



Constitution and Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Safeguarding Board (the Board) is a joint statutory body fulfilling the objectives, functions and responsibilities set out for Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards in the [Children Act 2004](#), [Working Together 2018](#) and the [Care Act 2014](#).

Functions

The Board is responsible for supporting the co-ordination of multi-agency arrangements to protect and safeguard children and adults in Bracknell Forest and for monitoring their effectiveness at a multi-agency strategic level and to assure that:

- Local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and the Children Act 2004 and all relevant statutory guidance.
- Safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused.
- Safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults and children in its area.
- Work collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible.
- Ensure agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred.

The Board will support the three key agencies, namely health, police and the local authority to oversee and coordinate multi-agency arrangements for protecting children and adults, deliver joint strategies and lead the safeguarding system.

The Board is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults and advising them on ways to improve.

The key objectives and responsibilities of the Board are:

- a) To gain appropriate assurance that practice is person-centred and improves outcomes for vulnerable children and adults at risk.
- b) To use the Board's intelligence (gained from its performance and quality assurance activity and listening to the voices of adults and children) to influence the strategic design, commissioning and delivery of multi-agency services to safeguard children and adults and promote welfare.
- c) To approve multi-agency policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults, and the action to be taken where there are concerns about safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention.

- d) To gain assurance of the quality of local practice and to identify areas for further improvement.
- e) To agree standards, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of workforce development, training and learning, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults.
- f) To agree local practice standards as appropriate and to challenge and tackle poor standards where identified.
- g) To monitor and review all deaths of children and oversee the learning from the reviews of deaths of people with learning difficulties normally resident in Bracknell Forest.
- h) To be responsible for commissioning and undertaking Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs), Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and other forms of learning reviews following deaths or serious incidents involving children or adults where safeguarding is an issue.
- i) To produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard children and adults in Bracknell Forest and promote their welfare.
- j) To produce, publish and implement a strategic plan and annual business plan.
- k) To hold the risk and challenge logs for delivering the statutory functions required.
- l) To communicate the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults, raising awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging people to do so.
- m) To share local, regional and national information and learning.
- n) Promote robust challenge and ensure transparent escalation policies and processes are in place
- o) To scrutinise functions of the Safeguarding Partnership and subgroups, and endorse strategies for managing risk and shared decision making

Membership

The core membership of the Board will be made up of:

- Independent Chair and Scrutineer (accountable to and appointed by the Chief Executive of Bracknell Forest Council in consultation with key partners).
- Local authority – Chief Executive with delegated powers to: Executive Director (People), Assistant Director (Children’s Social Care) or Assistant Director (Adult Social Care)
- Police – Chief Constable with delegated powers to: Local Policing Area (LPA) Commander –Thames Valley Police (Bracknell Forest) and the Superintendent for Protecting Vulnerable People (PVPU).
- Health – Clinical Chief Officer with delegated powers to: Managing Director – Bracknell Forest, and/or Director of Nursing from East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group, and the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and named professional East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Activities and Structure of the Safeguarding Board

The Safeguarding Board will:

- Adopt the financial year 1st April – 31st March.
- Keep a written record of all Board meetings, Partnership meetings and meetings of its subgroups.
- All agendas, reports and minutes will be circulated at least five working days before meeting. Minutes will be circulated within ten working days of the meeting.
- Professional advisors and designated professionals will attend the Board as required for specific items.

The Board will operate a Safeguarding Partnership with subgroups which will carry out the operational functions of the Board. The subgroups are:

- Case Review subgroup

- Communication, Engagement and Prevention subgroup (including safeguarding forum)
- Quality Assurance subgroup (including local S.I.I forum)

In addition, there will be:

- An E. Berks Learning and Development subgroup (including local forum)
- Two pan Berkshire policy and procedures subgroups (adults & children)
- Pan-Berks Exploitation subgroup (children)
- Pan-Berks S.I.I subgroup (children)

Independent Chair & Scrutineer

The Chair will be accountable to the Bracknell Forest Council Chief Executive, Chief Accountable Officer East Berkshire CCG and the Superintendent Protecting Vulnerable People Unit – Thames Valley Police. The Chair will ensure the Board operates effectively and that all organisations collaborate successfully to co-ordinate and promote the safeguarding agenda.

Business Support and Financial Arrangements

The statutory partners have agreed to the establishment and maintenance of a pooled budget which will be managed by the Local Authority. An annual budget will be published in the Annual Report.

Business support is provided by officers funded by Board member contributions and hosted by the Local Authority. Business support will include developing and progressing Board business, supporting meetings, drafting documents and generally ensuring the Board runs effectively.

Disputes and complaints

The Board is intended to be a collaborative, co-operative body and needs to ensure that no particular sector or member is unduly favoured. Problems and issues should normally be debated and resolved at Board meetings.

Disputes

If there is a dispute between Board members, the Independent Chair will convene a joint meeting with the parties. This should take place within 28 days of determining that the dispute exists. In most cases the Independent Chair will chair these meetings. The agenda will be agreed jointly by the parties in dispute.

If no agreement can be reached, either party to the dispute may suggest to the Chair that an independent mediator be appointed in a further attempt to resolve the dispute.

If there is a dispute between the Independent Chair and a Safeguarding Board partner or any other board, the Chief Executive of BFC will convene a joint meeting of the parties as above. If no agreement can be reached, either party to the dispute may suggest that an independent mediator be appointed in a further attempt to resolve the dispute.

Requests for Information

The Board can require a person or body to comply with a request for information. This can only take place where the information is essential to carrying out Board statutory functions. Any requests for information about individuals must be 'necessary' and 'proportionate' to the reasons for the request. The Board will be mindful of the burden of requests and should explain why the information is needed.

Complaints

The Board shall refer all complaints from members of the public in relation to the provision or performance of any function of a member organisation to the Board partner's own internal complaints handling process.

Complaints regarding the operation of the Board should be addressed to the Chair who will investigate and attempt to reach satisfactory resolution with the complainant. Any unresolved matters will be referred to the Local Authority Ombudsman for decision.

Non-compliance of activities

The work of the Board will be set out in the Strategic Plan. In endorsing the plan, all member agencies will be agreeing their commitment to fulfil their obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults and children. This will include a commitment to fulfilling their role within the Board.

Issues of non-compliance will, in the first instance, be referred to the Chair of the Board who will investigate and attempt to reach satisfactory resolution through discussion with the representative of the agency concerned. In the event of satisfactory resolution not being reached, the matter will be referred back to the Chief Officer within the agency concerned and the Chair will have the right to advise the relevant inspectorate, and, if necessary, the relevant government department. Any decision to take this latter course of action will be discussed with the Board members before being actioned by the Chair.

Monitoring and inspection

The Board's role is to ensure the effectiveness of work to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect by member organisations and as such the Board will monitor and evaluate this through its work. The Board will publish performance against objectives set out in its Strategic Plan within the Annual Report.

Quoracy

The quorum for the Board will consist of one representative from the local authority, police and health plus the Independent Chair.

Frequency of Meetings

Quarterly with additional meetings as required. Meetings will be scheduled to ensure work feeds back to the Partnership meetings in a timely manner.

Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually with the next review due April 2022.