

Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

Contents

Section 1: Safeguarding Children Policy

Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Policy.....	2
Who is this policy for?.....	2
Commitments.....	3

Section 2: Supporting information

Legal framework.....	3
Contact details for reporting abuse.....	4
Definition of a child.....	5
Abuse and neglect.....	5
Signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.....	5
Risk factors.....	9

Section 3: Safeguarding Children Procedures

Responsibilities.....	10
Recognising abuse.....	10
Recording and reporting abuse.....	12
What happens when a concern is reported?.....	13
Allegations against a member of staff, volunteer or another organisation.....	14
Allegations made against a child involved in Back Up.....	14
Whistleblowing.....	15

Section 1: Safeguarding Children Policy

Introduction

Back Up believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to a practice which protects them.

Whilst we acknowledge that Education and Health and Care plans can be applicable to the age of 25 for disabled young people, for the purpose of this document, anyone under the age of 18 will be considered as a child.

We aim to provide young people and children with a safe and supportive environment in which they can realise their full potential. Back Up, including our volunteers, uses our values to guide everything we do, including our partnership with each-other.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children/young people regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- Disabled children and young people are three to four times more likely to experience abuse.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Back Up to safeguarding children and to ensure that everyone involved in Back Up is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding children.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding children.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of a child within the organisation.

Back Up commits to safeguarding children who receive Back Up's services, including the children of adult members or users, by:

- protecting children/young people from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children/young people's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children/young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children/young people to have the best outcomes.

Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone providing support on behalf of Back Up.

Commitments

We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Appointing a designated person for safeguarding, a deputy and a lead trustee
- Implementing an effective e-safety policy
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made. We request DBS checks on a 3-year basis (with staff consent) to re-check staff's criminal history and suitability to work with children. We also request two written references as part of safe recruitment, before someone begins their role.
- Sharing information about child protection policy and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers (e.g., avoid spending time with young people unobserved)
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring we have a procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Actively working to build and maintain a safe culture in our organisation, so that all members of our workforce and all involved feel able to share concerns.
- Provide annual child protection training for all staff, volunteers and Trustees, highlighting the reasons disabled children are at increased risk of abuse and neglect and why additional safeguards are needed to protect them
- Being committed to anti-discriminatory practice in all our work by having a zero tolerance to racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia and discrimination towards any other protected characteristic

Section 2: Supporting information

Legal Framework

It has been informed by guidance from the NSPCC and consideration of the legal and rights framework including:

- [The Children Act 1989 and 2004](#)
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991](#)
- [Data Protection Act 1998](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)
- [Special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities: HM Government 2014](#)
- [Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people and carers: HM Government 2015](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: HM Government 2018 \(with updates July 2022\)](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) \(Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679\)](#)

- [The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)
- [The Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) Act 2003](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)
- [The Online Safety Act 2023](#)

The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.' (WTSC page 19).

This policy should be read alongside our child protection procedures; code of safe conduct; guidance for data sharing; safer recruitment procedures; online safety policy; and our health and safety policy.

Contact details for reporting abuse

Designated safeguarding person (DSP) for children and young people

Dominic Ridley

020 8078 2942 / dominic@backuptrust.org.uk

Designated safeguarding person (DSP) for adults

Katie Mitchell

020 8078 2939 / katie@backuptrust.org.uk

Senior Lead for Safeguarding

Anne Luttmann-Johnson

Chair of Services Committee (Trustee)

Local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

All Referrals – MASH@wandsworth.gov.uk

Telephone - 020 8871 6622

CEOP

www.ceop.police.uk

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

Definition of child

Child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are both forms of maltreatment of a child/young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child/young person by inflicting harm, or by not acting to prevent harm.

Children/young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting: by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Disabled children/young people are more likely to experience abuse than their non-disabled peers.

It can happen to any child/young person. Abuse is always wrong, and it is never the child/young person's fault.

Signs and indicators of abuse and neglect

Physical abuse

What is it?

When children are hurt by parents or other people. For example, hitting, kicking, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, beating with objects, throwing and shaking are all types of physical abuse. Injuries can be pain, cuts, bruises and broken bones and even death. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Children living in a home where there is domestic violence are also considered to need protection even if the violence is not towards them.

Signs of physical abuse

Bumps and bruises don't always mean the child is being physically abused. All children have accidents, trips and falls. There isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for, but it's important to be aware of the signs.

If a child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported. Examples of signs include bruises, burns, bite marks, seizures, swelling, vomiting, extremely sleepy, unusual behaviour.

Sexual abuse

What is it?

There are 2 types of sexual abuse – contact and non-contact abuse.

Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. This includes sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not, using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child, forcing a child to take part in sexual activities, making a child undress or touch someone else.

Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes exposing or flashing; showing pornography; exposing a child to sexual acts; making them masturbate; forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos; forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

Sign of sexual abuse

Knowing the signs of sexual abuse can help give a voice to children. Sometimes children won't understand that what's happening to them is wrong, or they might be scared to speak out. Some of the signs you might notice include emotional or behavioural such as self-harm, drug/alcohol misuse, changes in eating habits, avoiding being alone or frightened of a person they know. Some of the signs you might notice include physical such as bruises, pregnancy, bleeding, soreness in genital or anal area, sexually transmitted infections.

Neglect

What is it?

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. It can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Neglect can be a lot of different things, which can make it hard to spot. Broadly speaking, there are 4 types of neglect; **Physical neglect** where a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe; **educational neglect** where a parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education; **emotional neglect** where a child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them; **medical neglect** where a child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

Signs of neglect

Neglect can be difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while they might show there's a serious problem. Signs may include poor appearance and hygiene such as unwashed, dirty or smelly clothes; health and development problems such as untreated injuries, medical or dental issues, regular illness, missed appointments; housing and family issues such as being left alone for a long time, living in an unsuitable home environment, or taking on role to care for other family members; or change in behaviour such as missing school, becoming aggressive, depressed, clingy or withdrawn.

Domestic abuse

What is it?

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. It's important to remember domestic abuse can happen inside and outside the home; can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites; can happen in any relationship and can continue even after a relationship has ended; both men and woman can be abused or abusers.

Domestic abuse can be emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological, such as kicking, hitting, punching or cutting; rape (including in relationship); controlling behaviour; not letting someone leave the house; reading emails, text messages or letters; threatening to kill someone or arm them; threatening to another family member or pet.

Signs of domestic abuse

It can be difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening and those carrying out abuse can act very different when other people are around. Children and young people might also feel frightened and confused, keeping the abuse to themselves.

Signs that a child has witnessed domestic abuse can include aggression or bullying; anti-social behaviour, like vandalism; anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts; attention seeking; bed wetting, nightmares or insomnia; constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers; drug or alcohol use; eating disorders; problems in school or trouble learning; tantrums; withdrawal.

Children affected by domestic abuse are automatically treated as victims regardless of whether they were present during violent incidents.

Emotional abuse

What is it?

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. Emotional abuse is often part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own. It can include blaming or scapegoating, humiliating or constantly criticising a child, not allowing a child to have friends, persistently ignoring a child, threatening a child, manipulating, never saying anything kind or positive.

Signs of emotional abuse

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect. A child might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. Signs can include seeming unconfident or lacking self-assurance; struggle to control their emotions; have difficulty making or maintaining relationships; act in a way that's inappropriate for their age. Signs in babies and toddlers include being overly affectionate to strangers or people they don't know well; seem unconfident or anxious; not have a close relationship or bond with their parent. Signs in older children include having extreme outbursts; seem isolated from their parents; struggle to control their emotions.

There are also other emerging types and methods of child abuse, including but not limited to:

- Female genital mutilation (FGM)*
- Trafficking of children/young people in order to exploit them sexually, financially, via domestic servitude, or via the involvement in activity such as the production and sale of illegal drugs
- Abuse linked to beliefs such as spirit possession or witchcraft
- Radicalisation and the encouragement or coercion to become involved in terrorist attacks
- Online abuse (including to bully, groom and exploit)
- Bullying** and cyberbullying
- Criminal exploitation and gangs

- Grooming, including county lines (where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries, although not exclusively, usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs). Disabled children and young people are often considered to be more vulnerable to this type of abuse.

***Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003 provides a mandatory duty for reporting FGM. This legislation requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they either:

- Are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

****Bullying**

Any incident of bullying must take into account the needs of the person being bullied; the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour; needs of any bystanders; and our organisation as a whole. Action should be taken in the same way as any other safeguarding concern. The Back UP DSO will consider the needs of all parties when taking action. For example; those accused of alleged bullying (or those witnessing) could be vulnerable individuals themselves and reporting should reflect this.

Bullying may also occur in connection to protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex), or any intersectionality which create further levels of vulnerability.

Other causes for concern can include but not limited to:

- mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered abuse, neglect or exploitation
- a child/young person's risk of homelessness and the duty to refer early on to a housing authority if this is suspected, especially with 16 and 17 year olds

Risk factors

Safeguarding disabled children and young people

Children/young people who have disabilities are at an increased risk of being abused compared with their non-disabled peers (Jones et al, 2012). They are also less likely to receive the protection and support they need when they have been abused (Taylor et al, 2014).

Factors that contribute to disabled children/young people being at a greater risk of abuse include:

- Communication barriers
- Increased isolation
- Dependency on others
- Inadequate support
- Misunderstanding the signs of abuse

Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people

We recognise the additional risks and vulnerability factors for LGBTQ+ children and young people.

Concerns about LGBTQ+ children and young people should be dealt with sensitively, taking into consideration any complicated feelings they might have about their sexuality or gender identity.

You should be mindful that LGBTQ+ children and young people might not want to or feel ready to come out to everyone in their life. It is important to understand that sharing a child or young person's gender identity or sexuality might put them at additional risk if the person you tell is not supportive. You should only share information about a child or young person's sexuality or gender identity if they give you permission, or if it's relevant to a child protection concern such as if they are using adult dating apps.

Safeguarding children and young people who come from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities

We recognise that many children and young people who come from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities experience racism, bias, stereotyping or cultural misunderstanding as they grow up.

When supporting children, young people and families from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities, make sure:

- you use the same safeguarding process for all children.
- you include all the factors that affect the child's life.
- your decisions are evidence-based.
- acknowledge the additional barriers they may face.
- acknowledge that child-rearing practices may be different between and within communities.
- acknowledge and challenge any preconceptions you have about the community you are working with.
- ask about the community's cultural traditions and values.
- Consider how difference in language (particularly where English is not the young person's or their parent/carers first language) and what additional support might be required, such as translation services

Section 3: Safeguarding Children Procedures

Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We recognise that all adults and children have a basic right to live free from abuse and neglect and we will support our service users to achieve this right. We also recognise that

our services users have a right to make decisions about their lives and so we always seek to work with them to enable this to happen.

We provide a range of services for children and adults affected by spinal cord injury, including; courses, wheelchair skills, telephone support, education inclusion, and mentoring. The people who we support may be vulnerable or at risk of abuse because of a range of factors. We have a duty to comply with both our statutory responsibilities and with our partner local and health authority safeguarding procedures.

Anyone working for or providing support on behalf of Back Up has a safeguarding responsibility. This includes (but not limited to) senior managers, Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone else providing support on behalf of Back Up.

As part of your responsibility, you must read all the Safeguarding Policies, Procedures, and Code of Conduct referred to here.

Recognising abuse

If someone has disclosed something to you or you have a gut feeling something isn't right, follow **the three Rs**:

- **Recognise** an issue, listen carefully to what that person has to say and don't try to interject.
- **Record** it as accurately as possible, and in the person's own words.
- **Report** it to a member of Back Up staff and/or the Back Up safeguarding team asap. Back Up staff should do this via the Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form. Proof is not required to report a safeguarding concern. All that is required is that there are reasonable grounds to suspect a safeguarding concern.

How you could recognise abuse:

- A child/young person might tell you
- Someone else might tell you a child/young person has told them, or that they strongly believe a child/young person has been or is being abused
- A child/young person might show some signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- A child/young person's behaviour may indicate to you that it is possible that he or she is being abused
- Something in the behaviour of a staff member, volunteer, parent or young person, or in the way they relate to a child/young person, alerts you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way
- You observe one child/young person abusing another

In some cases, for the welfare of the child, we may need to share information with other agencies to ensure they and their family get the support they need to keep them safe.

Our **code of conduct** gives guidelines on safe behaviour (e.g. avoid spending time with young people unobserved) and is there to protect you as well as children and young people. Please ensure that you read it fully.

If a staff member or volunteer has any concerns about a child/young person they must always place the child's welfare and interests as the paramount consideration. It is essential that you pass on any concern immediately

to someone from the safeguarding team in office hours or if out of hours. Katie Mitchell is the point of contact for out of hours on 020 8078 8573.

Our safeguarding team consists of:

- Designated Safeguarding Children Officer – (Dominic Ridley)
- Designated Safeguarding Adults Officer - (Katie Mitchell)
- Director of Services, (Kevin Filby)
- Chief Executive, (Abigail Lock)
- Senior Lead for Safeguarding and Trustee (Chair of Services Committee)

If an employee believes a child (or adult) to be at immediate risk of harm or abuse, and/or a criminal offence is taking place, they must take immediate steps to protect that person by calling 999. Employees must then contact their line manager or the out of office hours safeguarding contact (Chris Yeates on 020 8078 8573) to let them know what has happened and to take advice on next steps.

In your role, you may have limited opportunity to recognise a cause for concern with a child. But it is really important that if you were at all concerned about a child, you would know what to do. Back Up volunteers across our services receive a child protection training session during training weekends so that they can fully understand these procedures, including what would be a cause for concern, and be able to discuss different scenarios and what they should do.

It is important to create an environment where children/young people feel able to disclose abuse or talk about anything that is concerning them. Children and young people need to be able to recognise abuse, know that it is wrong and be aware of who they can talk to about it. You can help to make this possible by:

- Build trust by treating children with respect.
- Be positive about children and reinforce positive messages about those who seek help.
- Encourage parents to support their child/young person in seeking help.

Barriers to disclosing abuse

Children/young people may find it difficult to disclose abuse because they:

- Feel like they may not be believed or taken seriously.
- Feel worried or embarrassed.
- Fear the consequences of asking for help.
- Worry they will make the situation worse.
- Find formal procedures overwhelming.

Recording and reporting an allegation of abuse

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully and actively to what is said.
- **Reflect back** what you have been told to check your understanding.
- Take it **seriously**.
- **Don't react strongly** or jump to conclusions.

- Find an appropriate early opportunity, if possible and it doesn't put the child at risk to explain that it is likely the information will need to be shared with others – **do not promise to keep secrets**.
- Allow the child to continue at his/ her own pace.
- Do not investigate. Ask questions of individuals for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer. If anything needs to be clarified in order to understand the safeguarding risk, ask clear, open questions – tell, explain, describe (TED) can be a helpful way of remembering the kinds of questions that it's okay to ask.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing, within 24 hours, what was said and using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure the record is signed and dated. Do not use your phone to take photos or write the report as it could be taken away and then the record is lost.
- If the child is under the duty of care of the hospital, consult Back Up's **Designated Safeguarding Children Officer or someone from the safeguarding team listed above**, as soon as reasonably possible They will advise on the best course of action to be taken.
- In any case, you should report any concern to Back Up's **Designated Safeguarding Children Officer or someone from the safeguarding team listed above**, within 24 hours to notify them about what happened and what action was taken.
- Where there is a serious and immediate threat to a child or young person or adult then you should phone the police/ ambulance on 999 as the first point of action.
- Remember you are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has or has not occurred, and that concerns about the welfare of a child always override any concerns about confidentiality. It is your responsibility to report any concern.
- Reflect on your learnings from the safeguarding process by debriefing after any concern with Back Up's Designated Safeguarding Children Officer, member of the safeguarding team and/ or your line manager.

Remember you are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has or has not occurred, and that concerns about the welfare of a child always override any concerns about confidentiality. It is your responsibility to report any concern. The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe.

Reflect on your learnings from the safeguarding process by debriefing after any concern with Back Up's Designated Safeguarding Children Officer, member of the safeguarding team and/or your line manager.

Support for you

After exposure to something concerning, feeling anxious about someone's welfare is normal. It's important you share how you feel, be in contact with a Back Up staff member, the safeguarding team or a mentoring supervisor.

People can feel guilty after passing on a safeguarding concern; they might feel they have shared personal information inappropriately. In fact, as stated in Back Up's [Confidentiality Policy](#), it is the duty of all those involved with Back Up to pass on any concerns about someone's welfare. Service users are made aware of the Back Up confidentiality policy when they agree to receive support services from Back Up, for example they sign up to a Back Up course or to receive mentoring.

Training and Ongoing Support

All staff, including senior managers and the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone providing support on behalf of Back Up will receive an introduction to our Safeguarding policy and procedures at their induction.

Back Up will offer annual safeguarding refreshers for staff delivered by the safeguarding leads. Volunteers will also be trained on Back Up's safeguarding procedures at their initial training events and be given refresher sessions at development days.

Back Up's role in safeguarding the welfare of staff, volunteers and service users includes recruiting staff and volunteers safely and ensuring all necessary checks are made.

Back Up also have a duty to provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision and ongoing training and support.

What happens when a concern is reported?

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, they may have experienced bereavement in the family.

However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk were such concerns to be shared, e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately.

In these situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation, or incident of abuse must be reported to the person in charge as soon as possible and recorded.

If a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, we may decide to share information with appropriate agencies or professionals without the child/young person's or their parent's consent.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer, with support from other members of the safeguarding team will consider whether to:

- 1) Contact MASH or the devolved equivalent of MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) or local social services to make a referral or seek further advice
- 2) Call the police / ambulance
- 3) Gather further information / initiate an Early Help Assessment

If there is any uncertainty around what next steps to take, the local MASH or the devolved equivalent of MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub) or the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000) will be contacted to seek further advice.

Allegations against a member of staff, volunteer or another organisation

These procedures also apply if there is an allegation or suspicion against a worker (staff or volunteer) of Back Up or another organisation.

In the event of allegations of abuse, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed of all allegations that come to Back Up's attention and appear to meet the criteria to discuss the content of the allegation.

Allegations made against a child involved in Back Up

When a child abuses another child, this can be referred to as 'peer-on-peer abuse'. They may not realise that they are doing so and could include behaviour such as bullying, online abuse, sexting, sexual abuse, emotional or physical abuse. Sometimes children also may be abusive towards adults.

If allegations have been made against a child you should speak to your nominated child protection lead, who can advise you on the best way to proceed. It is really important to do this, so you respond in the appropriate way and avoid making the behaviour worse. The needs of everyone involved need to be considered.

A child may tell you themselves that they have behaved abusively. Use non-judgemental language when responding to them and let them know that they've done the right thing in telling you. Reassure the child that they can get help to change their behaviour and remember that they may need support too – you could suggest that they contact ChildLine. You should also report this to Back Ups' DSO for Children.

You might see a child behaving inappropriately and decide to talk to them about this immediately, in order to manage the behaviour. It is important to remember that they may not realise their behaviour is unacceptable.

Talk to them calmly and explain why their behaviour is unsuitable and what they can do to improve it. You can read more about how to manage behaviour in our [Code of Conduct](#).

Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about any wrongdoing or unsafe practice and the senior leadership team will always take such concerns seriously. The wrongdoing might have happened in the past, be happening now, or be something the whistleblower is concerned may happen in the near future (Gov.uk, 2019).

Legislation across the UK ensures that you shouldn't be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle' (Gov.uk, 2021).

You should refer in the first instance to Back Up's [Whistleblowing Policy](#) for information and guidance.

Members of Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.