



Registered Charity No. 1079216

The Bridge Counselling Service  
The Angel Centre  
1 Angel Place  
Worcester WR1 3QN

01905 731850

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **1. Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is defined as the protection of a person's health, wellbeing, and right to live in safety, free from harm, abuse, and neglect ('Central Government Care and Support Statutory Guidance' 2018). It involves being alert to possible signs of abuse and acting on those concerns.

This policy is designed to reduce to a minimum those situations where it may be possible for vulnerable adults to be mistreated or abused. Vulnerable adults are defined in the Care Act of 2014, as 'adults who need care and support who are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse and neglect and are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect'. Trustees of the Bridge Counselling Service are committed to nurturing, protecting and safeguarding all adult (over the age of 18yrs) clients and staff in its care. Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the agency follows statutory and specialist guidelines in working with vulnerable adults or adults at risk. This policy is designed to reduce to a minimum those situations where it may be possible for vulnerable adults to be mistreated out abused.

### **2. Safeguarding Lead Officer:**

Safeguarding Lead Officer is the Chair of Trustees  
Dr Linda Watson  
Tel:01905 731850  
chair@b-c-w.org.uk

### **3. Safeguarding: Responsibility**

All clients are safeguarded regardless of age, gender, sexuality, social status or faith. Safeguarding and good working practices are the responsibility of everyone at the Bridge working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experiences of abuse or neglect of clients, wherever possible, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs when deciding on any action. **It is the responsibility of all counsellors and administrative staff of the Bridge to report any abuse, suspected or discovered.**

#### **4. Abuse or neglect of an adult who has need for care and support**

Abuse and neglect can take many forms. It may sometimes be deliberate, but it may be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. It may also arise from frustration or lack of support. Potentially, anyone, adult or child, can be the abuser of an adult - examples include a family member, relative, carer, neighbour, voluntary worker, another vulnerable adult, confidence trickster. It must also be recognised that adults 'sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear of unrealistic about their personal circumstances' (Statutory Guidance, 2018)

#### **5. Child Protection**

Whilst the Bridge is an adult counselling agency, it is important to recognise that there may be disclosures made by clients at the Bridge which imply child abuse or neglect. The UK Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) defines child protection as referring to activity undertaken to protect specific children (under the age of 18) who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Child abuse is defined as a 'form of maltreatment of the child'. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting physical or emotional harm, sexual exploitation or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or institution or community setting by those known to them, or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. All indications of possible child abuse or neglect must be taken seriously and, following careful discussion with clients.

#### **6. Categories of abuse**

The Government's Care and Support Statutory Guidance (2018), written to support the Care Act 2014, defines the following categories of abuse: physical, sexual, psychological and emotional, discriminatory financial and material, neglect or acts of omission, domestic, organisational and modern slavery. Additional forms of abuse becoming increasingly prevalent include cyber bullying and sexual grooming. These definitions are described in more detail in Appendix A of this policy.

#### **7. Safe recruitment and training of counsellors and administrative staff/volunteers**

In order to ensure, wherever possible, the safety of clients whilst in our care, Trustees are responsible for the careful recruitment and vetting of all those involved in client work. (See procedures below). Safeguarding policy and practice will be brought to the attention of all existing and new staff. Staff Team Meetings will be the forum where issues can be raised

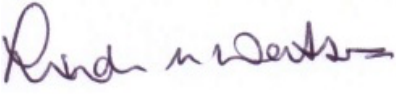
regarding either policy and/or procedures and its implementation as situations arise.

### **8. Safeguarding and Confidentiality**

Trustees will ensure that all counselling at the Bridge takes place within a binding agreement/contract which is discussed and agreed with the client at the start of counselling. This includes a confidentiality clause to protect clients and their disclosures. There may, however, be times when the counsellor's professional and ethical duty to maintain the confidentiality of information disclosed by a client is in conflict with a perceived need to disclose information which is in the public interest or for individual protection.

Procedures for the implementation of such action re safeguarding issues are found in The Bridge Safeguarding Policy in Practice document.

**7. Policy review** Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be maintained and reviewed regularly by Trustees as a constant guide to all the activities of the agency.

Signed: 

Date: 06.03.2023

Next date for Review: March 2025

### **References:**

BACP (2018) Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions BACP

H.M.Government (2018) 'Care and Support Statutory Guidance'

H.M.Government (2014) 'The Care Act'