

Bracknell Amateur Radio Club – Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

SAFEGUARDING – What you must do:

1. BARC members are required to act on any safeguarding or child protection concerns they have.
2. BRAC members must report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or local Social Services or The Police.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead for BRAC is Paul Norris who can be contacted on 07909918460
4. You will never be criticised for raising a concern.
5. The professional agencies concerned will make the necessary judgements and actions for the situation. Your report might appear minor to you however it can form part of a larger picture that the professional agencies have.

Policy

1. Every child or vulnerable adult who participates in amateur radio activities should be able to take part in a safe, enjoyable environment and be protected from abuse.
2. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in amateur radio.
3. BARC recognises its responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults by protecting them from neglect, physical, emotional or sexual harm and from bullying.
4. BARC is therefore committed to
 - protecting children and vulnerable adults who receive our services and those who take part in activities we have organised
 - Supporting members in protecting children and vulnerable adults who take part in amateur radio activities they have organised.

In order to fulfil our responsibilities, we will

- Publish and implement procedures for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, which will include details on reporting concerns
- Publish guidance and provide training for employees and volunteers who require it
- Arrange for appropriate safeguarding disclosure checks on members of BRAC who are assessed as requiring them
- Share any concerns with the relevant agencies who have a need to know

Applicability

This policy applies to all BRAC who attend or organise activities involving, children or vulnerable adults.

This might include, for example, construction meetings, training courses, UK Amateur Radio Examinations, field days or YOTA camps.

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Definitions

- A child is someone under the age of 18.
- A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over, who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability and / or who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse can be:

- Neglect: where children or vulnerable adults are not protected from danger, seriously impairing health and development.
- Physical: where children or vulnerable adults are hurt or injured.
- Emotional: where children or vulnerable adults are frightened by threats or taunts or are given responsibilities beyond their capabilities.
- Sexual: where children or vulnerable adults are used to satisfy sexual desires
- There are also many other forms of abuse e.g. financial

Bullying Is A Broad Term And Can Encompass Several Types Of Abuse

- Physical (e.g. kicking, hitting, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling)
- Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities)

Safeguarding Contacts

If any BRAC member requires advice relating to this policy they should contact

The Designated Safeguard Lead: Paul Norris (07909918460)

Or

RSGB Safeguarding Lead: Carol Meredith (carol.meredith@rsgb.org.uk)

Authority

This policy was agreed by the BRAC Committee on the 15th April 2025.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the BRAC committee when any significant change occurs and no less than once every three years.

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Procedure for assessing the risk of abuse to children or vulnerable adults

Whenever we organise activities involving children or vulnerable adults there is the potential for them to suffer abuse.

There is no one-size-fits-all assessment as the activities, timing, location and people involved will all have an effect on the magnitude of the risk.

The first step in minimising the likelihood of abuse occurring is to carry out a risk assessment.

What are the activities?

In the context of the BRAC Club activities involving children or vulnerable adults can be wide and varied.

The following is not an exhaustive list but provides some typical activities where a risk assessment may be appropriate:

- Youth Team meetings
- Training courses
- UK Amateur Radio Examinations
- YOTA camps
- Club meetings
- Radio contests
- DXpeditions
- SOTA activations

Useful questions to ask:

- Will there be children or vulnerable adults present?
- Will the activity be repeated on four or more days in any 30-day period?
- Will adults be supervising children or vulnerable adults overnight?
- How many adults will be taking part?
- Will children or vulnerable adults ever be alone with an adult?
- Will parents/carers be present?
- Who are the children or vulnerable adults?
- The numbers of children or vulnerable adults involved, their specific circumstances and their relationship to others present all have a bearing on the risks involved.
- How many children or vulnerable adults will be present?
- Do you have parental consent for children to attend?
- Do you have parental consent to take photographs?
- Do the children or vulnerable adults have any special needs?

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What safeguarding controls are already in place?

It may be that all adults involved are used to working with children or vulnerable adults or the activities may take place in a well-controlled environment, like a school or college.

In those circumstances little more may be required.

Useful questions to ask

- How many adult helpers/supervisors will be present?
- Is the adult helper/supervisors to child or vulnerable adult ratio sufficient to ensure they are cared for and bullying is prevented?
- Do all adults involved have sufficient awareness of the guidance available?
- How many of the adults involved already have appropriate safeguarding disclosure checks?
- How many adults have received formal safeguarding training?
- Does the host have safeguarding policies and procedures in place?
- Is there a first aider available if the activity can result in minor injuries?

What else is needed?

Following on from the steps above and taking into account all of the information you have gathered so far, you need to consider what is needed, and what is in place.

Useful questions:

- If there is nothing in place or arrangements are limited, what else is needed?
- Do you need to arrange for adults to have appropriate safeguarding disclosure checks?
- Do you need to raise awareness of the guidance available?
- Do adults need formal training?
- Do you need to seek parental permission?
- Do you need to arrange for parents/carers to be present?
- Do you need an online safety consent form?
- Do you need a media consent form?

Record your assessment and keep it up to date.

Having worked through the steps above you should have a clear picture of what level of risk exists, what controls are already in place and what else needs to be done (if anything).

It is therefore a good idea to capture all that information so you can be sure you have covered the requirements you can monitor progress with any actions and can demonstrate to any external authority that you are taking positive steps to fulfil your responsibilities.

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Procedure For Arranging Safeguarding Disclosure Checks Via The RSGB

The Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks Guidance for Volunteering, formerly CRB, published in 2008 states that the decision as to whether to make an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is a matter for the employer.

Our legal advice is that “Employer” in this context means the RSGB for headquarters staff and volunteers that are directly appointed or registered by the RSGB (e.g. Committee Chairs, Honorary Officers and Exam Secretaries).

Clubs and independent training providers are seen as the ‘employer’ for trainers.

It goes on to state that the decision should be part of an overall risk management process.

The decision should, it states, be made “carefully” and “because there is a strong and demonstrable reason for doing so and not just in case”.

The “test” for assessing whether a person is recommended and eligible for an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is if:

They engage in a “regulated activity” (in this case, any form of teaching, training or instruction of children and/or vulnerable adults)

AND they carry out this activity EITHER frequently (i.e. once a week or more)

OR intensively (i.e. four or more days in any 30-day period)

OR they supervise young people or vulnerable adults overnight (e.g. during contests, DXpeditions or YOTA events).

After careful consideration of the advice, it is clear that:

- Some BRAC Committee Members and some volunteers may fall within the definition above, depending on who they interact with and how their activities are structured.
- The role and scope of examination Invigilators do not normally fall within the definition of a regulated activity.
- Some examination Invigilators are also trainers and may therefore qualify for an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check.
- Notwithstanding the above, it may be that BRAC Committee Members or club members already have appropriate safeguarding disclosure check due to their activities outside of amateur radio.
- The BRAC will respect existing checks that are still valid.
- BRAC Committee Chair must review their activities.
- If a Committee activity falls within the definitions described above, then a risk assessment must be undertaken by the Committee Chair to determine whether an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is warranted.
- There should be consideration of how well the risk is mitigated by the attendance of parents or other responsible adults.
- All clubs and independent training providers should review their teaching schedules.
- If a trainer’s teaching commitment falls within the definitions described above, then a risk assessment must be undertaken by the club or independent provider to determine whether an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is warranted.
- There should be consideration of how well the risk is mitigated by the attendance of parents or other responsible adults.
- If the risk assessment causes the assessor to decide that an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is warranted, then it is their responsibility to initiate the check.
- The GM Department Admin Manager @the RSGB is available for advice in such cases.
- Please send a copy of your risk assessment to gm.dept@rsgb.org.uk in the first instance.
- Where the BRAC Committee Member or club member requires an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check, RSGB Headquarters will organise and fund an agreed check on their behalf.

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Procedure For Employee And Volunteer Training

BRAC believes that for most members this policy, the associated procedures and guidance will be sufficient to raise awareness and provide reasonable protection from abuse for children and vulnerable adults.

There are a small number of cases where more formal training is appropriate and therefore mandatory:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead The Chair of the Youth Committee
- Any BRAC member who has been assessed as requiring an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check in relation to the services they provide, or the activities they organise, in relation to amateur radio.
- Where training is required, it will be funded by the RSGB and will be provided via suitable on-line courses

Procedure For Reporting Concerns

The following action should be taken by anyone who has concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult in:

1. The amateur radio environment, e.g. the club premises
2. The home or other settings

Non-action is not an option in Child Protection.

Concerns About Poor Practice And Possible Abuse

Child abuse is a sensitive and difficult issue, but abuse has occurred within amateur radio and may occur within other settings (social activities).

Recent inquiries indicate that abuse that takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event.

It is crucial that those involved in amateur radio training are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are treated seriously, and appropriate actions taken.

Allegations may also relate to poor practice where an adults' or peers' behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a vulnerable adult.

Poor practice includes any behaviour, which infringes an individuals' rights and/or is a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care.

Poor practice is unacceptable and should be treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

Action to take if you are suffering abuse If you think you are the victim of abuse, you should report it.

Start by talking to someone you trust.

Your family is a good place to start.

You may feel comfortable speaking to someone like a teacher, carer, your doctor or someone at BRAC.

Your concerns will be taken in strict confidence.

If you are under 18 and you have no one you can talk to you can call **Childline on 0800 1111**.

If you or someone else are in immediate danger, call 999.

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Actions To Take If You Become Aware Of Abuse

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child or vulnerable adult
- Tell the child or vulnerable adult he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell you
- Take what the child or vulnerable adult says seriously
- Ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult – if the child or vulnerable adult needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a Child Protection or Adult Safeguarding issue
- Avoid leading the child or vulnerable adult and keep any questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- Re-assure the child or vulnerable adult but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Parents and carers should be contacted ONLY after advice from Social Services or the Police
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible including the date and time of the disclosure. This should be signed by the writer
- Report concerns to the person in charge or designated person immediately, unless the concern is about the person in charge. If in doubt, report your concerns to one of the RSGB contact points noted in the Safeguarding Policy
- The person in charge should be clearly identified at all times. If the person in charge is not available, or the concern is about the person in charge, then report your concerns directly to the Social Services (or equivalent local agency) or the Police. These agencies will advise you whether a formal referral to Social Services (or equivalent local agency) is necessary and what further action you might need to take. If you are advised to make a formal referral, make it clear to Social Services (or equivalent local agency) or the Police that this is a Child Protection referral
- Confidentiality should be maintained on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis and relevant documents stored in a secure location
- Please remember that it can be more difficult for some children to disclose abuse than for others. Children from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism, which may lead them to believe ‘white people’, including those in authority roles, do not really care about their well-being. They may feel they have good reason to question whether your response will be any different
- Disabled children and vulnerable adults will have to overcome additional barriers before feeling they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care or residence. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced. There may be communication difficulties and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices, which block our willingness to believe they may be abused or to use their medical condition to explain away indicators, which in an able-bodied child would concern us
- When working with these groups you need to be extra vigilant and give extra thought as to how to respond Recording of information, suspicions or concerns Information passed to the Social Services (or equivalent local agency) Department or the Police must be helpful as possible and it may be used in any subsequent legal action, hence the necessity for making a detailed record.

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The Report Should Contain The Following Information:

- The child's or vulnerable adult's name, address and date of birth
- The nature of the allegation
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The child's or vulnerable adult's account, in their own words, if possible, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Any observations that have been made by you or to you
- Any times, locations, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- Your knowledge of and relationship to the child or vulnerable adult
- This record should note the date and time of disclosure and should also be signed by the writer.
- Whenever possible, referrals to Social Services (or equivalent local agency) Departments should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.
- Keep a record of the name and designation of the Social Services (or equivalent local agency) member of staff or Police Officer to whom, concerns were passed and record the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is needed.
- Advise the RSGB Designated Safety Lead that a referral has been made, noting the date and time of the referral and to which agency it was made.

Further information can be obtained from the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

For deaf users Textphone 0800 056 0566

These numbers are available 24 Hrs are free and completely CONFIDENTIAL

These guidelines are designed to help you in what is a complex issue.

Always remember when working with children and young people, commonsense prevails!

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Guidance For Club Members

It is essential to remove situations in which abuse can occur and help to protect Committee Members and club members by promoting good practice.

The following are more specific examples of good practice, which should be taken when working within the club

- Always be public and open when working with children and vulnerable adults.
- Do not allow situations where a teacher/instructor/club members, individual child or vulnerable adult are completely unobserved.
- Make sure another adult is present, preferably the parent or carer of the child/vulnerable adult. You should never:
 - Spend time alone with a child/vulnerable adult
 - Take children or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short
 - Take children or vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you
- If your role involves contact with a child/vulnerable adult, you should discuss with the committee whether it would be wise for you to be the subject of a DBS check.
- Checks can be arranged and the procedure for this is set out above.

Adults Should Never

- Allow or engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a bedroom with a child or vulnerable adult
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun
- Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children or vulnerable adults to visit or stay at your home unsupervised
- If you accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult, he/she seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to a committee member and make a brief written note of it.
- Parents or carers should be informed of the incident.
- In terms of on-air safeguarding BRAC will follow the guidance of social media providers and apply the same principles outlined above as appropriate to on-air interaction with young people and vulnerable adults.

Guidance for recognising types of abuse It is part of everyone's role as a club member and to do everything possible to keep young people safe from abuse.

There is a moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child, young or vulnerable person in any context.

Most suspicions of abuse come about from observation of changes in the person's behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship with others.

Examples may be but are not limited to:

Child-on-child abuse

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

County Lines Domestic Abuse (Child and Adult-Adult)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Mental Health (Child / Adult)

Financial Abuse (Adult > Adult, Child > Adult)