

BAPT Child Protection & Safeguarding Guidelines

Introduction

BAPT is committed to supporting members to safeguard and protect children from harm. Staff, members and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of issues, which cause children, and young people harm.

Child Protection Definition

‘Child Protection’ means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place, it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a ‘likelihood or risk’ of significant harm from abuse or neglect. Child Protection is the responsibility of all who work with children and families, regardless of whether this work brings them into direct work with children.

Play therapists involved in offering direct support to children and their legal guardians / parents or carers, may have contact with children at risk of harm in the course of their duties.

Administrative workers, volunteers, trainee or qualified play therapists may also become aware of situations where a child may be at risk of being harmed, or is being harmed.

It is important that all paid or unpaid workers are alert to signs of either physical harm, neglect or emotional abuse and take appropriate action to safeguard children who may be at risk of exposure to harm. For ease of reference, the term 'worker' within this document refers to both paid and paid staff.

The following outlines in detail what steps must be taken to safeguard children at risk where any form of abuse may be suspected. It outlines our commitment and obligation to equip play therapists / workers with the skills & knowledge to be able to deliver child safeguarding policy safely.

Key Principles - All workers must:

- Be alert to and act on indications that a child may be being harmed or be at risk of harm;
- Be clear about their responsibilities in safeguarding the protection of children at risk;
- Act in accordance with agency Child Protection Policy procedures and guidance on children in need of support and protection.
- Never act alone, except in an emergency.

Action to take if a member suspects that a child may be at risk:

- Members should ALWAYS and IMMEDIATELY discuss any suspicions or concerns with the named Child Protection Officer [CPO] within the service they are operating and their clinical supervisor.
- Members must be ready to provide the CPO with detailed information to enable them to share essential information with relevant authorities

Investigating a concern

- In exceptional circumstances when the CPO cannot be contacted and a child is in danger, a concerned Worker should bring the matter to the attention of their Local Social Work Safeguarding Services, keep detailed records of contacts and inform the CPO as soon as possible.

- Regional Social Work Department and / or Police as the statutory services, will follow-up and may further investigate any child safety concerns. They will keep the CPO informed [please refer to regional Child Protection documentary guidelines]
- All parties should be treated with sensitivity and respect.
- The CPO in cooperation with the Worker may keep the child and legal guardians / parents / adult carers informed of their actions, unless such information is likely to put the child in danger, in which case they will inform the regional statutory services relevant to the child safeguarding case being investigated.

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Emergency Contact Phone Numbers

Local day-time Social Work number:

Local after-hours Social Work number:

Local day-time Police Service number:

Local after-hours Police Service number:

Each UK nation has its own child protection legislation and guidance:

England

In England, the Department for Education (DfE) provides the key statutory guidance for anyone working with children and young people: Working together to safeguard children (PDF) (DfE), 2018). This sets out how organisations should work together to keep children safe. Sections 57 – 62 set out the requirements for voluntary, charity, social enterprise, faith-based organisations and private sectors.

The DfE's guidance What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (PDF) describes the actions to take if you think a child is being abused or neglected.

The DfE has published a voluntary code of practice for out-of-school settings. It includes advice on safeguarding and child protection, staff suitability, and governance (DfE, 2020).

If your organisation is a registered charity, you must also follow the Charity Commission's guidance.

> Find out more about the safeguarding legislation and guidance for charities

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Health (DOH) has published Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland (DOH, 2017). Section 3.8 sets out how voluntary, charitable, faith and community-based organisations should contribute to keep children safe.

The Revised regional core child protection policies and procedures for Northern Ireland explain what actions people who work with children should take if they have concerns about a child or young person's welfare (Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, 2019).

If your organisation is a registered charity, you must also follow the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance.

> Find out more about the safeguarding legislation and guidance for charities

Scotland

In Scotland, the National guidance for child protection (PDF) provides a framework for anyone who might face child protection issues (Scottish Government, 2014). This includes third sector organisations (voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals).

If your organisation is a registered charity, you must also follow guidance from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Find out more about the safeguarding legislation and guidance for charities

Wales

The Welsh Government has published Working together to safeguard people, a suite of guidance and codes of practice that sets out how agencies and practitioners should work together to safeguard children (Welsh Government, 2019).

Volume 5 (PDF) focuses on handling individual cases to protect children at risk.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures provide a framework for how child protection referrals, actions and plans should be carried out (Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2019).

If your organisation is a registered charity, you must also follow the Charity Commission's guidance.

Find out more about the safeguarding legislation and guidance for charities

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For regional advice on child protection policy, contact your local authority social care department or the NSPCC 24-hour Child Protection helpline on 0808 800 5000. If you're a child or young person and need help or advice, you can call Childline on 0800 1111. Their service is private and confidential.

