

Bahar Women’s Association

Safeguarding Children: Policies and Procedures

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# Safeguarding Policy

##  Policy Statements

This policy in one of a series of Bahar AFG Women’s Association’s (hereinafter referred to as “the Organisation”) integrated safeguarding portfolios, and must be read in conjunction the Organisation’s policies and procedures on: -

1. Safeguarding Adults,
2. Health and Safety, and
3. Equality and Diversity

The Organisation is committed to the following: -

1. Providing support to children in need and protecting the welfare of all service users irrespective of nationality, religion, and ethnicity;
2. Working in partnership with children, young people, families, and other agencies as appropriate to safeguard and promote the welfare of service users;
3. Providing effective management and supervision of all employees and volunteers to ensure that all staff have access to and familiarity with all the Organisation’s policies and with their roles and responsibilities;
4. Ensuring that all employees and volunteers receive adequate training in relation to safeguarding children and other incidental matters commensurate with their role;
5. Ensuring that all personal information of service users are handled with utmost care and confidentiality;
6. Ensuring that all concerns and allegations of abuse of service users, perpetrated by the Organisation’s staff or otherwise, are taken seriously and are investigated as appropriate;
7. Reviewing the Organisation’s policies and procedures annually to ensure that policies and procedures are kept up to date and in line with new regulations and legislation;
8. Maintaining an environment safe for children of all ages in accordance with legislative and regulatory guidance.

The procedures contained in this policy are consistent with the letter and spirit of the law.

## Terminology

### “Children in need”

For the purposes of this policy, the categorisation “children in need” include those who: -

* [requirements to be in receipt of services]
* [age limit?]
* [not in receipt of other support]
* [any exceptions of who cannot receive services?]
* [what happens after they grow up and pass the age limit? Women 🡪 safeguarding adults; what about men?]
* [those who may be regarded as unsuitable]

### “Organisation staff”

Includes all employees and volunteers of the Organisation.

### “Abuse”

Abuse may take many forms and should be analysed on a case by case basis with regards to the individual’s particular circumstances and characteristics. The alleged abuse may be one-off or recurring. Examples of forms of abuse regarded as safeguarding concerns are as follows: - [anything else to add?]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Form of abuse | Definition  |
| Cyberbullying and cyber violence  | May take many forms, including sharing personal information about a child online and sending unwanted content to a child. Includes cyber stalking and cyber harassment. |
| Economic abuse  | Controlling one’s ability to acquire, use, or maintain financial resources, diminishing the victim’s capacity for financial independence. Includes preventing a child from obtaining education.  |
| Emotional and psychological abuse  | Recurring emotional maltreatment of a child. Includes intimidating and threatening, undermining, and guilt-tripping another.  |
| Male and female genital mutilation (MGM and FGM)  | Partial or total removal of external genitalia or cutting or injuring of genital organs for non-medical purposes, irrespective of the jurisdiction in which the procedure has been arranged to take place and parental consent |
| Financial and material abuse | Illegal or unauthorised use of a child’s funds or assets. |
| Modern slavery  | May take many forms. Usually comprises physical or mental coercion to work, with restrictions placed on a child’s freedom of movement. Includes human trafficking, forced marriage, and bonded labour.  |
| Child marriage | Formal and informal union or marriage of a child before the child attains the age of 18. Children may marry with parental consent from the age of 16.  |
| Neglect and acts of omission | Ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic needs. Many not be deliberate, but the result of an inability to provide support needed. Includes medical neglect, emotional neglect, educational neglect, and any acts of omission that impairs the health or development of the child.  |
| Organisational abuse  | Ongoing neglect or poor care practice within an institution or care setting due to inadequate support. May result from structural inefficiency, poor enforcement, or inadequate staff training. |
| Physical abuse  | Deliberate and unlawful infliction of physical harm, irrespective of the degree of injury caused. Includes maladministration of medication, striking, and throwing objects at a person. |
| Sexual violence and abuse | Coerced or misled participation in sexual activity of underaged children regardless of consent. May be contact abuse such as rape or molestation and non-contact abuse such as forced consumption of pornography. May be perpetrated by another child. Includes sexual grooming, using sexually explicit words with children, and persuading a child to send sexually explicit images of themselves to another.  |

## Key Roles and Responsibilities

Every staff of the Organisation has a duty to act on concerns and allegations of abuse, and must inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) should suspicions of abuse arise. In the event of the unavailability of the DSO, the Deputy DSO must promptly be informed instead.

The contact details of the DSO and the Deputy are as follows: -

Designated Safeguarding Officer

Name: Bahar

Mobile number: 07 815 506 017

Email address: baharafg.wa@live.com

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer

Name:

Mobile number:

Email address:

In addition to acting on allegations of abuse, the DSO and the Deputy are also responsible for the following: -

1. Ensuring staff compliance with all procedures and policies,
2. Ensuring adequate staff training,
3. Ensuring safe recruitment by properly assessing the suitability of applicants to work with children prior to recruitment,
4. Ensuring that all procedures in this policy are adhered to, and
5. Managing allegations of abuse and exercising informed discretion to refer cases to local authorities as appropriate.

## Safe Recruitment

The Organisation endeavours to ensure safe recruitment to secure that all staff are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The Organisation’s recruitment policy seeks to deter and to identify applicants who are likely to be unsuitable for work with children or whom might pose a risk to their safety and wellbeing.

Applicants will be vetted at various stages of recruitment and immediately preceding employment in the following ways as appropriate: -

1. Proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK;
2. Identity verifications;
3. Educational and professional qualifications;
4. Mandatory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance;
5. Interviews;
6. Provision of a minimum of two references.

## Staff Training and Supervision

The Organisation recognises that safe recruitment extends beyond the selection process preceding employment. The Organisation therefore undertakes to provide ongoing training and support for all staff throughout the course of their work commensurate with their roles.

All new staff will be made aware of all safeguarding procedures and policies from induction. Measures will be taken to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of new and existing policies and procedures throughout the course of their work.

Staff training will be provided based upon analysis of the Organisation and staff needs. Examples of staff training provided are “General Data Protection Regulation” and “Effective Advocacy and Negotiation Skills”.

## Distributing and Reviewing Policies and Procedures

The Organisation recognises the duty to publish and display all policies and procedures for easy access to all staff, service users, and members of the public.

The Organisation undertakes to review all policies and procedures annually or as appropriate in light of the introduction of any new regulations or legislation.

The following steps will be taken to ensure that all relevant parties will have easy access to policies and procedures: - [to be reviewed]

1. Making references to and familiarising new staff with policies and procedures during induction;
2. Display of policies and procedures on the Organisation’s website, and
3. Distribution of copies to all staff and service users or direction to access to policies and procedures on the Organisation’s website.

## Confidentiality and Information Management

The Organisation recognises the duty to protect all personal information of service users and affected parties. All staff are contractually and legally obliged under the Data Protection Act 2018 to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information they come into contact with during the course of their work.

### Data Protection Principles

* Access to rooms and offices where personal information is stored must be controlled. Doors must be locked with keys. In mixed office environments, measures must be taken to prevent oversight of personal information by unauthorised parties.
* All documents containing personal information must be locked in designated filing and storage places. Documents containing personal information must not be left unattended or lying around, and must be filed and locked away as soon as no longer in use.
* Passwords and other information providing access to emails and other modes of communication must be kept secure and must not be disclosed to unauthorised persons.
* For the purpose of making referrals to other organisations and services, care must be taken to ensure that personal information is only shared with relevant parties and only the minimal amount of information necessary is disclosed. No personal information may be shared without the DSO’s permission or instruction.
* All personal information must be kept up to date and must be disposed of where no longer necessary.
* Personal information may only be collected and processed in a way that is relevant to the service user’s case and must be limited to only what is absolutely necessary.
* Service users retain the right to be informed about how their data is being used, to demand the disposal of all of their own personal data, and to have any incorrect data updated.
* Should any concerns or doubts about disclosing or storing personal data arise, staff must discuss this with the DSO prior to taking any action.
* No personal information may be disclosed to any other organisation or service without the consent of the service user whose information is at issue, save for exceptions where the DSO considers that the service user could be at risk of abuse and/or harm. In such a case, the DSO must take care in exercising his/her discretion to ensure that personal information is shared with appropriate parties and only the minimal amount of information necessary is disclosed.
* [how is information stored and what safeguards are in place to prevent breach]

### Breach of Data Protection by Organisation Staff

Any breach of confidentiality, inappropriate use of personal information, or abuse of the Organisation’s electronic systems such as email is a disciplinary offence, which may result in dismissal or termination of employment contract.

Service users may raise complaints to any Organisation staff or to the DSO directly should suspicions of confidentiality breach arise, irrespective of whose personal information is at issue.

The DSO has a duty to ensure that any breaches of confidentiality are investigated and acted upon. All staff have a duty to disclose and to report any known or suspected confidentiality breaches to the DSO.

[any specific steps to be taken in the event of breach?]

# Safeguarding Procedures

## Becoming Aware of a Safeguarding Issue

All staff have a duty to act promptly upon discovering or upon suspicion of a safeguarding issue. A safeguarding issue may come to the Organisation’s awareness in the following ways: -

* Receipt of a third party or anonymous allegation;
* The appearance or behaviour of a service user causes suspicion of abuse and/or neglect;
* Report of alleged abuse and/or neglect by the victim him/herself;
* Referral from an appropriate third party organisation or service.

## Responding to an Allegation of Abuse and/or Neglect

All staff have a duty to act promptly on allegations of abuse and/or neglect. All allegations from service users and third parties as appropriate must be taken seriously and must be reported to the DSO as soon as possible. Failure to act upon receiving information of any form of abuse and/or neglect of, due to carelessness or otherwise, is a breach of duty.

The responsibilities of the Organisation’s staff upon knowledge of an allegation of abuse and/or neglect are as follows: -

1. Assure the alleged victim and/or the party making the allegations that their concerns are being taken seriously;
2. Explain to the alleged victim and/or the party making the allegations that all Organisation staff have a duty to disclose all allegations and relevant information to the DSO;
3. Record all allegations and other relevant information pro forma as soon as possible and ensure that it is signed and dated by the staff in charge;
4. Refrain from conducting investigations without consent or instruction of the DSO;
5. Take action to ensure the immediate safety and welfare of the alleged victim as appropriate. Consultation may be made with the DSO in the event of uncertainty as to steps to be taken;
6. Where there is reasonable cause to believe that urgent police presence or medical assistance is required to keep the victim safe, and that to consult with the DSO will lead to an undue delay causing the victim to be in a position of risk, staff may take action by contacting emergency services as appropriate by dialling 999.

The final decision-making authority as to steps to be taken upon allegations of abuse and/or neglect remains the DSO, with respect to the wishes of the alleged victim. The alleged victim(s) will be involved in all decision-making involving them.

## Responding to Suspicions of Abuse and/or Neglect

All staff have a duty to identify and to act on any suspicion of abuse and/or neglect. The physical appearance and/or changes in behaviour of service users may give rise to suspicion of abuse and/or neglect. In such a case, suspicions must be taken seriously and a report must be made to the DSO as soon as possible.

In addition to reporting to the DSO, the responsibilities of the Organisation’s staff upon suspicion of abuse and/or neglect are as follows: -

1. Monitor and record basis for suspecting abuse and/or neglect, such as signs of physical abuse and/or changes in the alleged victim’s behaviour and report to the DSO;
2. Provide the alleged victim with the opportunity to confide in staff by arranging consultations or appointments as appropriate;
3. Refrain from conducting investigations without consent or instruction of the DSO;
4. In the event that the alleged victim discloses incidences of abuse and/or neglect, all relevant information must be recorded pro forma as soon as possible, signed and dated by the staff in charge. Staff responsibilities listed in Section 2.2 must then be taken as appropriate.

## Responding to Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse by Organisation Staff

Proportionate action should be taken to ensure the immediate protection of alleged victims where the perpetrator of harm is an employee or staff of the Organisation.

In the event of allegation that another member of staff poses a risk of harm to any service user, a report must be made to the DSO immediately.

All staff have a duty to ensure that the alleged victim is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.

The DSO has a duty to investigate internally and to take immediate action in compliance with employment laws with regards to the wishes of the alleged victim. Employees retain the right to know in broad terms all allegations that have been raised about them.

The police or any other relevant local authorities may be notified as appropriate, after which an external investigation may be conducted. During period of investigation, the alleged perpetrator of harm may be suspended immediately.

# Important Contact Details

Where a crime needs to be reported or police assistance is sought, the following telephone numbers should be used:

For Non-Emergencies

Telephone Number: 101

For Emergencies

Telephone Number: 999

The DSO should always be the first person to contact whenever allegations or concerns arise. However, the following may be contacted for further information and/or advice as appropriate:

NSPCC

Telephone Number (24/7): 0808 800 5000

Email Address: help@nspcc.org.uk

Leeds City Council Children’s Social Care Team

Telephone Numbers: 011 3222 4403 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

011 3240 9536 (out of hours)