

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

Safeguarding Policy

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Background information about our organisation

The Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC) is a community group, formed in 2006 when a group of local people got together in order to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the Avon New Cut, including its history, geology and wildlife and its role in the development of Bristol's Floating Harbour. FrANC now has a membership of over 180 who share a keen interest in helping both the natural environment of the Avon New Cut to thrive and its visitors and local people to enjoy this green corridor in the heart of Bristol. The organisation is managed by a small steering group (committee) drawn from its membership. There are no paid posts. For further information: www.franc.org

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect all volunteers from any harm or abuse that may be caused to them while they are engaged in an activity or event organised by FrANC. This includes harm arising from the conduct of any member of FrANC and the planning and implementation of any activity organised by FrANC. This policy does not cover safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by a member of FrANC.

As well as setting out the commitments made by FrANC, what follows is intended to inform any member of FrANC of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

The key objectives of this policy are to ensure that all members of FrANC

- have an overview of adult and child safeguarding;
- are clear about their responsibility to safeguard at risk adults;
- take appropriate actions when an adult with care and support needs is deemed to be in an unsafe situation.

What is safeguarding?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights so as to enable them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

As a community group comprising volunteer members, we understand it to mean protecting people - in particular, 'at risk' adults and children – while they participate in any activity or event which we organise, and where they will be in close contact with one of our volunteers. Adult safeguarding duties apply to *any* adult who:

- Has needs for care and support.
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Examples of adults with care and support needs include:

- A person with a physical disability, a learning difficulty or a sensory impairment.
- Someone with mental health needs, including dementia or a personality disorder.
- A person with a long-term health condition.
- Someone who misuses substances or alcohol to the extent that it affects their ability to manage day-to-day living.
- An older person.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all members of FrANC while engaged in any activity or event organised by our organisation. In all that we do, our aim is to create a safe and welcoming environment, where everyone is respected and valued.

This policy is based on the Care Act of 2014 and uses guidance issued by the Government:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance/safeguarding>

It also draws on information set out in Bristol's Safeguarding Adults Policy:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/33728/Bristol+Safeguarding+Adults+Policy2015.pdf>

Policy Statement

FrANC believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. FrANC will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by any of our members.

This policy addresses safeguarding specifically relating to at risk adults and children and we are committed to addressing safeguarding throughout the activities which we

organise, through the three safeguarding pillars of **Prevention, Reporting and Responding**.

PREVENTION

The chairperson of FrANC in conjunction with members of the organisation's steering committee will:

- Ensure all our members have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy. This will be done by emailing the policy to all existing members as well as new members at the point of joining. The policy will also be available via the FrANC website.
- Plan and undertake all our activities and events in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with any member of FrANC. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator and an assistant coordinator who will each undergo a DBS check and will be responsible for this policy in practice (see below).
- Identify at least four members of FrANC who will be prepared to undergo DBS clearance and who will then be asked if their name can be placed on a list held by the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Ensure that at least one of the above people is present at every activity organised by FrANC so that all those taking part are aware of who to report concerns to. The Safeguarding Coordinator her/himself is not required to be present.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.
- Consider whether any additional training in relation to Safeguarding is required and if so, for who.
- Review this policy and procedures in light of changes in legislation.

Safeguarding specifically relating to at risk adults

When working alongside or supporting an at risk adult in a particular activity, members of FrANC must not do anything which makes the person concerned feel ill at ease. Examples of this are engaging in unnecessary physical contact; making personal comments; telling inappropriate jokes; using unpleasant language

Safeguarding children

Although this policy applies specifically to at risk adults, we are also mindful that children might attend FrANC events. In order to safeguard them, we do not allow any child who is not accompanied by a parent, carer, older (adult) sibling or other family member to take part in any activity or event organised by FrANC. The responsibility for safeguarding generally rests with the adult they have come with. However, if FrANC volunteers have a safeguarding concern about a child they should still report this to a FrANC designated safeguarding person.

As for adults, when working alongside or supporting a child in a particular activity, members of FrANC must not do anything which makes the child concerned feel ill at ease. Examples of this are engaging in unnecessary physical contact; making personal comments; telling inappropriate jokes; using unpleasant language.

REPORTING

FrANC will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to all our members and people from the local community who join our activities.

Any person who has a concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the designated safeguarding volunteer who will then take any necessary action.

RESPONDING

FrANC will follow up safeguarding reports according to our policy and procedure, as well as legal and statutory obligations. This will be undertaken by the designated safeguarding volunteer to whom a safeguarding concern has been reported.

Confidentiality

We recognise that it is essential to maintain confidentiality at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to a particular concern and subsequent action should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times. The chairperson of FrANC will be notified of any safeguarding concern and will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate steps are followed.

This Policy in practice

All FrANC volunteers have a duty to be vigilant to signs that all is not well with an adult with support needs. There is a duty to respond to any allegation or suspicion by following the reporting procedures, bearing in mind that not all concerns about adults with support needs relate to abuse as such and there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind. If any person has concerns it is not their responsibility to decide whether or not it amounts to abuse. However, it is their responsibility to take appropriate action and the following sections set out the procedures to be followed in the event of a safeguarding concern.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will be responsible for making decisions and taking appropriate actions in line with the following guidance.

Who do I go to if I am concerned?

At least one designated person for safeguarding will be identified at the start of every event organised by FrANC. **Any member of FrANC, or other person present at or taking part in an activity or event we organise, should report any safeguarding concerns or discuss any queries with the above person.**

Respond

- Get brief details about what has happened and what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation.
- Take emergency action by dialling 999 if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention.
- Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.

1. Report

- Explain to the person the need to report the concerns that s/he or a third party has raised or identified.

2. Record

- Keep a concise written record of the concerns. As far as possible, this record should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed. The person creating the record should give it to the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Records of safeguarding concerns must be treated as confidential and stored in a location where an alleged abuser will not have access to what has been recorded.

3. Refer

In making a decision whether to refer or not, the Safeguarding Coordinator should take the following into account:

- The individual's wishes and preferred outcome. Never promise to keep a disclosure a secret.
- Whether the person has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety.
- The safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs.
- Whether a crime has been committed.

This should inform the decision whether to notify the following:

Social Services & Health

For advice, 'phone Care Direct: 0117 922 2700. Outside Office Hours: 01454 615165

Concern about the well-being of a child: contact the First Response Team on 0117 903 6444

They will offer advice on whether the concern meets the threshold for a formal referral. Referrals can also be made online at

<https://www2.bristol.gov.uk/form/adult-care-andhealth/report-suspected-adult-abuse>.

The Police

The Police is a key safeguarding partner. Involving the Police depends on a number of factors, including:

- Whether the situation is an emergency.
- The views and wishes of the adult at risk.
- Whether a criminal offence as defined by law has been disclosed.
- The exact circumstances surrounding each individual case of suspected abuse or neglect.

In general terms, if there is a reasonable suspicion that a crime may have been committed and the harm caused to the adult concerned was deliberate, malicious or reckless, then it is sensible to have a discussion with the lead officer in the local Police force. **Dial 101 if a crime may have taken place, or you are seeking Police advice.**

The Police need to be involved in an emergency situation if there are concerns that an adult is at immediate risk of serious harm. **In such cases, dial 999.**

The Police have powers to intervene if a person needs immediate assistance due to a health condition, injury or other life-threatening situation.

If the situation is not an emergency, it is important to find out from the person whether they want the police to be involved, especially where there are complex family dynamics or personal relationships.

Risk of harm to others should also be considered in these circumstances, and so the person's wishes would not be the sole consideration.

Family members, carer/s or relatives as appropriate

Seek advice from adult social services first.

In the event of a referral NOT being made, the Safeguarding Coordinator should keep a record of the reasons why this decision was reached.

Giving feedback

The designated safeguarding person dealing with the particular incident is responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern. Feedback may be very limited on a need to know basis and should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the Data Protection Act. If the Police are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage. FrANC will not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry.

Glossary of terms used in this policy

Child: a person under the age of 18

At risk adult: sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Harm: Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

In the context of this policy and the kind of activities which at risk adults might take part in, psychological harm includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming and social isolation.

Sexual abuse: the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Safeguarding: taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. As a community group, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our members or any events or activities that we organise. Safeguarding is at the centre of all we do.

DBS: Disclosure and Barring Service. In the context of this policy, the DBS will carry out a background check of the Safeguarding Coordinator, assistant coordinator and designated people who attend FrANC events.

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This policy has also been informed by reference to the following:

Bristol City Council '*Safe City*' leaflet

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/what-is-safeguarding>

<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/safeguarding-checklist-what-is-safeguarding/>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection>

<https://www.voscur.org/resources/safeguarding>