



BIRMINGHAM CHILD CONTACT CENTRE

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Birmingham Child Contact Centre (BCCC) places child protection and the safeguarding of children and young people at the epicentre of its activities. In recognition of this fact, BCCC maintains a Safeguarding Lead on its Trustee Board.

Reporting

The Charity Commission requires any registered charity (many supported contact services are registered charities) to report 'serious incidents'. They must report to the Charity Commission if any safeguarding concerns have resulted or could have resulted in harm. This includes some situations where their own policies or procedures have not been followed properly. If those breaches have put people who come into contact with the charity through its work at significant risk of harm, they must report them even if no actual harm occurred.

There is no law, or exemption to the law that means that voluntary organisations (or those that volunteer in them) do not have to report safeguarding concerns. There is also nothing within the NACCC (National Association of Child Contact Centres) National Standards, the UK Judicial Protocol or GDPR / Data Protection that exempts services from reporting safeguarding concerns. The statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, states that "anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to local authority children's social care and should do so immediately if there is a concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so." This guidance applies to contact services as much as any other organisation.

Birmingham's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) will outline requirements for reporting safeguarding concerns. It is difficult to be specific about these requirements without knowing the location of the centre or child. However, these will be published on the website of the LSCB and Local Children's Services.

Accountability

Copies of this policy and its accompanying Statement of Commitment will be given to existing and new trustees and volunteers.

They will be provided with a copy and be expected to sign and return Birmingham Child Contact Centre's 'Statement of Commitment'.

Basic Principles

1. Birmingham Child Contact Centre believes that children and young people need safe environments in which they can grow and develop in confidence.
2. Birmingham Child Contact Centre recognises that organisations working with and supporting children and young people have a duty to keep them safe.
3. Birmingham Child Contact Centre is committed to and working towards the objectives as defined in the [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#). The Guidance makes clear that all those working to support children and their families should follow the guidance and states: "It should be read and followed by LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) Chairs and senior managers within organisations who commission and provide services for children and families, including social workers and professionals from health services, adult services, the police, Academy Trusts, education and the voluntary and community sector who have contact with children and families. All relevant professionals should read and comply with this guidance unless exceptional circumstances arise".

We also recommend reading the UK Government's Illustrated Guide to Working Together, which can be found here [Statutory Guidance - Working Together Guidance](#)

4. Birmingham Child Contact Centre believes that children and young people should not be exposed to negligence or avoidable risks.
5. Birmingham Child Contact Centre recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are emotive issues that need to be handled both sensitively and carefully.
6. Birmingham Child Contact Centre is committed to creating and implementing policies and procedures that will ensure where risks need to be taken regarding children and young people they are both fully assessed and carefully managed.
7. Birmingham Child Contact Centre also subscribes strongly to the view that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**. Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
8. Birmingham Child Contact Centre endorses the guidance in "Working Together" (see note 3 above) about the importance of developing a "child centred approach." It states:
 - "Effective safeguarding systems are child centred. Failings in safeguarding systems are too often the result of losing sight of the needs and views of the children within them, or placing the interests of adults ahead of the needs of children."
 - "Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs."

Birmingham Child Contact Centre believes in listening to the "**Voice of the Child**" by both observation and by directly listening to their play, interaction and demeanour, this is followed by direct discussion in an empathetic environment. Observation is key with children who are too young to understand or interact with. It is recommended to read the NSPCC document "How can we hear and facilitate the voice of the child? Found here: -

[How can we hear and facilitate the voice of the child? Practice points | NSPCC Learning](#)

Additional learning with regard to the importance of a child's voice can be found in NSPCC's case study document, where listening was a key factor, see [Voice of the child: learning from case reviews](#)

9. A child-centred approach adopted by Birmingham Child Contact Centre is supported by:
 - the Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004). This Act requires local authorities to give due regard to a child's wishes when determining what services to provide under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. These duties complement requirements relating to the wishes and feelings of children who are, or may be, looked after (section 22(4) Children Act 1989), including those who are provided with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and children taken into police protection (section 46(3)(d) of that Act);
 - the Equality Act 2010 which puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs; and
 - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the

UNCRC in 1991 and, by doing so, recognises children's rights to expression and receiving information."

- Whilst the above are of great importance, additional applicable policies and legislation relating to the safeguarding of children are also provided by Birmingham Child Contact Centre during its information sharing and training sessions.

10. Birmingham Child Contact Centre is committed to ensuring that all its trustees, coordinators and volunteers are aware of, kept up to date with and operate in accordance with good practice in relation with Safeguarding and Child Protection. This will mean that they will have the ability to recognise, respond to, report, record and refer issues of Safeguarding and Child Protection.
11. Birmingham Child Contact Centre recognises the difference between Child Protection and Safeguarding namely:

Child Protection is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect ("Working Together... 2010"). It involves recognising signs and symptoms of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect and acting upon them.

Safeguarding involves keeping children and young people safe from a much wider range of potential dangers and/or harm. It looks at preventative action rather than just reactive action.

12. Birmingham Child Contact Centre is committed to ensuring that all its trustees, coordinators and volunteers are aware of, kept up to date with, and operate in accordance with good practice in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection. This will mean that they will have the ability to recognise, respond to, report, record and refer issues of Safeguarding and Child Protection.
13. Birmingham Child Contact Centre firmly believes that all volunteers, coordinators and trustees acknowledge the following:
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organization should play their full part; and
 - A child-centred approach is vital for services to be effective; i.e. services should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.
14. For clarity, Birmingham Child Contact Centre offers the following definitions to the following terms:

Definition of Safeguarding:

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect from harm.

Safeguarding means...

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Definition of Child protection:

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures that detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Safeguarding children and child protection and guidance and legislation applies to children up to the age of 18, when they become an adult.

Definition of Child Abuse:

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.

An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It often happens over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event. And it can increasingly, happen online.

The NSPCC estimate that over half a million children are abused in the UK each year.

Definition of Neglect:

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse.

A child may be left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care.

A child may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm.

They may not get the love, care and attention they need from their parents.

A child who is neglected will often suffer from other abuse as well. Neglect is dangerous and can cause serious, long-term damage - even death.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Definition of Significant Harm:

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of 'Significant Harm' as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Intentions

Managing safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within Birmingham Child Contact Centre

Birmingham Child Contact Centre will have one Volunteer who will be responsible for ensuring that the Policy and its processes are implemented and adhered to. This person is the Volunteer & Families Coordinator.

Birmingham Child Contact Centre will also have one trustee who has specific responsibilities for all matters referring to Safeguarding and Child Protection. This trustee's details are noted on the Contact Centre's, Contact Information Document; or via email: Safeguarding@birmccc.org.uk

Recruitment

Disclosure and Barring Service

When recruiting Birmingham Child Contact Centre trustees, coordinators and volunteers who have unsupervised access to children, Birmingham Child Contact Centre will adhere to a thorough and standardised procedure that will include making appropriate checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) which helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. (It replaced the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA):

- When first joining the organisation a DBS check to the enhanced level will be obtained, and every three years thereafter, this applies to all trustees and volunteers.
- Completing and signing a standard application form and a full CV including a written statement of their suitability for the post applied for.

- Signing a personal declaration of eligibility stating any criminal convictions including those considered to be spent
- Being asked to provide a minimum of two character references (excluding family members and those that have known the applicant personally for less than two years)
- Reading, understanding, accepting and complying with Birmingham Child Contact Centre's Policy for Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as part of the terms and conditions of their appointment as a Volunteer or trustee.

This procedure must be followed before any appointments are confirmed.

Any individual or organization undertaking relevant work for Birmingham Child Contact Centre on a contractual basis will need to demonstrate that they have procedures in place to carry out DBS and or other checks on their staff to an appropriate level.

Birmingham Child Contact Centre's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will also extend to the following in collaboration with its umbrella organisation:

- National Association of Child Contact Centre's (NACCC) accreditation and re-accreditation processes for its member centres requiring them to ensure that all their staff and volunteers are DBS checked to an enhanced level either when they first become involved with the centre or every three years.
- National Association of Child Contact Centre's (NACCC) ensuring that its staff, trustees and member centres are all aware of and kept up to date with good practice and procedural changes in relation to DBS check

Education and Training

The Birmingham Child Contact Centre induction process will include "Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children" training for all volunteers, staff and trustees. This is mandatory. Records of all training will be kept by the Volunteers & Families Coordinator and Training Coordinator (where appointed).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children: Training for Birmingham Child Contact Centre

Birmingham Child Contact Centre will produce and regularly update training modules which will be made available by the Volunteers & Families Coordinator and Training Coordinator. Copies of these policies are also on BCCC's website.

- Birmingham Child Contact Centre will dispense training for volunteers and coordinators regularly and at least every three years.
- Birmingham Child Contact Centre will encourage its volunteers, coordinators and trustees to operate in accordance with Birmingham City Council's Local Safeguarding Children's Board's (LSCB) policies and procedures.
- Birmingham Child Contact Centre will help its volunteers, coordinators and trustees to be aware of legislation, guidelines and directives updates as and when they are issued.
- There is a National Domestic Violence Unit helpline available on 0800 800 0028, Birmingham Children's Services have an Emergency Duty Team available on 0121 675 4806. NACCC has a dedicated Saturday safeguarding helpline 07540 703577 operating from 10:00 am to 6:00pm all run by trained members of staff to provide guidance and support when working with Safeguarding or Child Protection concerns.

- In addition, Birmingham Child Contact Centre provides the following guides for training and instructional purposes: -
 - a) Applicable policies and legislation relating to the safeguarding children
 - b) Family Law – Children Arrangement Procedures Flowchart – issued by MOJ.

Support and Supervision

- All volunteers, coordinators and trustees with direct access to information about or relating to children will be given on-going support by those in a supervisory position. It is the responsibility of the Volunteers & Families Coordinator and Trustee for Safeguarding to identify and provide the support required by all levels of the charity.

Sharing Information

Birmingham Child Contact Centre trustees, coordinators and volunteers will follow a procedure that ensures that every safeguarding issue brought to the attention of Birmingham Child Contact Centre trustees, coordinators and volunteers is logged correctly and followed up to ensure that information is shared correctly with the relevant agencies. NACCC have created a step-by-step process designed to enable a prompt decision making process and have also issued a reporting document specifically for this reporting process; examples of both are to be found at the end of this document.

Providing Advice and Support

Birmingham Child Contact Centre will ensure that Safeguarding is a rolling agenda item in all Management Meetings.

Failing to follow or non-compliance with recognized procedures and good practice in relation to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by Birmingham Child Contact Centre's trustees, coordinators and volunteers will generate support, information and training processes.

In more serious cases involving Birmingham Child Contact Centre's trustees, coordinators or volunteers the people involved could be removed from the board of trustees or their role as a volunteer, by the Chair of the Board.

Distribution of Birmingham Child Contact Centre's Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection

A copy of this policy will be:

- Included in the Birmingham Child Contact Centre Handbook and Guidance Notes for trustees.
- Sent to all of Birmingham Child Contact Centre's volunteers
- Made available on its website
- Made available to all of Birmingham Child Contact Centre's partner organisations, where applicable.

Review of Birmingham Child Contact Centre's Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection

This will take place annually.

Additional changes to take account of new legislation and practice directions will also be made as and when required.

Copies of the revised policy will be made available as indicated in the distribution list shown above.

Helpline

NACCC have a dedicated phone-line 07540 703577 to help safeguard everyone using or working at BCCC. We are advised that if there is immediate risk of harm to a child or adult during contact or once contact has ended and the family have left their premises to contact the out of hours Children's/Social Services team or the local police.

We can call the helpline for various reasons:

- a. To check if you are unsure what to do regarding a safeguarding concern.
- b. To let us know that an incident has occurred and what you have done about it.
- c. The person on the helpline will possibly advise you to complete the Safeguarding Reporting Form with as much detail as possible and send this to any agency as agreed with a copy being sent in any event to NACCC on contact@naccc.org.uk as soon as possible but by the Monday following the call.

Please send any safeguarding forms to NACCC via Egress secure email.

NB! Please note that the safeguarding number is for member use only and should not be shared outside of BCCC.

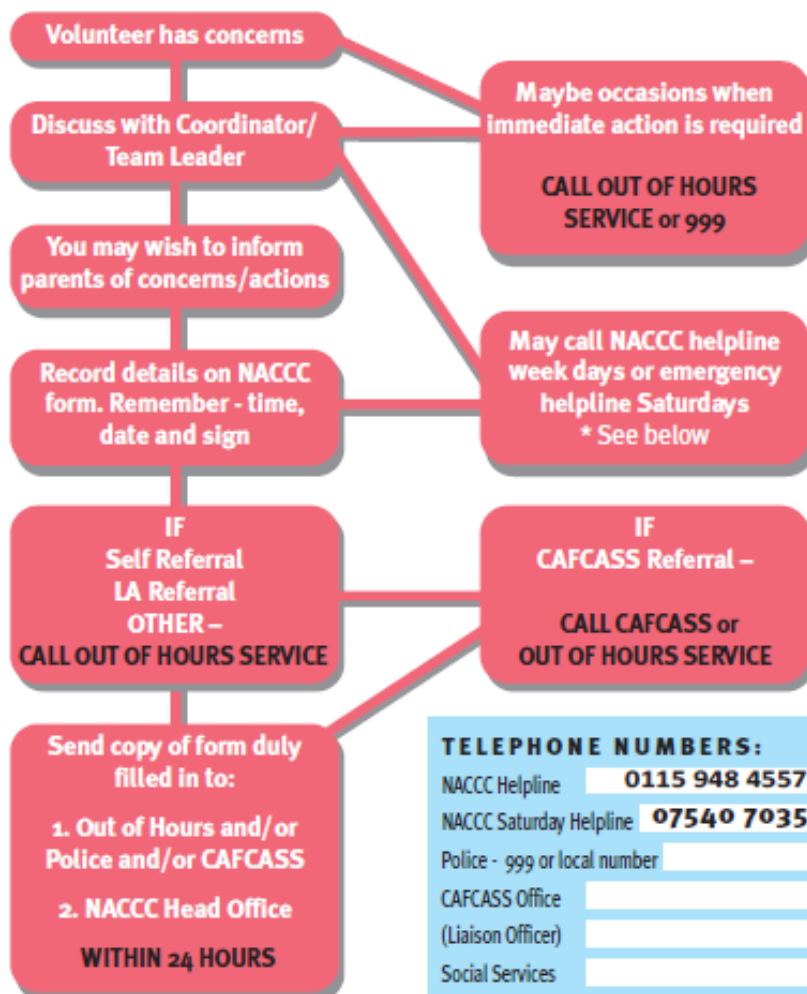
Examples of a step-by-step guide for incident reporting and an inter-agency reporting form are provided in the following pages.

Safeguarding is a preventative measure

If you think a child may be in danger, discuss the perceived problem with your co-ordinator/team leader. If your co-ordinator is not available and you are still concerned, call the Out of Hours number and/or the police.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE

What to do when you have concerns about Safeguarding...



Before a session starts, all volunteers should know **who they must contact, who is the named safeguarding person** and have the relevant telephone numbers to hand

TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

NACCC Helpline	0115 948 4557
NACCC Saturday Helpline	07540 703577
Police - 999 or local number	
CAFCASS Office	
(Liaison Officer)	
Social Services	
Out of Hours	
LSCB	
Centre Name	
Named Safeguarding Person	
Contact No 1	
Contact No 2	

Be familiar with: • 'child abuse – signs and symptoms' • 'Responding and reacting to a child making an allegation of abuse' – (www.naccc.org.uk/members/safeguarding) • NACCC Publications © 2012. • Registered Charity No. 1078636.

Safeguarding Recording/Reporting Form



- This form must be used to record information about a safeguarding concern. It can also be used to send information about the concern to Children's Services or your local Safeguarding Board within 24 hours of the concern arising.
- When completing the form **please use facts wherever possible** and distinguish between fact, observation, opinion, and information from others.

Name of Person completing the form:	
Position:	
Name of centre/service:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Email:	

Name of family causing concern:	
Address:	
Telephone number:	

Names, date of birth and gender of child/ren causing concern and any siblings:		
Name	Date of birth	Gender
What is the child/ren's first language?		
Do any of the children have special needs? (Please indicate)		Yes
		No
If 'Yes', please give details		
Names of any other household members or significant others involved with the children.		
Name	Relationship to child	

People contacted:				
Name	Organisation	Telephone number	Date	Time

Referral Status (Please Indicate)		
Supervised Contact Y / N	Supported Contact Y / N	
Mediation Y / N	Social Services Y / N	Private Law referral Y / N
Court Order Y / N	Self-referral Y / N	SRS (Safe Referral System) Y / N

Names of other agencies and workers involved with the family/children		
Contact name of worker	Agency of worker	
Nature/reason for your concern		
Please give an opinion as to whether the children may need urgent action to make them safe		
Has a parent with parental responsibility given consent for a referral to Children's Services or a Safeguarding Board to be made? (Please indicate)	Yes	No

Please record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.					
Name:		Date		Time	

Copy of this form has been sent within 24 hours to: (please complete and indicate method of sending form) In any event the form must be sent to the NACCC office.					
Organisation	Email	Post	Web Form	Time	Date
Police					
Out of hours Services					

Cafcass					
NACCC head office					
Other (please specify)					