

River Worth Friends

Safeguarding Policy

Inclusion

River Worth Friends welcomes the fullest possible participation of young and vulnerable people in our activities.

All people under 18 years of age, and vulnerable adults, taking part in River Worth Friends activities, must be accompanied at all times by a responsible guardian or carer. Both the person and their guardian/carer must attend any safety briefings prior to the activity, and any concerns or potential difficulties must be discussed with the activity leader.

Our Commitment

River Worth Friends recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults at risk. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults at risk can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The Trustees are committed to:

- promoting a safe environment and culture
- supporting those with any responsibility related to children, young people and adults at risk
- responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- showing care for victims and survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- responding to circumstances that may pose a present risk to others.

The Trustees undertake to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, including The Children Act 1989/2004, Human Rights Act 1998, Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place and followed
- appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead and a Deputy
- support the Designated Safeguarding Leads in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults at risk
- operate within the guidance “Working together to safeguard children 2018”.

River Worth Friends recognises that abuse can take many different forms including:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychological or Emotional Abuse
- Financial or Material Abuse
- Neglect
- Discrimination
- Radicalisation
- Institutional Abuse

More information on types of abuse and signs to look for with children and adult are available through the following links

Children <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf>

Adults <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse>

Training and Awareness

Before volunteering commences River Worth Friends will provide guidance for volunteers on appropriate safeguarding procedures to follow in the event they have concerns about themselves or others, including how to report concerns.

River Worth Friends will also develop awareness of safeguarding issues, which will help protect everyone.

River Worth Friends will also ensure that, when required, children and adults at risk are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Contact With People Under 18 and Vulnerable Adults

Contact should not be made with people under 18 or vulnerable adults who volunteer with us for any reason unrelated to their involvement. No social or non-volunteering related arrangements should be made with them, including interactions on social media.

Whistleblowing

River Worth Friends will follow our obligations under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

It is important that people feel free and safe to voice any concerns without fearing that they will be victimised for doing so. River Worth Friends undertakes to protect anyone voicing concerns from unfair consequences arising as a result of raising a concern, so long as the accusation is made in good faith.

Allegations of Abuse

If an accusation of abuse is made the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) within 1 working day (LADO@bradford.gov.uk tel:01274 435600).

Where a criminal offence is thought to have been committed the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately.

The safety of the individual(s) concerned is paramount and it should be ensured that they are safe and away from the person(s) who are the alleged perpetrators.

Dealing with a Disclosure

It is important that if someone discloses that they are being abused it is dealt with appropriately.

The key points are

- act promptly
- keep the person safe
- take all allegations seriously
- record things clearly
- don't investigate
- don't promise confidentiality.

More detail is in the guide to dealing with disclosure, which is attached as Appendix 1.

Responding to Concerns Raised or a Disclosure

The following general procedures should be followed.

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

- In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, if the suspicions involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Chair of Trustees.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead should collate available information and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion.
- In discussion with others they should decide if the situation reaches the threshold for referral to Social Services. The document detailing how to assess the level of vulnerability, risk and need is currently available at <https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/media/0fabac30/con-10-02-23update.pdf> and the diagram on page 6 shows the threshold for social services involvement. If it does reach the threshold then an immediate referral should be made on the Safer Bradford web site <https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/>.
- For any concerns that do not reach the referral threshold an action plan should be produced. This may include actions to monitor the situation, talking to people involved, taking safeguarding/support measures, referral to support agencies and any required follow up.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

Specific procedures where there is a concern about a child:

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Make sure the child is safe
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- Contact Children’s Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child’s safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers about serious concerns, unless advised to do so, having contacted Children’s Social Services.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children’s Social Services or a relevant support agency directly for advice.

Specific procedures where there is a concern for an adult:

If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of abuse the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, capacity, privacy and right to lead an independent life.
- If the adult at risk is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- Take into account the capacity of the person both physical and mental.

Right to Refer to Social Services

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to Social Services, for example if the individual with the concern has a disagreement with the response of River Worth Friends.

Other Issues

Confidentiality

All records kept and discussions will be on a confidential basis and limited to those who need to know.

There are circumstances where the public interest overrides the individual's right to confidentiality (e.g. if the alleged abuser has access to children in their role as a teacher or youth worker)

The Trustees will accept that any information they may have in their possession on safeguarding cases will be confidential.

Radicalisation

If there is a concern related to radicalisation of an individual, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the Bradford Prevent Team on 01274 376215

Supporting those affected by abuse

River Worth Friends is committed to offering care and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who they have contact with, or are part of, River Worth Friends. This may include referring them to other support agencies and providing information.

Working with Offenders

When someone attending River Worth Friends' events or services is known to have abused, or is a risk to children or adults at risk, we will ensure appropriate supervision of the individual concerned. In adherence to its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults at risk, boundaries will be set for

that person, which they will be expected to keep to and may be monitored. **At all times the safety of any children or adults at risk will be our primary concern.**

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be variations in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. We will discuss our safeguarding expectations with our partners and, where appropriate, have an agreement for safeguarding for joint work.

Retention of Records

Safeguarding records will be stored securely and only available to authorised personnel. Should River Worth Friends cease its activities, suitable, secure appropriate arrangements will be made for the storage of records.

Adopted by the Trustees on 23 September 2024

USEFUL CONTACTS/NUMBERS:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sue Patchett (suepatchett55@yahoo.com)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Laura Bates (lauraannbates@outlook.com)

Police – 101 or for an emergency dial 999

Safer Bradford web site - <https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/> for referral and general information

Social Services Contact Point - **Children** 01274 435600 **Adults** 01274 431077

At all other times, call the Emergency Duty Team on 01274 431010

Appendix 1 – Guidance on Dealing with a Disclosure

DO

- Follow your policy and procedures
- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen carefully
- Establish the basic facts of the allegation or concern
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Offer support and reassurance
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Immediately speak to your manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Explain what will happen next to the individual making the allegation

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be dismissive of the concern or allegation
- Investigate or interview beyond what is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Promise confidentiality – there may be circumstances that override a person's right to confidentiality in the public interest e.g. if the alleged abuser is a teacher or youth worker with access to many other young people
- Make promises on what may happen
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Ask leading questions
- Assume anything
- Ignore the allegation
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation

Helpful things to say or show

- Show acceptance of what the child/vulnerable adult says
- "I take what you are saying very seriously"
- "I am pleased that you have told me. Thank you for telling me"
- If appropriate, "It isn't your fault and you are not to blame at all"
- "I am sorry that happened to you"
- "I will help you"

Things not to say

- "Why didn't you say something before?"
- "I really can't believe it"
- "Are you sure this has happened?"
- "I am shocked!"

- “Don’t tell anyone else”
- “Why?” “How?” You don’t investigate, you just record

Concluding the conversation

- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they were right to tell you
- Tell them what you are going to do next
- Tell them that you will let them know what is happening at each stage