

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Policy Aim

Buttle UK works to support children and young people (together 'children') up to the age of 20. As a charity, it is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure that no child or young person comes to harm or suffers abuse of any kind as a result of a grant application being made to, or in the course of any interaction with, Buttle UK.

In relation to this policy, this means that we will take all reasonable steps to promote the welfare of children and that we support by actively considering their needs to:

- Be protected from maltreatment;
- Avoid impairment of their health or development;
- Grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Seek to have the best outcomes¹.

We will do this by working with the children, parents, carers, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. We will give equal priority to keeping all children safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We will ensure that all of our grants programmes are child-centred, and the voice of the child will be of paramount importance in all our safeguarding considerations.

Legislative Framework

This policy is developed with due cognisance to relevant legislation and policy, especially the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006, SVG) and The Protection of Freedoms Act (2012), as well as other guidance issued by the Independent Safeguarding Authority; the Mental Capacity Act (2005); Children and Families Act (2014); Data Protection Act (1998) and Human Rights Act (1998); and Equality Act.

The SVG Act was passed to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, by preventing people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work. The Independent Safeguarding Authority was established as a result of this Act. The Protection of Freedoms Bill (chapter 1 of Part 5) amends the SVG, retaining the national barring function whilst abolishing registration and monitoring requirements.

¹ Taken from the HM Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013'.

Corresponding Policies and Procedures related to keeping children safe at Buttle UK

Other existing policies and procedures that consider additional elements of keeping a child or young person safe and should be considered alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy are Buttle UK's:

- Staff recruitment Policy & Procedure
- Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy & Procedure
- Data Protection Policy & Procedure
- Whistleblowing and complaints Policy & Procedure

Background and Risk Assessment

- 1) The majority of the grant-making work of Buttle UK is carried out as a desk-exercise in correspondence with applicants and agencies acting on behalf of our beneficiaries. All staff have at least limited access to case papers though most immediate access is available to Caseworkers. Trustees see a limited number of case papers. In all these cases, the chief consideration is the confidentiality of the information held by Buttle UK since there is no doubt that in many cases this could be used in such a way as to put children at risk.
- 2) Some of the grant programmes require Buttle UK casework staff to have more direct contact with children. As we develop the grant programmes, staff will have increased exposure to, and be in more direct contact with, children, as in these cases there will be more home visits and interviews carried out. All such interviews would normally be in the home of the applicant and would involve discussions with the responsible adult or adults, although for some programmes, these may be conducted in a hostel, refuge or other safe space and will usually be attended by the child/young person's parent, guardian or referral and/or case support worker.
- 3) For most of our grant programmes, the child or children involved would not play a major part – if any – in the interview process though the visit might provide the Casework Manager with the opportunity of meeting and talking to the child or children concerned. In the case of particular programmes, the young person concerned is interviewed, usually alone, either at home (permanent or temporary) or in the offices of their referral agency. In all the situations referred to in this paragraph, there is a theoretical possibility that the Casework Manager might have the opportunity of forming an abusive relationship with the child or young person.
- 4) Some of our programmes also expose us to the potential of confidential information about vulnerable adults e.g. in domestic abuse situations. All efforts will be made to ensure the confidentiality of these clients at all times, including our only seeking information as is necessary. Where

necessary, we will refer to The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) published guidance².

- 5) We will require all agencies working on our behalf to have regularly updated safeguarding and child protection policies. We therefore reserve the right to randomly test this with any of the agencies we work with. All suppliers of goods delivered directly to the home addresses of the children we are supporting with a grant will have an updated safeguarding policy.
- 6) We have a rigorous recruitment and interview process for all relevant new staff, which includes an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, where necessary.
- 7) We shall remain vigilant of safeguarding and child protection issues that may arise from Buttle UK's advocacy and research activities especially where the research involves interviewing children. All academic institutions that we commission shall be subject to the requirements of their organisations' ethical committee, and policies and systems have been put in place with regard to expected practice.

Information, Applications and Case Records

- 8) Buttle UK's records are maintained in two systems, manual and electronic. Access to electronically maintained records is password-protected. Manual records should be kept in filing cabinets in locked areas to which access is available only to Buttle UK's staff. The filing cabinets are kept locked at all times at night and also during the day except when they are in use or under close supervision. Case papers that are in use should be locked away³ at night.
- 9) Papers for the Board of Trustees that contain confidential personal information are anonymised before being mailed out of the office.
- 10) Buttle UK's policy on confidentiality of information is designed to ensure that confidential information is not released (by telephone, email, letter or other means) to anyone who is not authorised to receive it.
- 11) Similarly Buttle UK's Data Protection Policy provides for the secure and systematic handling of client records.
- 12) The precautions in paragraphs 5–8 above are designed to ensure that no unauthorised person (such as a cleaner or a visitor to Buttle UK's' offices) is able to obtain unauthorised access to confidential information.
- 13) Access to information will only be granted to those whose records have been checked through the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) – previously Criminal Records Bureau - (or the equivalent in Scotland and

² 'Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work' (2011).

³ Case papers may be kept secure either by being locked in a drawer or filing cabinet; or by the locking of the door of the office.

Northern Ireland). All staff and relevant trustees will be subject to an appropriate Disclosure through the DBS.

- 14) Temporary staff and volunteers shall have restricted access to the records and only under supervision of a properly checked member of staff. Volunteers will not be allowed unaccompanied access to children either on a visit or at any other event arranged by Buttle UK.

Casework Staff and Contact with Children

- 15) All staff with casework responsibilities will be subject to appropriate Disclosure checks (see paragraph 13 above) in addition to the normal process of taking up references.
- 16) Where a young person is to be interviewed anywhere other than in the offices of Buttle UK, it is required that the young person should be given the opportunity of being accompanied by a friend, adviser or other supporter of his or her choice.
- 17) Where a member of staff of Buttle UK, in the course of her or his official duties, is witness to any form or signs of abuse or neglect, they shall make an objective record of any such observation or disclosure. The record shall include details of:
 - a) Child's name
 - b) Child's address
 - c) Age of the child and date of birth
 - d) Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
 - e) Exact words spoken by the child
 - f) Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
 - g) Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
 - h) Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
 - i) Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this abuse and any other person present (e.g. referral worker, colleague), dated and kept in a separate confidential file to the normal case notes. If a child starts to talk to a caseworker about a potential disclosure it is important that the child should be told that you may have to tell somebody else in accordance with our legal obligations. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged accurately.

- 18) The Caseworker shall discuss this matter with the Head of Grant Development or a member of the Senior Management Team as soon as possible. In accordance with the Children's Act 1989 as amended by Children's Act 2004, there is a duty for the organisation to then report this matter to the relevant authorities with immediate effect.
- 19) If this report becomes a matter for further investigation, Buttle UK shall extend every appropriate co-operation to those authorities.

- 20) Staff must not make any other comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

Buttle Staff, Volunteers' and Trustees' Interaction with Children

- 21) In addition to keeping children whom Buttle UK encounters through its activities safe, it is important to keep safe and take steps to protect the reputation of Buttle UK, its employees, trustees and volunteers (together, "**Buttle UK Workers**"). Our actions can sometimes be perceived in a way that is not intended; as such, it is imperative that Buttle UK Workers follow the guidance below.
- 22) Buttle UK Workers should not:
- a) instigate verbal or physical contact with children at any point unless this is appropriate and part of their expected duties or remit with Buttle UK;
 - b) respond to any non-trivial physical contact from children or any verbal contact or correspondence that is outside of the Buttle UK Worker's expected duties or remit (including in any manner other than through such person's official Buttle UK email and/or phone number, including through personal email or phone number, through any personal social media presence and/or in person) and should in all cases report any such contact to their line manager;
 - c) give personal information other than Buttle UK contact information (including their personal contact details and/or details of any personal social media presence or any information as to any Buttle UK Workers' private lives);
 - d) accept or respond to any Young Person attempting to share personal email or phone number or details of any personal social media presence and/or address, save where this is in the context of an application to, or other sanctioned contact with, Buttle UK;
 - e) tolerate physical or verbal abuse from any Young Person and should report all instances to their line manager; and/or
 - f) in any circumstances initiate or enter into any romantic or sexual contact of any nature with any Young Person, regardless of their age or consent (and should report any such attempted contact by any such Young Person to their line manager).

Buttle UK Workers should be aware that verbal and physical interactions may be interpreted by Young Persons as being inappropriate, even where this was not the intention.

Allegations and Concerns about the Safety of Children

- 23) Where an allegation of child abuse is made to Buttle UK this will, in all circumstances and irrespective of the apparent credibility of the allegation,

be referred immediately in writing to the Child Protection Officer/or allocated worker of the Social Services Department/Trust (or equivalent) in whose area the child or young person lives (or to the CPO of the authority responsible for the welfare of the child or young person).

- 24) Where no allegation of child abuse has been made, but where a member of staff receives information giving cause for concern about the safety of a child or young person:
- a) The member of staff concerned should discuss the matter with the Head of Grant Development or an alternative member of the Senior Management Team,
 - b) A decision should be taken, in the light of the individual circumstances of the case, on what further action should be taken.
 - c) When the matter falls within the Child Protection concern, and appears to be reasonably well founded it should be drawn to the attention of the Child Protection Officer/or allocated worker of the appropriate Social Services Department/Trust or equivalent.
 - d) In other circumstances it may be appropriate to raise the matter with the child or young person's social worker, an appropriate member of staff at a school or other educational institution, or a family member.

Allegations of Abuse or Misconduct involving Children Against a Member of Buttle UK's Staff

- 25) An allegation of abuse or misconduct involving children will be dealt with under Buttle UK's Complaints Procedure (and later, if necessary, under the Disciplinary Processes). However, the following additional action will be taken:
- a) All allegations will be reported immediately to the Chief Executive and Chair and then to the Charity Commission.
 - b) If the allegation involves a possible criminal offence the matter will be reported to the police. It will also be a matter for decision whether the allegation should immediately be drawn to the attention of the member of staff concerned; or whether this should be deferred to a later stage when, on the advice of the police, this would not risk prejudicing the police investigation.
 - c) At the same time a decision will be taken by the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Chair) whether to suspend the member of staff on full pay or whether to limit the duties of the member of staff in some way (e.g. by prohibiting home visits or other contact with children).
 - d) In consultation with the member of staff – and as speedily as possible in light of consideration of other issues referred to in this paragraph – the Chief Executive will ensure that the accused member of staff has

access to appropriate support by an independent person throughout the investigation.

- 26) The Charities Commission requires trustees to report serious incidents to them as soon as they become aware of it. Should there be any child protection or safeguarding breaches, it is therefore incumbent that the Chair is immediately informed and made aware of this duty⁴.
- 27) The lead officer for safeguarding for Buttle UK will be the Chief Executive. Once the Chair has been notified of a serious incident, the Chief Executive will report it to the Charity Commission.

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⁴ <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/detailed-guidance/protecting-your-charity/safeguarding-children/>