



Safeguarding

We are committed to providing safe and supportive environments for everyone involved in our organisation and the work we do.

We believe that everyone, and specifically those who are in vulnerable circumstances and less able to protect themselves, has the right to be kept safe from harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

Every Birth Companions' representative has a personal responsibility for safeguarding children and adults. They do this by considering the safety and well-being of all those involved in our activities; by protecting children and adults from harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect; and by reporting concerns whenever these happen.

Every child or vulnerable adult who receives services from Birth Companions should do so safely, and the organisation recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Birth Companions is determined to ensure that our woman-centred approach does not interfere with our ability to recognize behaviour that could be abusive. We recognise that abuse can occur within many situations including the home, community, prison and hospital.

Birth Companions will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working in the organisation understand their responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads for Birth Companions

Our safeguarding commitment

To meet this commitment, we will ensure that:

- Every Birth Companions representative, (and the organisations we work with relevant), has access to the safeguarding policy and guidance, and

understands their role and responsibilities, which includes what to do if they have a concern.

- We actively create safe and supportive environments for everyone involved in our organisation
- There are appropriate risk assessments in place for all our activities.
- We encourage the active participation of children and adults in keeping themselves and others safe, encouraging them to voice their concerns and know where and how to seek help if needed.
- Effective procedures are in place for responding to safeguarding concerns. we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of Birth Companions' representatives, especially those who work with children or adults at risk.
- We ensure that all staff and volunteer DBS checks and Safeguarding training are reviewed and updated every two years
- The safeguarding policy and guidance meet the requirements of legislation and statutory guidance (England and Wales) and the Charity Commission.
- The organisation continues to monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policy and guidance and take any measures required to strengthen and improve existing practice.

Key principles

Birth Companions will take responsibility for:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Recruiting, training and supervising all volunteers and staff members to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse.
- Training all employees and volunteers to adopt and abide by the appropriate codes of conduct and the Child Protection Policies and Procedures outlined within this document.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately.
- Regularly reviewing the policy.

Identifying and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Our safeguarding duty of care

At Birth Companions we promote a proactive response to keeping children and adults safe, encouraging their active participation in keeping themselves and others safe. Some of the individuals we encounter may be in vulnerable circumstances, experiencing distress (for example due to family conflict or experience of violence) or have mental health needs. We recognise that Birth Companions is not a 'professional safeguarding organisation'. We will work in partnership with other organisations, including statutory services like the police and social care, to signpost to services who are better equipped to provide help and support and to protect those who have been or are at risk of harm, exploitation or abuse

This means that Birth Companions representatives will:

- Always act in the best interests of individuals, respecting and involving those who use our services, providing them with safe and appropriate advice and signposting to services that meet their needs and supports their rights.
- Not knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results in harm to others.
- Provide high-quality services to the best of their ability, acting within their competence and not taking on anything they do not believe they can safely do.
- Protect confidential information except where the wider duty of care or the public interest might justify making it known.

What is a safeguarding concern?

A safeguarding concern is when you are worried about the safety or well-being of a child or adult because of something seen or heard, or information which has been given to you. A safeguarding concern can also involve a Birth Companions representative, or a representative from another organisation, endangering the safety or wellbeing of others, for example, by not following the code of conduct.

If you are concerned that Birth Companions or one of its representatives, is endangering the safety or wellbeing of others please contact: [Denise Marshall](#), or call Helen Benson on 077896 112460.

If you are concerned about the welfare or safety of a child or vulnerable adult:

Always:

- Seek appropriate advice and support
- Discuss any concerns with your project coordinator or safeguarding lead(s)
- Write information down as soon as possible

Never:

- Do nothing
- Assume that someone else or another agency will act or is acting
- Fail to discuss your concerns with your supervisor or safeguarding lead within 24 hours
- Attempt to resolve the matter yourself

If you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child you should call the NSPCC adult helpline for confidential advice on 0808 800 5000.

If you are worried about the safety or welfare of an adult you should call the police (if they are in immediate need of help) or your local adult social care team.

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