the report, the site's Deputy Safeguarding Officer and the organisation's Safeguarding Lead will deal with concerns by following the procedures set out in the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Procedure.

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to ensure that these are rigorously adhered to.

Anyone concerned about the correct procedures being followed should contact the organisation's Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding Officer: Anne McEwan, Operations Director, amcewan@betterlivespartnership.org.uk

Safeguarding Reports should be made using the Safeguarding Concern / Incident Report Form (Appendix B) to the Safeguarding Officer or the Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

Karen O'Rourke, Team Officer West, korourke@betterlivespartnership.org.uk

Debbie Templeton, Service Lead East, dtempleton@betterlivespartnership.org.uk

3. Record Keeping

All records will be securely kept in a locked cabinet at Better Lives Partnership Head Office (once the Young Person has left the service) or at the reporting site (whilst the Young Person is attending the service). Records will be kept for 2 years after a disclose leaves the programme or Better Lives Partnership's employment.

All records should be factual. It is equally important to record the reasons for making the decision not to refer to social work services as when the decision is taken to refer. Always sign, clearly detail name and job role of the person making the record, date and time of these records.

Appendix A Flowchart: Safeguarding Procedure

Step 1: Concern is noted by member of staff

Concerns about a member of staff, volunteer or another adult attending the site should be referred directly to the Safeguarding Lead.

Concerns about a Young Person should be referred to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer located at that site copying in the Safeguarding Lead.



Step 2: Report is Made

Reports should be made using our Safeguarding Reporting Form (Appendix B)

Reports should be factual



Step 3: Information Gathering

Site Deputy Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding Lead decides whether further information needs to be gathered from other staff, including that about any children or other vulnerable adults in the household.

Further information needed is gathered and recorded (information gathering is not an investigation, there should be no investigation).

Step 4: Decision



Young person is not in need of immediate protection but may need further assessment or need further support. Consider whether Social Work should be contacted.



Young Person is in need of protection – Social Work Referral to be completed on AP1 Form. Make Decision whether the family needs to be informed prior to referral.



Child is not in need of protection or referral to Social Work for assessment – record that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for the decision.

Update/start a chronology regarding the referral.

Contacts

Social Work Access Team email contact:	AccessTeam@dumgal.gov.uk
Social Work Access Team Telephone contact:	030 33 33 3001
Social Work Out of Hours Team email contact:	socialworkoutofhours@dumgal.gov.uk
Social Work Out of Hours Telephone contact:	01387 273660

Remember – An Adult Support and Protection (ASP) Referral is not an emergency service – if necessary, phone 999 to access immediate assistance

Step 5: Checking in with referrer

The Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Safeguarding Officer taking the lead in the referral should check in with the referrer once a decision has been actioned, no information about the decision should be shared and the referrer should be given the opportunity to share any new information they feel is relevant. If new relevant information is shared go back to step 2.

Appendix B Safeguarding Concern / Incident Report Form

This form is designed to report any safeguarding incidents or concerns. It should be completed by the worker who has been disclosed to, who witnessed the incident, was most directly involved or who provided first aid if relevant. Once completed it must be submitted to the site's Deputy Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Lead.

Name of Person Completing the Form	Their Role within the Organisation

Date Form Completed:	
Reference Number: (initials of name	

Details of child, young person or adult at risk:

Name:	Address:
Contact number:	Gender:
Date of birth:	Any further information that may be useful to consider:

Parents/carers details:

Name:	Address:
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Contact Number:	Email Address:
Have parents/carers been notified of the Incident? Yes / No	If Yes, please provide details:

Details of reportee:

Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?	Reporting my own concerns	
	Responding to someone else's concerns	
If responding to someone else's concerns, please provide their details below:		
Name:		
Relationship to child, young person or adult at risk:		
Email Address:		
Contact number:		

Incident Details:

Date/ Time:	Group name (if applicable):
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Location of Incident:

Description of the incident or concern: *(continue on a separate sheet if necessary & include reference Number):*

(Include relevant information such as what happened and how it happened, description of any injuries sustained, behaviour witnessed and whether the information provided is being recorded as fact, opinion or hearsay)

Child, young person or adult at risk's account of the incident or concern: *(use their own words)*

Witness account of incident or concern: *(include further accounts on separate sheets as necessary. Include reference number on each accompanying account)*

Details of any witnesses:		
Name(s): <i>(Consider anonymising where this will not negatively impact the ability to take immediate response actions)</i>	Relationship to child, Young Person or adult at risk:	Contact Details:
Details of any persons involved in the incident or alleged to have caused the incident, injury or presenting risk:		
Names(s): <i>(Consider anonymising where this will not negatively impact the ability to take immediate response actions)</i>	Relationship to child, Young Person or adult at risk:	Contact Details:

Outcome of incident & immediate actions taken: <i>(complete box where relevant)</i>		
Ambulance Required? Yes / No	First Aid treatment provided and by whom?	Medication given:
Name of Hospital/ Medical Facility attended if applicable:		
Police / Fire / Rescue Services Attended? Yes / No		
Notes:		
Any resulting change of plans or disruption to the programme, if applicable:	Disciplinary procedures enacted:	Were any immediate changes to risk management procedures made?

Signed By Author:	Name:	Date:

Reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Section: *(to be completed by DSL)*

Date & Time DSL notified of incident/concern:		
Date & Time this form passed on to DSL: <i>(if different from above)</i>		
DSL comments: <i>(Actions taken/impact on rest of programme/external agency involvement/initial Lessons learned/follow-up actions required)</i>		
External Agency Referral:		
Social Services Notified? Yes / No	LADO Notified? Yes/ No	Other Referral Made? Yes / No
		Agency:
Date & Time of Referral:	Date & Time of Referral:	Date & Time of Referral:
Name of Contact Person:	Name of Contact Person:	Name of Contact Person:
Contact Number / Email:	Contact Number / Email:	Contact Number / Email:
Agreed Action or Advice Given:	Agreed Action or Advice Given:	Agreed Action or Advice Given:

Signed By DSL:	Name:	Date:

For Office Use Only:

Follow Up Actions Required:		
Action:	Due Date:	Whom Responsible: