

Safeguarding children & vulnerable adults

Our statement

This council takes seriously its responsibility under the current legislation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, and to work together with other agencies to ensure that there are adequate arrangements within our organisation to identify and support those who are suffering harm. Where someone is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action will be taken to protect that person.

1.0 Background

1.1 Every Town and Parish Council has a statutory duty to ensure the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to provide a framework for safeguarding and ensure that:

- All children, young people and adults are safe and protected from harm;
- Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable children, young people and adults to feel safe and adopt safe practices; and
- Everyone (e.g. Councillors, council staff, volunteers) are aware of the expected behaviours and the council's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults.

1.2 This document sets out a summary of why the council believes that safeguarding awareness is important, and explains how the council will deliver training and support for them. Links to more detailed documents are listed below, and Appendix 1 lists some of the most common signs of abuse.

1.3 Key points

- Keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe is everybody's business.
- You must never keep concerns about safety, abuse or neglect to yourself.
- It is not your responsibility to investigate concerns but you should tell an appropriate professional about it. If you see something, say something.
- If you have significant concerns for someone's immediate safety you should call 999, and
- By law, individuals up to the age of 18 are considered to be children.

2.0 Who is responsible

2.1 Cornwall Council operates telephone helplines and professional support where you can report concerns or incidents of abuse. They are confidential to all parties. Details in the Appendix attached.

2.2 Councillors and staff have a responsibility to pass on any concerns reported to them or any they observe. Their first step may be to share their concerns with another councillor or someone else who can agree what is the appropriate next step. We call this other person a Designated Person (see 4.1 below). As community leaders, we should all be aware of other peoples' needs and vulnerabilities.

3.0 What is the responsibility?

3.1 We have a statutory responsibilities to risk assess situations where the council and its members may interact with residents; to undergo awareness training; to report issues.

3.2 Ethical responsibility. The job of the council is to represent the interests of the community, and understanding the needs of your residents is an important part of your role as a councillor.

4.0 What we will do

4.1 The Parish Council will create two posts for the role of 'Designated Person' to whom concerns and incidents should be reported. One of the DPs will be the parish clerk and the other will be a portfolio holder, chosen and confirmed each year at the annual parish council meeting. The DPs will undergo additional training and are expected to lead and champion the council's safeguarding agenda. The Clerk's Office will maintain a log of reports made to the DPs.

4.2 Parish councillors are not expected to be safeguarding experts but as part of their position in the community, are expected to have a greater awareness of the signs of abuse and know how to make an appropriate intervention.

4.3 Safeguarding awareness will be included as part of councillor induction, and appropriate training will be added to the council's Training Policy.

4.4 The council will formerly assess situations where safeguarding may be an appropriate concern, for example, at events it organises or meetings. Records of assessments and their outcomes will be logged.

4.5 The council will raise awareness of its safeguarding responsibilities to other stakeholders in the parish, and will act as a point of contact for residents who may need signposting to professional help.

5.0 Legal

5.1 Information sharing: any information collected by the Designated Persons is secured under the council's General Privacy Notice and the 2018 Data Protection Act.

6.0 Further reading

6.1 References from Cornwall Council

Safeguarding Teams

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/what-is-safeguarding/>

Safeguarding Adults

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-care-services/safeguarding-adults/>

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Appendix 1

What we should be looking for?

Children may show these signs:

- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- Becoming withdrawn or seeming anxious
- Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- Lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- Poor bond or relationship with parent
- Knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- Running away or going missing
- Always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body

Vulnerable adults may be subject to these abuses:

- Physical abuse – including assault, misuse of medication.
- Domestic abuse – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, controlling and coercive behaviour; and ‘honour-based’ violence.
- Sexual violence – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was coerced.
- Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- Financial or material abuse – including coercion to take extortionate loans and threats to recover debt, theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Modern slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- Organisational abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Failure to follow agreed processes.
- Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding that causes a risk of harm.

Appendix 2

What should we be asking?

If you are approached by a resident with concerns or you observe a situation that gives you concerns, it is helpful to be able to pass on some level of detail. So, and subject to the circumstances, are you able to record:

The person who is reporting to you

- Their name
- Contact phone number
- Their relationship to the person they are concerned about
- What they have observed
- When did this happen
- Where did this happen
- Is this part of a pattern of concerns about them?
- What is the action they want from you?

The person of concern – if you are able to find out

- What do you know about them? (name or just the name they are known by if it's different)
- Their address (or whereabouts you think they live or shop/socialise)
- Approximate age
- Signs/symptoms of concern
- Can they speak/understand English?