



Birtley Community Aquatic Centre Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures

Version: 1.0

Revision Date: March 2025

Next Review Date: March 2026

1. Introduction

Birtley Community Aquatic Centre (BCAC) exists to provide leisure facilities and activities that enable the community and schools in the Birtley area and beyond to maintain active, healthy lives. This is achieved through the operation of a swimming pool, swimming lessons, water-based fitness classes, and access for swimming clubs.

BCAC is committed to protecting all individuals using its facilities and services from harm. We recognise that some adults are particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and mistreatment. This policy outlines BCAC's responsibility to safeguard adults at risk with whom it works and acknowledges the duty to respond appropriately to any allegations, reports, or suspicions of abuse.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Safeguarding Adults Policy is to:

- Promote good practice and prevent harm, abuse, and coercion.
- Ensure that any allegations or suspicions of abuse are dealt with appropriately and that the individual experiencing abuse is supported.
- Stop abuse from occurring.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, trustees, subcontractors, work placements, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of BCAC. It specifically relates to the safeguarding of adults at risk, defined as individuals over the age of 18 who:

- Have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and

- Are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- Are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect due to those care and support needs (as per the Care Act, 2014).

4. General Principles

4.1. Commitment to Safeguarding

- BCAC is committed to operating within the legal framework for safeguarding adults as set out in the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

4.2. Prevention of Abuse

- BCAC will take steps to stop abuse or neglect wherever possible, prevent harm, and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.

4.3. Promoting Wellbeing

- BCAC will promote the wellbeing of adults at risk in safeguarding arrangements, ensuring they have control and choice over their lives.

4.4. Raising Awareness

- BCAC will raise awareness of safeguarding adults to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse and neglect.

5. Responsibilities

BCAC will:

- Ensure that all trustees, staff, volunteers, service users (as appropriate), and those working on our behalf understand their duty to protect vulnerable people and those at risk.
- Work within the framework of the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board Policy and Procedures.

- Gain consent from service users before sharing information about them with another agency unless there is a valid reason for doing so without consent.
- Make safeguarding adult referrals to the Local Authority as appropriate and with consent, unless there is a valid reason for doing so without consent.
- Ensure staff, volunteers, and trustees complete appropriate safeguarding training, refreshed every 3 years, and that the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is trained to Level 3 in Safeguarding.
- Keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and the welfare of adults.
- Ensure that the DSO understands their responsibility to refer incidents of adult abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Local Authority).

6. Safeguarding Procedures

BCAC provides health and leisure facilities for organisations and individuals, which may include vulnerable people, including those with mental health needs, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, neurodiversity, and older people.

These procedures are designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any adult accessing services provided by BCAC, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or religion. The procedures recognise that adult abuse can be a difficult subject for workers to deal with, and BCAC is committed to the belief that protecting adults from harm and abuse is everybody's responsibility.

7. Preventing Abuse

BCAC is committed to implementing safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse within the services it offers. This includes ensuring that all those involved with BCAC are treated with respect.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following BCAC policies:

- Bullying and Harassment

- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection
- Disciplinary Rules and Procedures
- Equal Opportunities
- Grievance Procedure
- Health and Safety
- Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers
- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Volunteer
- Whistleblowing

BCAC is committed to safer recruitment practices for appropriate paid staff and volunteers. This includes enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, Barred List checks, ensuring references are taken up, and providing adequate training on safeguarding adults. The organisation will work within the legal framework for referring staff or volunteers to the DBS who have harmed or pose a risk to vulnerable adults and/or children.

8. Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

8.1 Training and Awareness

Birtley Community Aquatic Centre (BCAC) is committed to ensuring that all relevant staff, trustees, and volunteers undertake training to gain a basic awareness of signs and symptoms of abuse. BCAC will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Officer, staff, and relevant volunteers have access to higher levels of training around safeguarding adults provided by the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board.

8.2 Understanding Abuse

BCAC will not be limited in its view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as these

can take many forms, and the circumstances of an individual case will always be considered.

8.3 Types of Abuse

Abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- **Discrimination**

Forms of harassment, bullying, slurs, isolation, neglect, denial of access to services, or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

- **Domestic Abuse or Violence**

Incidents or patterns of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse by an intimate partner or family member, including psychological, physical, sexual, financial abuse, and so-called 'honour' based violence.

- **Financial or Material Abuse**

Theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion in relation to financial affairs, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

- **Modern Slavery**

Includes slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude.

- **Neglect and Acts of Omission**

Ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs, failure to provide necessities such as medication, nutrition, and heating.

- **Organisational (Institutional) Abuse**

Poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting, through neglect or poor professional practice.

- **Physical Abuse**

Assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.

- **Psychological (Emotional) Abuse**

Threats of harm, deprivation of contact, humiliation, controlling behaviour, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, or cyberbullying.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Rape, sexual assault, sexual acts, harassment, or exploitation, including situations where a person receives something in exchange for performing sexual acts.

- **Self-Neglect**

Neglecting personal hygiene, health, or surroundings, or an inability to provide essential needs.

9. Designated Named Person for Safeguarding Adults

9.1 Appointment of Designated Safeguarding Officer

BCAC has an appointed individual responsible for safeguarding adult concerns. In their absence, a deputy staff member will be available for consultation.

- **Designated Safeguarding Officer:** Lewis Herbertson
- **Designated Adult Safeguarding Trustee:** Yvonne Probert
- **Emergency Contact Number:** 07446 130455

9.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The designated individuals are responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff, volunteers, and trustees know who to contact if they have concerns about adult abuse.
- Acting on concerns within the deadlines, recording them, and referring them to the appropriate body.
- Managing and overseeing complex cases involving allegations against employees or volunteers.

- Ensuring confidentiality and supporting staff and volunteers working with individuals who have experienced abuse.
- Supporting staff and volunteers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

10. Responding to People Who Have Experienced or Are Experiencing Abuse

10.1 Duty to Act

BCAC recognises its duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of adult abuse is never easy.

10.2 Steps to Take Upon Receiving an Allegation

When receiving an allegation:

- Stay calm and reassure the person concerned.
- Listen carefully and record the information as soon as possible.
- Do not investigate or ask probing questions; ask questions for clarification only.
- Inform the individual that the information will be treated seriously.
- Do not promise to keep the information secret.

10.3 Immediate Actions if Abuse is Witnessed

Priorities, depending on circumstances:

- Call an ambulance if required.
- Call the police if a crime has been committed.
- Preserve evidence.
- Keep yourself and others safe.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Record the incident in the Safeguarding Adults File.

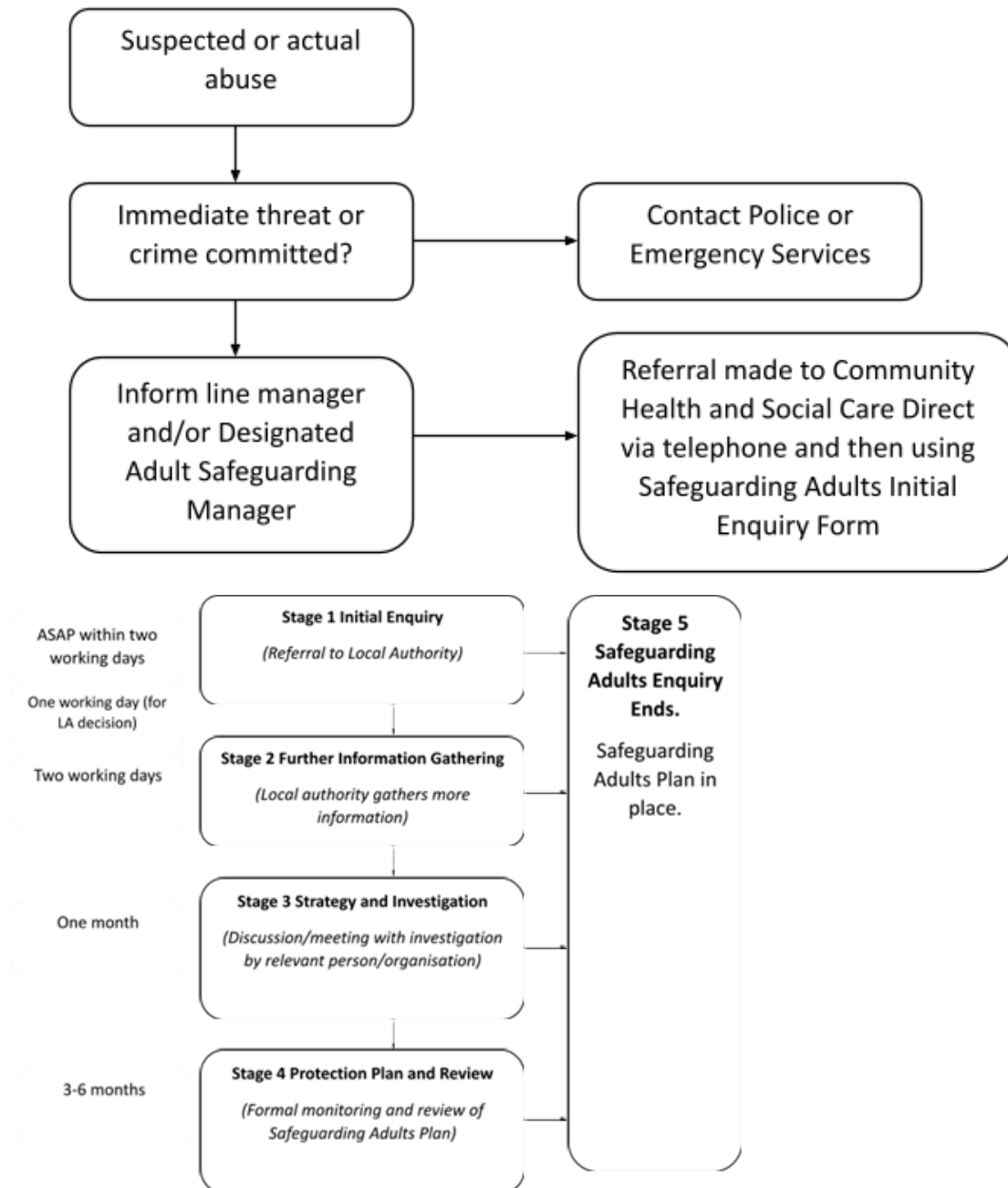
10.4 Making a Referral

All situations of abuse or alleged abuse must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Officer. If necessary, a referral will be made to Gateshead Council's Community Health and Social Care Direct Team.

- **Referral Form Location:** SharePoint – Staff & HR
- **Referral Timing:** No later than the next working day after the report.
- **Referral Contact:** Community Health and Social Care Direct Team

10.5 Understanding the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Process

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will have an understanding of the multi-agency safeguarding adults process to support the individual concerned. They should refer to the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board's policy and procedures and may seek advice from relevant agencies.



Safeguarding adults enquiries are:

- Driven by the desired outcomes of the adult or their representative;
- Multi-agency;
- Proportionate to the level of presenting harm/risk.

The Safeguarding Adults Enquiry can end at any stage, when it is felt that risks have been managed, and the desired outcomes of the adult (or their representative) have been met, as far as they possibly can be.

At every stage of the Safeguarding Adults Enquiry, risks will be assessed and a Safeguarding Adults Plan agreed.

11. Managing an Allegation Made Against a Member of Staff or Volunteer

BCAC is committed to ensuring that any allegations made against a staff member or volunteer are handled swiftly and effectively. Upon receiving an allegation, the board member responsible for safeguarding adults must be informed immediately. The board member, in collaboration with the Chair of Trustees and Senior Operations Manager (if applicable), will determine the immediate actions required, and outline a suitable approach and timeframe for the investigation, in accordance with the Incident Management Procedure.

If a member of staff or volunteer is suspected of committing a criminal offence, the police will be notified. If a crime has been witnessed, it is imperative to contact the police immediately.

The safety of the individual(s) involved is of utmost importance. A risk assessment must be conducted promptly to evaluate the potential risk to all service users posed by the alleged perpetrator. This assessment will determine whether it is safe for the individual to continue in their role or any other role within the service during the investigation. If it is deemed unsafe or inappropriate for the individual to continue in their role and no suitable alternative can be found, they will be suspended until the investigation is concluded.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or the board member for safeguarding adults will liaise with the relevant officer/department within Community Health and Social Care Direct, typically the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), to discuss the best course of action. They will also ensure that BCAC's disciplinary procedures align with any ongoing inquiries related to the allegation. Records of any allegations and the outcomes of investigations will be securely stored by BCAC for the recommended duration. Requests for the removal of these records will be considered only after obtaining legal advice. BCAC will also fulfil its legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service if the necessary conditions are met.

BCAC has a whistleblowing policy in place, to ensure that staff and volunteers can raise concerns about colleagues conduct without fear of repercussions, and staff are aware of this policy. They will be supported in utilising this policy. Support will be provided following an allegation, even if, after a thorough investigation, the allegation is found to be unfounded. The Senior Operations Manager will maintain records regarding any allegations against staff members.

12. Recording and Managing Confidential Information

BCAC is dedicated to maintaining confidentiality whenever possible. Information related to safeguarding adult issues should be shared only with those directly involved in making a referral.

All records of allegations or concerns must be documented on a form within the Safeguarding Adults file. The recorded information should be factual, not opinion-based. It should include what the person has reported to you, what you have observed, and, where applicable, the names of witnesses. Specific times, locations, and, as far as possible, the exact words used by the person reporting the allegation should be recorded. This recorded information will be kept secure and in compliance with data protection procedures. Paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet within the organisation, with access restricted to the Senior Operations Manager and/or deputy and the chair of the trustees.

13. Training, Induction, and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

BCAC will provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training. Safeguarding issues will be discussed in supervision where appropriate.

As part of their induction, new staff members must sign to confirm that they have read and understood this policy and procedure. Both electronic and hard copies of this policy and procedure will be made available to all staff for reference.

Relevant and appropriate BCAC staff and volunteers must complete Level 1 Safeguarding Adults e-learning as part of their training. Evidence of training completion must be provided to BCAC. This ensures that staff and volunteers understand the types of abuse and neglect that might affect vulnerable adults and the warning signs to look for, This training should be renewed every three years.

Safeguarding issues will be discussed during supervision when necessary.

14. Disseminating/Reviewing Policy and Procedures

The Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure will be clearly communicated to trustees, staff, volunteers, and service users. The Senior Operations Manager and trustee board will be responsible for ensuring effective communication of this policy.

The Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure will undergo an annual review, to ensure it remains relevant and effective, with any significant changes approved by the BCAC board of trustees. The BCAC Senior Operations Manager will participate in this review process and may recommend changes. The Senior Operations Manager will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to staff, trustees, and volunteers. Where appropriate, trustees, staff, volunteers, and service users may be involved in the review process.

15. Contacts

To make or discuss a referral:

- **Gateshead Council's Adult Social Care Direct/Advice Line**

Phone: 0191 433 7033

Available: Monday-Sunday 24 hours

- **Northumbria Police**

Phone: 101 or 999 (in an emergency)

Ask for the Local Area Police Station or Protecting Vulnerable Persons (PVP) Team.

For immediate concerns regarding safeguarding adults, please use the following contact details:

- **Adult Social Care:** 0191 433 7033
- **In an emergency:** Dial 999

16. Sources of Support

If appropriate, those experiencing abuse should be signposted to relevant support services. (It is recommended to research and list appropriate support services for Gateshead, possibly with advice from the council.)

17. Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Birtley Community Aquatic Centre works in and with the community, and our work may involve individuals who are vulnerable or at risk of abuse or exploitation. All staff, volunteers, and representatives of BCAC are responsible for ensuring that all our customers, regardless of their needs, are kept safe from abuse and exploitation.

Staff must:

- Treat all people with respect.
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Respect people's right to personal privacy and encourage them to feel comfortable pointing out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.

- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse.

Staff must not:

- Engage in inappropriate physical or verbal contact with vulnerable adults.
- Allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour or make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of vulnerable adults.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Rely on their good name or that of BCAC to protect them.
- Believe “it could never happen to me.”
- Take a chance when common sense, policy, or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

18. Information About How This Document Should Be Sent Safely and Securely

Once completed, this document contains personal and sensitive information.

Sending the Information to Adult Social Care

The form should either be sent to Community Health and Social Care Direct or to the adult at risk's allocated Social Worker if known. If the allocated Social Worker is unknown, please send the form to Community Health and Social Care Direct. It is the sender's responsibility to ensure that the form has arrived with Adult Social Care.

It is preferable to complete the form electronically and then either email it or print a copy to fax or post. If the form is handwritten, ensure that the handwriting is legible.

Before printing, you may wish to enlarge the box sizes or add additional sheets if completing it by hand.

Options for Sending the Safeguarding Adults Initial Enquiry Form

- **Email:** The completed form should only be sent by email if both the sender and receiver use secure email addresses (.pnn.police.uk, .cjsm.gov.uk, .gsi.gov.uk, .nhs.net) or if the email is encrypted (contact IT support about email encryption). The subject field of the email should clearly be marked OFFICIAL. If secure email addresses or encryption are unavailable, this document should not be sent electronically.
 - Community Health and Social Care Direct email: [Insert URL for Gateshead]
- **Fax:** The procedure for sending information securely by fax is as follows:
 - The sender needs to verify the fax number.
 - Ensure the recipient is waiting at the fax machine.
 - Use a fax covering note marked "OFFICIAL."
 - Send the fax.
 - The recipient should confirm receipt with the sender.
 - Community Health and Social Care Direct Fax: [Insert Number]
- **Post:** Documents should be sent via recorded delivery in external post, double enveloped. The outer envelope should state "To be opened by named addressee only" and include a return address. The inner envelope should be marked "OFFICIAL." Avoid using internal post.
 - Community Health and Social Care Direct Address: Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH
- **Delivery in Person:** The form can be hand-delivered. Obtain a signature from the intended recipient to confirm delivery.

You can contact the Safeguarding Adults Unit at 0191 433 7033 if you need advice regarding Safeguarding Adults.

19. Making a 'Good' Safeguarding Adults Referral

Safeguarding Adults is everyone's responsibility. Timely, accurate, and well-constructed referrals help agencies work together to keep adults with care and support needs safe.

19.1 Pointers

- **What have you seen?** (where, when) What have you heard? (when, who from)
- **Basic information about the adult(s) at risk.** What care and support needs do they have? Why are they unable to protect themselves from the abuse/neglect or the risk of it? Do they have mental capacity to make decisions about keeping themselves safe/other relevant decisions (please specify)?
- **Basic information about the person alleged to be causing the abuse or neglect.** Do they have any care and support needs? Do they work with children or vulnerable adults? Are they in a position of trust? Do you know if they have a history of posing a risk to others?
- **Why are you worried?** What abuse/neglect is the adult(s) at risk of or experiencing? This could include (but is not limited to) physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, financial, organisational, self-neglect, modern slavery, exploitation, or discrimination. Has a crime been committed? Was the harm intended or ill-informed?
- **What is the impact on the adult (or others) now?** What do you think the future impact on the adult(s) is likely to be if agencies do not become involved?

- **Identify what you have tried already to reduce risk and meet the adult(s) needs.** Include details and outcomes of any referrals to other services or agencies (e.g., Police). What protective factors are in place? If you are making a safeguarding adult's referral without engaging with the adult(s) and/or their representative(s) please explain why, for example, where there is an immediate risk of harm or perhaps your role does not bring you into direct contact with the adult. Even if the information is from a third party, please refer your concerns.
- **Remember to separate Facts and Opinions.** You can have a professional opinion but make sure this is stated clearly. For example: the adult said, "I wanted to give the person money," however, in my view, they were coerced into making this decision because... (then list evidence that leads you to this opinion – use of substances/alcohol, witnessed control/coercion, impairment of mind/brain, etc.)
- **Do you have consent to make this referral?** Unless it increases the risk to the adult(s) (immediate safeguarding concern) or is a risk to your own personal safety, then consent of the adult(s) at risk (or their representative if they are unable to consent) should be sought. However, do not let the issue of consent get in the way if you are worried (and there will be circumstances when consent has to be overridden). Having consent is best practice, and you should always endeavour to inform the person or their representative that you are making a referral. If this has not been possible, please explain this within your referral.
- **What does the adult(s) at risk want to happen as a result of the safeguarding adult's referral being made?** What are their (or their representative's) desired outcomes? Safeguarding adult's enquiries and associated safeguarding adult's plans are more effective if they are person-centred and led by the adult at risk. Where possible, the person's views and wishes will be followed.

- **Have you included the basic information about the people who are in the adult(s) at risk's professional and informal support network?** If the person would have substantial difficulty in participating in the safeguarding adults process themselves, is there someone who could represent them and act in their best interests?

Use the Safeguarding Adults Initial Enquiry Form (SAIEF) to make a referral which can be found [here]. Details of where and how to send the referral are included at the end of the form.

19.2 Pitfalls

- **Using 'Unknown' as an answer or leaving answers blank.** Provide details of why you do not know.
- **Formalising, sanitising, or omitting language used.** When quoting someone, use their actual words, including swearing and slang language. You may want to include clarification of what they meant. Remember, this could become part of an evidence submission to court – do not leave room for ambiguity or dispute.
- **Not enough details of the concern or impact on the adult(s).** For example, a good referral would not refer to a person having “a chaotic lifestyle,” but would instead separate fact from opinion and evidence of the lived experiences for that adult – e.g., does not attend appointments (e.g., missed their last four appointments in the last 6 months); homeless (are they sleeping on the streets? Staying with friends – who? Involvement with housing services?); lack of routine (e.g., not in work/education/training and not involved in any other structured activities); poor home conditions (e.g., damp, refuse piling up, flies, animal waste on carpets); uses drugs and alcohol (one litre of vodka per day, on methadone programme); witnessed X threatening Y (e.g., said they would kick their head in if they told anyone); often in the presence of people who pose a risk (include names/nicknames and why they are of concern), etc.

- **The referral is written in a way that is not for sharing.** For example, it includes judgmental or stereotypical views and language. State your concerns but be respectful – would you be happy for the person you are writing about reading your comments over your shoulder? Language implying that the adult is complicit or responsible for the abuse that has happened or may happen to them must be avoided. Language should reflect the presence of coercion, and the lack of control people have in abusive situations. Using victim-blaming language risks normalising and minimising the person’s experience, resulting in a lack of appropriate response.
- **Delays in submitting the referral.** If you are worried about an adult(s) at risk, then making the referral should be a priority. We know you are busy with many demands on your time, but timely referrals help to minimise risk and mean we can act faster to assess and protect adults at risk.

A top tip in making a referral is to remember that you are not telling a story, you are sharing concerns about an adult at risk. Keep the adult at risk at the centre of your referral: What is a day in their life for them? What are you worried about? What needs to happen for things to get better?

20. Review and Monitoring

The Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure will be regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure its effectiveness. This includes an annual review, or more frequently if needed, in response to changes in legislation or guidance. The Senior Operations Manager, alongside the board of trustees, will oversee this process. Any changes will be communicated to all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders.

21. Contact Information

For more information or to discuss additional employment issues, please contact:

Tracy Green

HR Trustee, Birtley Community Aquatic Centre Board of Trustees

Tracy.Green@birtleycommunitypool.org.uk

22. Agreement

This Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure has been agreed upon and endorsed by the BCAC board of trustees. All staff, volunteers, and trustees are expected to adhere to this policy. A signed copy of the policy will be kept on record.

This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees of Birtley Community Pool on 06/03/2025.

Signatories:

Yvonne Probert

Chairperson, Birtley Community Aquatic Centre Board of Trustees

Tracy Green

HR Trustee, Birtley Community Aquatic Centre Board of Trustees