

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

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1. Purpose

BCS is committed to protecting the welfare of all children and vulnerable people who use our services and engage with BCS at any level.

In pursuance of the BCS Royal Charter object of promoting "the study and practice of Computing and to advance knowledge and education therein for the benefit of the public", members and staff interact with children and vulnerable adults in several ways and circumstances.

BCS therefore needs to ensure the maintenance of a safeguarding culture which protects not only children and vulnerable people but also BCS members and staff who have responsibility for them.

This policy is designed to protect children and vulnerable people who attend BCS workshops and events organised by BCS or by our Member and Specialist groups.

It provides the guidelines that all BCS employees, volunteers and members must adhere to when working with children and vulnerable people on behalf of BCS.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all BCS staff, volunteers and members, wherever they are in the world, when undertaking BCS business.

3. Legislative Governance

There is a considerable body of legislation, government guidance and standards, and other advice, all of which are designed to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from harm. In drawing up this policy BCS has consulted and reviewed this legislation and the requirements and recommendations of the Charity Commission. BCS has also drawn upon the advice and recommendations of the NSPCC in its publication "firstcheck" (in which all relevant legislation is listed and summarised).

4. Principles

The needs and rights of children and vulnerable adults are paramount. Any suspicions of and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

It is the duty of all BCS members and members of staff to safeguard, to the best of their ability, the welfare of children and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact in the course of their duties and voluntary activities, and also to protect them from assault and from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

It is the duty of any BCS member or member of staff who has concerns about possible abuse to children or vulnerable adults to report such concerns immediately through the standard whistleblowing procedures or to BCS legal services (legal@bcs.uk).

5. Safeguarding Procedures

BCS will endeavour to ensure safeguarding by:

- Actively encouraging a climate through which protection issues are regarded as an essential element of relevant activities and events;
- Ensuring that Branches, Specialist Groups and other member organisations which may from time to time be created appoint a member with responsibility for protection issues;
- Adopting protection guidelines that give clear procedures, volunteer selection and vetting criteria, and a written code of conduct for members in Branches, Specialist Groups and other member organisations which may from time to time be created;
- Adopting a rigorous staff recruitment and selection policy which includes full risk analysis and appropriate vetting, reference and disclosure processes for appointments that will necessitate interaction with children and vulnerable adults;
- Adopting protection guidelines and procedures, and a written code of conduct for staff who interact with children and vulnerable adults;
- Planning all relevant activities so that protection issues are properly addressed;
- Sharing information on protection and good practice with members and staff;
- Issuing step by step guidance on the action to take in the case of concerns or allegations of abuse;
- Providing appropriate training for members and staff who interact with children and vulnerable adults, and appropriate awareness training for member committees and members of staff;
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy and the associated procedures on a regular basis, at least annually.

6. Events

This policy applies to all events organised by BCS and all BCS Member and Specialist groups that allow children to attend.

All children under the age of 13 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian when on site at an event.

Children over 13 may attend unsupervised but with parental permission sought by the organisers of the event.

When children attend a BCS event, all of our standard health and safety policies apply and must be adhered to.

For insurance purposes, please notify Legal Services when organising any event with expected or encouraged attendance from children. For Member Groups, please liaise with Member Groups Services.

7. Data Protection

When inviting children under the age of 16 to attend, you must seek permission from their parents to use any of their personal data including, but not limited to, email addresses and contact information for invitation to future events and further BCS participation or to facilitate participation in activities requiring online registration.

The parent must be informed of the exact intention of the use of the data at the time of request and this data cannot and must not be used for any direct or indirect marketing purposes.

All privacy policies and terms of use for our website also apply.

8. Definitions

Child

A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. (Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, Article 1).

Vulnerable Adult

There is no legal definition of the term "vulnerable adult". The definition adopted by BCS is as follows:

A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of eighteen who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse

The Government guidance document *Working Together to Safeguard Children* describes four categories of abuse:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional

abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young or vulnerable person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

9. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of Legal as a minimum, on an annual basis in line with legislative and regulatory standards and procedures.



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