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Safeguarding Policy (Inc. Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection)

1. Purpose and Scope

Moulton Parish Council ('the council') considers it unacceptable for a child or vulnerable person to experience abuse or harm of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by a commitment to work in a way that protects them.

This Safeguarding Policy describes how the council will meet its legal obligations and sets out (for members of the public, customers, Councillors, employees and people working on behalf of the council):

- What they can expect the council to do to protect and safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
- Guidance on what they should do if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This Safeguarding Policy confirms that an effective recording and monitoring system is in place and that Councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers:

- Must use the established procedure to voice any concerns they have; and
- Will receive appropriate training.

The council is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and protecting them from abuse, including when they are engaged in services that are organised and provided by, or on behalf of, the council at any location including, but not limited to, Moulton Library, Moulton Community Centre and Moulton Village Hall.

We have a duty of care to the protection and safety of everyone who enters our premises in addition to our Councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers.

- This policy applies to all Councillors, employees, volunteers, and contracted service providers.
- Partners will also be encouraged to develop a safeguarding policy and procedures.

It will do this by:

- Ensuring that, through its Recruitment Policy, suitable people are selected for working with children and vulnerable adults.
- Taking seriously any concern that is raised by a Councillor, employee, volunteer, contracted service provider, child or vulnerable adult; and
- Not tolerating the harassment of any Councillor, employee, volunteer, contractor, child or vulnerable adult who has raised concerns about abuse.

It should be noted that any safeguarding referral made by a Councillor, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider cannot be anonymous and must be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, they may be required to act as prosecution witnesses.

2. Legal Responsibility & Policy Support

[Children Act 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[Children and Social Work Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Children and Families Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[Human Rights Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[Data Protection Act 2018 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[Care Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

Principles

The principles underpinning this Safeguarding Policy are as follows:

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults (whatever their background and culture, maternity or pregnancy status, age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual orientation and/or gender identity) have the right to participate in society in an environment which is safe and free from violence, fear, abuse, bullying and discrimination.
- All children and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from harm, exploitation, and abuse and to be provided with safe environments in which to live and play.
- Working in partnership (with children, their parents, vulnerable adults and their carers, and other agencies) is essential in promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- The council has a duty to promote the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults, and to co-operate with West Northamptonshire Council in carrying out its safeguarding duties.
- The council is responsible for establishing appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that its activities promote the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults through, for example, safe recruitment policies and safe working practices.

Definitions

When the term 'children' is used in this document, this also includes young people and

young persons.

The phrase 'child' refers to a person under the age of 18.

The phrase 'vulnerable adult' refers to a person aged 18 or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or being exploited.

A person may be a 'vulnerable adult' because:

- They have a mental health problem or illness, including dementia.
- They have a disability.
- They have a sensory impairment.
- They are old and frail and/or experiencing a temporary illness.
- They have a substance misuse or alcohol problem.

When the term 'parents' is used, it is used in the broadest sense of the word to include parents, carer(s) and guardians.

The term 'contractors' also refers to sub-contractors and contracted service providers.

3. Policy Aims

The aims of this Safeguarding Policy are to:

- Respect the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children and vulnerable adults by listening to them and minimising the risks that may affect them.
- Prevent abuse and harm by promoting good practice and creating a safe and healthy environment in order to avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse occur.
- Ensure that Councillors, employees and volunteers are familiar with, and understand, this Safeguarding Policy and relevant Codes of Conduct.
- Raise awareness among Councillors and employees of the safeguarding duty that the council has in relation to the safeguarding legislation.
- Ensure that contracted, commissioned, and grant funded services have safeguarding policies and procedures commensurate with the level of involvement they have with children and vulnerable adults.
- Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Ensure that clear procedures are in place and that these are promoted and implemented.

To achieve these aims, the council will:

- Ensure that Councillors, employees, volunteers, and contracted service providers are provided with training that is appropriate to the level of their involvement with children and vulnerable adults.
- Respond appropriately and sensitively to any concerns that are reported.
- Develop and implement effective procedures for recording, and responding to, incidents and accidents.
- Develop and implement effective procedures for recording and reporting to West Northamptonshire Council, any allegations or suspicions of harm or abuse.
- Promote the welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults during and within council services, including the planning of services; and
- Maintain a good level of safe working practice at all times to minimise risk to children and vulnerable adults that come into contact with Councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers.

4. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – safer recruitment decisions

As Moulton Parish Council is not a Social Services Authority, the scope for working directly with children or vulnerable adults is limited.

Disclosure should be sought where individuals have substantial or regular unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults as part of their duties or responsibilities for, or on behalf of, the council or if it is an important part of their role. DBS checks only guarantee that the person concerned does not have a relevant criminal conviction up to the date that the certificate is issued.

The nature and extent of the DBS check that is undertaken will reflect the contact that the person is likely to have with children and/or vulnerable adults. The risk assessment for an adult working with vulnerable adults must also consider other forms of potential abuse (such as financial abuse) that may not apply when working with children.

When posts are advertised, applicants are notified if they are subject to a DBS check.

Checks are usually undertaken at 3-year intervals.

For further information about the Disclosure and Barring Service DBS, please check their external website. [Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

5. Recognising Potential Abuse

In this Safeguarding Policy, abuse covers physical, emotional, sexual and mental abuse including bullying. Abuse can also be financial for vulnerable adults. Child abuse and the abuse of vulnerable adults are difficult issues and present challenges to everyone who provides services for these groups.

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place.

People who are working for the council (in a paid or voluntary capacity) may not be experts in recognising abuse. However, they do have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the way in which someone (an adult or another child) is behaving towards a child or a vulnerable adult.

The council will therefore encourage and expect Councillors and employees, or anybody else working on behalf of the council (in a paid or voluntary capacity) to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a person immediately with the Executive Officer.

It is not the responsibility of Councillors, employees, volunteers or contracted service providers to determine if abuse is taking place. It is their responsibility, however, to follow the appropriate procedure within this Safeguarding Policy if an alert is received or a concern is raised that abuse may be taking place. Following the correct procedure will ensure that the correct people or agencies are informed and the appropriate action is taken.

Copies of safeguarding referrals and any other relevant documents or records relating to the incident will be securely stored. This information will be retained in accordance with data protection periods and retention guidelines.

All Councillors, employees and volunteers must also comply with the council's internet and email policies.

Information relating to an employee will be retained in their personal file. Only the Executive Officer and Finance & HR Manager have access to safeguarding incident records.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Confidentiality is a key issue in Safeguarding. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is more important than the privacy of another person.

Sharing information is sometimes necessary to establish the level of risk to a child or vulnerable adult. Ask yourself "Is it safe for me NOT to share the information?"

Decisions on who needs to be informed are set out in the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board and Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board Information Sharing Protocols.

Information must be shared appropriately and sensitively with relevant agencies. This will be the decision of the Executive Officer.

Always make a record of what information you have shared, with whom and why. If an employee alleges that another employee may have abused a child or vulnerable adult, they will be provided with full support.

6. To Report Concerns about a Child:

If it is an emergency and you think a child may be in immediate danger, please contact the emergency services directly by calling **999**.

If you have an urgent concern, please do not hesitate to call the MASH immediately on **0300 126 7000** (option 1) where you will be able to speak to a professional who will listen to and record your concern. You will be required to submit a written copy of the referral following this conversation if it meets the thresholds for a referral or complete the online referral form here: [Report a concern - Help and protection for children \(nctrust.co.uk\)](https://www.nctrust.co.uk)

The **Emergency Duty Team** can be contacted outside office hours on **01604 626 938**.

What happens when I raise a concern?

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so, we share and use information to help us to decide on the best course of action. This is likely to include more detailed enquiries by social workers and partner organisations. If we decide that a case does not meet the threshold for significant harm and does not need social care involvement, we will recommend alternative forms of support that are available to the family.

What will reporting a concern involve?

Parents and carers reporting a concern will be expected to provide various details about themselves, the child, the family, and the concern. This information will be recorded and may be shared with relevant partners. However, should you wish to do so, it is possible to report your concern anonymously.

What will happen after I raise a concern?

After a referral is made the concern will be assessed, further information may be collected with our partner agencies and, where appropriate, the family of the child will be contacted. Working with partners, your concern will be assessed and appropriate actions will be taken.

Non-emergencies

If it is not an emergency, you should report a concern about a child to [Northamptonshire Children's Trust \(nctrust.co.uk\)](https://www.nctrust.co.uk).

Whether you are a child, parent, carer or professional, the Trust's website offers important guidance and explains how the reporting process works.

7. To Report a Concern about an Adult

If an adult is in immediate danger, or missing, you should contact the police directly and/or an ambulance by phoning 999.

If the concern is urgent, contact our West Northamptonshire Council Customer Service Centre on **0300 126 7000**.

For more information on when to report an adult safeguarding concern please see: [Adult social care and wellbeing | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk)

When to report an adult safeguarding concern

The definition of an adult at risk is when a local authority has a reason to believe that an adult in its area (whether ordinarily a resident or not) is:

- In need of care or support.
- Experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- As a result of those needs unable to protect themselves against the abuse, neglect, or the risk of it.

For further information please see: [Care Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)


Consent

When reporting a concern you may need to gain the consent of the person involved, but this is not always possible. This is also known as a person's 'capacity' to understand what is happening.

The Mental Capacity Act states to have capacity a person must be able to:

- understand the information that is relevant to the decision they want to make
- retain the information long enough to be able to make the decision
- weigh up the information available to make the decision
- communicate their decision by any possible means, including talking, using sign language, or through simple muscle movements such as blinking an eye or squeezing a hand

If you are still unsure what capacity is, or what it means, you can read a longer [explanation of capacity \(PDF 468KB\)](#).

More detail on the Mental Capacity Act can be found in the  [code of practice document \(PDF 952KB\)](#).

Involving children, families and carers

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be appropriate to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns.

Decisions should normally be made with the agreement of children and their parents whenever possible, unless doing so would place the child at risk of significant harm and would not be in their best interests. Failure to obtain parental agreement should not be seen as a reason to delay making a referral.

When it is not appropriate to share concerns with parents

Information obtained about individuals should usually be shared with them unless sharing the information is likely to result in serious harm to the individual, a child or another person, or if the information relates to a third party who has expressly stated that the information must not be disclosed.

It would not be appropriate to share information, for example, with a parent or carer who is responsible for (or has been accused of) the abuse.

Where information is obtained and recorded and it is decided that it should not be shared with the individual concerned for one of the above reasons, this should be noted on the records, together with the reasons why it was not shared.

8. Implementation and monitoring

Roles and Responsibilities

The Library, Health & Wellbeing Manager and Assistant Manager are the Council's lead officers in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

Designated Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:

- Attending relevant training, including training for Designated Officers.
- Acting as a source of advice on all safeguarding matters.
- Familiarising themselves with the council's safeguarding procedures and ensuring that the systems are in place for effective record keeping.
- Ensuring that there are effective internal procedures to handle concerns.
- Acting as the 'link' between the council and the organisation or individual that has raised a concern.
- Deciding whether or not to involve other agencies (such as Children's Services and the Vulnerable Adults Team) and/or the Common Assessment Framework.
- Helping people to make referrals, including completing forms.
- Acting as the 'link' between the council and the relevant local agencies. consulting with them on the concerns that have been raised.
- Considering the need to provide extra support for people who have disclosed cases of poor practice or abuse.
- Reporting information to the relevant national governing body if the allegations concern a volunteer or coach in a specific sport.
- Dealing with enquires or information requests from other agencies in relation to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that records are kept and that they are safe and secure at all times.
- Ensuring that the policy, procedures and action plan are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure compliance with Safeguarding legislation; and
- Provide regular progress reports.

All employees, trustees and volunteers are responsible for:

- Carrying out their duties in a way that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- They must act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible, in line with this policy.
- They must bring matters of concern about the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults to the attention of their line manager and/or the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Contractors, sub-contractors (including those delivering activities at MPC venues) or other organisations funded by, or on behalf of, the council are responsible for:

- All hirers of Moulton Parish Council venues have signed a hiring agreement. This requires all hirers who wish to use the hall for activities which include children and vulnerable adults, other than for hire for private parties arranged for invited friends and family, to produce a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Applying for appropriate DBS checks and for ensuring that their staff comply with their Safeguarding Policy.
- They are also responsible for informing Moulton Parish Council of any concerns they encounter and refer in relation to safeguarding issues.

Communication

In order for this Safeguarding Policy to be successfully implemented, it is essential that it be effectively communicated to Councillors, employees, volunteers, and anybody else affected.

It is the responsibility of Executive Officer and line managers to ensure that all Council employees are familiar with this policy.

9. Complaints

All complaints relating to safeguarding issues will be dealt with in line with the Council's Complaints Procedure and may run in parallel with the safeguarding processes.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Officer and submitted to the full council for approval.

Last Reviewed: January 2024

Review Due: January 2025