



## **BucksVision Safeguarding Children Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to provide clarity to all staff and volunteers on child protection and safeguarding. It is intended to help us to have a common understanding of safeguarding issues, develop good practice across the areas in which we operate and thereby increase accountability in this aspect of our work.

Effective safeguarding arrangements should aim to meet the following two key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each individual and organisation should play their full part; and
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#) states:

*“Nothing is more important than children’s welfare. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support. This requires individuals, agencies, and organisations to be clear about their own and each other’s roles and responsibilities, and how they work together.”*

Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

At the point of writing (January 2026), people who work with children will be legally required to report child sexual abuse or face sanctions, as set out in the [Crime and Policing Bill](#) that is currently passing through Parliament.

## 2. Definition of abuse

The table below shows the definitions of abuse, as defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#):

<b>Abuse</b>	<p>A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear, or experience its effects.</p> <p>Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial contexts by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.</p> <p>Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.</p> <p>Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children</p>
<b>Physical abuse</b>	<p>A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</p>
<b>Emotional abuse</b>	<p>The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.</p> <p>It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate.</p> <p>It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.</p> <p>These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.</p>

	<p>It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.</p> <p>Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone</p>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	<p>Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.</p> <p>They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.</p> <p>Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.</p> <p>Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.</p>
<b>Neglect</b>	<p>The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.</p> <p>Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)</li> <li>• protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger</li> <li>• ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)</li> <li>• ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment</li> <li>• provide suitable education</li> </ul> <p>It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs</p>

<p><b>Controlling or coercive behaviour</b></p>	<p>Also known as coercive control, controlling or coercive behaviour is a form of domestic abuse. In 2015, the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour was introduced under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act as a criminal offence.</p> <p>Controlling or coercive behaviour is included in the definition of domestic abuse in section 1(3)(c) of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p> <p>Controlling or coercive behaviour is a pattern of abuse (on two or more occasions) that involves multiple behaviours and tactics used by a perpetrator to (but not limited to) hurt, humiliate, intimidate, exploit, isolate, and dominate the victim. It is an intentional pattern of behaviour used to exert power, control, or coercion over another person.</p> <p>Controlling or coercive behaviour is often committed in conjunction with other forms of abuse and is often part of a wider pattern of abuse, including violent, sexual, or economic abuse.</p> <p>Children can be used to control or coerce the victim, for example, by frustrating child contact and/or child arrangements, telling the children to call the victim derogatory names or to hit the victim, or by threatening to abduct the children.</p>
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### 3. Duty to refer and co-operate:

[Section 11 of the Children Act 2004](#) places a duty on key persons and bodies to make arrangements in any local area to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and improve the outcomes for children.

All professionals in agencies with contact with children and members of their families must make a referral to LA children's social care if there are signs that a child or an unborn baby:

- Has suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect.
- Or is likely to suffer significant harm in the future.

### 4. Whistleblowing

To fulfil its commitment to safeguarding, BucksVision has a Whistleblowing Policy, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed in a facilitated way.

BucksVision is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, BucksVision recognises that an

important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable employees and volunteers to voice concerns about breaches or failures in a reasonable and effective manner.

There must be an awareness of the vulnerability of children and adults in BucksVision's settings and that whistleblowing applies in all contexts. In addition, to situations where there is a perceived risk, whistleblowing may be necessary to highlight more general problems with unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour.

BucksVision's Whistleblowing Policy and procedures make clear how to raise a concern, which can be a matter about safeguarding.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives workers legal protection against being dismissed or penalised as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns.

## **5. Role and Responsibilities**

These roles and responsibilities are relevant to BucksVision's Safeguarding Policy and procedures, see Table overleaf.

<p><b>Trustees</b></p>	<p>Trustees take reasonable steps to protect those connected with BucksVision from harm. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who benefit from BucksVision’s work and services</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Other people connected to BucksVision’s activities</li> </ul> <p>BucksVision’s Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures are approved by the Trustees. The Trustees delegate the day to day work for safeguarding within BucksVision to the Chief Executive but are ultimately responsible. Trustees are accountable to The Charity Commission.</p>
<p><b>Chief Executive</b></p>	<p>The Chief Executive of BucksVision will ensure that safeguarding underpins all decisions made by the organisation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining a clear organisational and operational focus on safeguarding adults and children.</li> <li>• Making sure relevant statutory requirements and other national standards are met.</li> <li>• Acting as a source of support and advice for staff and volunteers on all safeguarding matters.</li> <li>• Following through safeguarding policy and procedures regarding their responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board of Trustees for safeguarding matters and must report on safeguarding concerns as a standing item at every Board meeting.</p>
<p><b>All other staff and volunteers</b></p>	<p>All staff and volunteers must be vigilant to potential safeguarding concerns and will raise these with the Chief Executive in the very first instance, even if they are unsure whether the concern meets the safeguarding concern threshold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A policy of, “<b>If in doubt, raise it anyway</b>”, <b><u>always applies.</u></b></li> </ul> <p>In the event of the Chief Executive’s absence, safeguarding concerns must be raised with the Operations Manager.</p>

## 6. Practical Considerations

BucksVision will develop effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding vulnerable children and ensure that all managers have received relevant training on safeguarding vulnerable children and that all staff are briefed on what is required.

BucksVision's selection and recruitment policy for staff and volunteers includes checks on suitability, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, in accordance with current legislation. Induction training for staff and volunteers covers safeguarding issues to ensure understanding of all types of child abuse as described above. BucksVision will ensure that all members of staff and volunteers know how to respond appropriately to a child who alleges abuse and is aware of the procedure to be followed.

BucksVision acknowledges the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff and other agencies in relation to safeguarding vulnerable children, in order to:

- Promote the wellbeing, security and safety of vulnerable people consistent with their rights, capacity and personal responsibility, and prevent abuse occurring wherever possible.
- Ensure that the process of reporting, investigation and subsequent action, is as effective as possible in achieving good outcomes for vulnerable people.
- Ensure that the processes of investigation, assessment and prevention of abuse do not constitute an abusive or harmful series of events for the vulnerable person.
- Ensure that the promotion of safeguarding children work is integral to the development and delivery of our services.

If anyone has concern for a vulnerable child or young person under 18 they must report their concerns to the Chief Executive, or to the Operations Manager in his/her absence. The Chief Executive (or Operations Manager) is responsible for:

- Alerting the Local Authority Social Care team of any instances of concern relating to a child's welfare, possible abuse or neglect.
  - [Buckinghamshire Council's MASH Team](#) may be contacted on 01296 383 962 Monday – Friday (office hours) or 0800 999 7677 (out of hours)
  - Note that any safeguarding referral **must** be made through the portal: [Report a concern about a child | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

- [Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) may be contacted on 01908 253 169 or 01908 253 170 on Monday – Thursday 9.00am to 5.00pm and Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm
- Milton Keynes Emergency Social Work Team (out of office hours) can be reached on 01908 265 545
- Note that any safeguarding referral **must** be made through the portal: [Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\) - Milton Keynes Council](#)
- Ensuring that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Acting as a focal point for staff concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals.

## 7. Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding vulnerable children are confidential. The designated person will not disclose confidential information to volunteers except on a strict need-to-know basis.

However, all staff and volunteers will be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard vulnerable children. Staff and volunteers must be aware that they cannot promise a member or any other informant to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing or that of another.

## 8. Supporting staff

We recognise that staff or volunteers working at BucksVision who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support staff and volunteers by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties and to seek further support. BucksVision understands that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child who has expressed a concern or reported abuse of any kind. It is always advisable for interviews or work with the individuals concerned to be conducted with another member of staff present.

BucksVision recognises that vulnerable children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff and volunteers fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

## 9. Charity Regulators: England and Wales only

The Charity Commission requires charities to [report serious incidents](#). If a serious incident takes place within BucksVision, it is important that there is prompt, full and frank disclosure to the Commission. BucksVision will report what happened and, importantly, let the Commission know how BucksVision is dealing with it, even if BucksVision has also reported it to the police, LA or another regulator.

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in, or risks, significant:

- Harm to BucksVision’s beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with BucksVision through its work, or
- Harm to BucksVision’s work or reputation.

For the purposes of reporting a serious incident to The Charity Commission, “significant” means significant in the context of the charity, taking account of its staff, operations, finances and/or reputation.

BucksVision must report an actual or alleged incident promptly. This means as soon as is reasonably possible after it happens, or immediately after BucksVision becomes aware of it.

The responsibility for reporting serious safeguarding incidents rests with the charity’s Trustees. However, this is delegated to the Chief Executive and will be agreed with Trustees before any incident is reported to The Charity Commission.

## 10. Policy review and version control

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive and approved by the Board of Directors. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, good practice or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness. All staff and people working within the charity will be made aware of the policy.

Reviewed: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Review date: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2027

Versn	Date	Author	Changes
1.4	Jan 2026	Steve Naylor	Updated logo, legislation and hyperlinks
1.3	Jan 2025	Steve Naylor	Minor edits
1.2	Apr 2023	Steve Naylor	Updated info and hyperlinks
1.1	Jan 2022	Steve Naylor	Minor edits
1.0	Jul 2021	Steve Naylor	Policy created