



DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



**South  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

## **Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, Policy and Procedures**

### **Introduction**

1. This policy is for all staff, elected members who may come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the course of their work, whether it is in someone's home, on council premises or in the community.
2. Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northants Council (SNC) aim to work in a way that contributes to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, preventing harm and radicalisation.
3. CDC and SNC will ensure that:
  - all employees involved in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults implement good working practices to ensure a safe and healthy environment;
  - all employees are aware of safeguarding and radicalisation issues both in the context of organised activities and within the home and community;
  - standard procedures are in place to identify and report suspected abuse or actual abuse of children or vulnerable adults and that all employees providing services for these groups understand these procedures.
4. CDC and SNC recognise that in providing services for children, young people and vulnerable adults there is a need to provide and maintain a high degree of physical and emotional wellbeing. Therefore the following procedures will be implemented:
  - ensure employees are aware of the safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy and procedures;
  - ensure employees and members of the public can effectively report concerns about children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk;

- operate sound recruitment and selection procedures for employees to ensure suitability for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- identify and enable appropriate safeguarding training to take place for employees who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- identify and enable appropriate safeguarding awareness training for Members and other staff not directly working with children, young people and vulnerable adults
- maintain appropriate records of training, risk assessments, referrals and escalation of concerns;
- demonstrate best practice in ensuring the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- participate in activities designed to increase community intelligence and reduce the risk of criminal acts

### **Recruitment and Selection of Employees**

5. CDC and SNC have a legal obligation to ensure that all job applicants (including casual and volunteer staff) do not have a history that would make them unsuitable for posts involving contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

In addition to the Safer Recruitment Policy and Practices of satisfactory references, medical reports / examinations and asylum and immigration checks, offers of appointment may be subject to receipt of a satisfactory disclosure from the DBS.

**The DBS policy must be adhered to and sets out clear guidelines for recruitment. The DBS policy should be read in conjunction with this Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy.**

### **Risk Assessment Protocol**

6. The line manager will carry out a risk assessment for any post identified on the vacancy assessment as having contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. In all such posts the individual is not permitted to commence employment until satisfactory clearance has been received by the Council.

In exceptional circumstances and if restrictions can be applied to the role to negate any risks prior to the receipt of DBS clearance, such as identifying office based duties, the employee may be able to commence employment. Continued employment under these circumstances will still be conditional upon receipt of a satisfactory Disclosure being received. Failure to obtain clearance will result in non-engagement/instant dismissal. This policy and procedure includes paid employees, volunteers, elected Members and contractors.

### Training

7. Training is a crucial element in supporting employees to meet their responsibilities toward safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. CDC will utilise the training provided by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Boards and will support the Boards by offering members of staff to train as trainers.
8. SNC will utilise the training provided through a training contract identified by the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Board.
9. Additional training from other providers will be accessed to support the continuing professional development of staff in specific circumstances i.e. national legislation changes or staff in new roles.
10. There are three levels of training which respond to the specific types of contact employees have with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Managers will identify which level of training is appropriate to all posts and this information will be held in a central HR register and reviewed each time a post is recruited to. Attendance at the appropriate level of training will be mandatory.
11. Attendance will be monitored by Managers as part of the appraisal process. Failure to participate in training provided can lead to disciplinary action. In addition, safer recruitment training will be provided for staff involved with recruitment of these groups. Ad hoc training will also be provided to up skill staff in relation to specific areas of the broader safeguarding agenda through the knowing your communities programme. ( this may be referred to as Level 4 training)

#### 12. Level 1 (Awareness)

All employees will be provided with a basic understanding of the principles and their responsibilities towards safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults via this Safeguarding policy and a Safeguarding presentation. This will form part of the induction process for new staff. All managers will be required to attend Know Your Community briefings and attendance will be monitored and recorded.

#### 13. Level 2 (Generalist)

This ½ day training course or e learning modules covers definitions of abuse, indicators and managing concerns and is designed for employees who work with or have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults during the course of their role. This includes staff who have regular or intense contact or who have an enforcement role or who have contact within a single setting, such as family homes, community events or schools or at Council offices to access services.

#### 14. Level 3 (Specialist)

This course is designed for the named lead / designated members for CDC with a specific responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults within their job role, including all staff who may make a safeguarding referral or may participate in an assessment, safeguarding plan or be a member of a vulnerable adults or safeguarding children statutory meeting.

### **Definitions of Abuse**

15. Abuse may arise through neglect or through infliction of harm, or by failure to act to prevent harm. Children, young people and vulnerable adults may be abused in a wide variety of settings, by people known to them, or by strangers. Further information on the categories of abuse can be found at Appendix 1.

### **Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations of Abuse**

16. It is not the responsibility of CDC employees to decide whether or not abuse is taking place. It is the responsibility of CDC/SNDC staff to be alert to signs of abuse and to report concerns. If a person says or indicates that they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a person may be being abused the concerns should be reported promptly.

17. Staff should participate in child and adult protection proceedings where their professional expertise is needed to ensure positive safeguarding outcomes for children, young people or vulnerable adults. These proceedings may be called by social care colleagues or the police.

### **Confidentiality**

18. Confidentiality is a key issue in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. Sharing information with appropriate agencies, even when the individual does not consent, is allowed under these circumstances

- if there are safeguarding concerns
- in the case of concerns over radicalisation
- where there may be a need to share information to prevent a crime being committed.

### **Data Protection**

19. Occasionally there will be a need or requirement to collect and use certain types of information on children, young people and vulnerable adults. This personal information must be dealt with properly however it is collected, recorded and used – whether on paper, in a computer, or recorded on other material - and there are safeguards to ensure this in the Data Protection Act 1998. (Personal information is data that relates to a living individual who can be identified from the data or other data held by the Council).

20. The lawful and correct treatment of personal information is very important and wherever such information is kept there is a need to comply and adhere to the principles of data protection, as laid out in the Data Protection Act 1998. The Council's joint Data Protection Policy is available on the intranet. In most cases

the need to safeguard a child or vulnerable adult will mean that sharing of the data with other relevant persons or agencies will represent fair and lawful processing of the data under the Act and where an employee is uncertain about this they should seek advice from Legal Services.

### Reporting Concerns

21. If you have any concerns you should report them using the See It Report It process. Guidance is provided on the intranet. The form captures written evidence of what you have seen or heard that gives you concern, keeps that document safe and confidential, and is reviewed by the Nominated Officer who is the joint Safeguarding Lead (detailed at Appendix II) as soon as possible.
22. Officers who have received specialist training may make their own referral to either MASH or Adult Social Care. A copy should be forwarded to the Nominated Officer for review and monitoring purposes.
23. If there is an imminent risk of harm then you should phone 999

### Nominated Officer

24. This person is available to advise employees and elected members and is required to:
  - be familiar with safeguarding procedures;
  - ensure there are effective internal procedures to handle concerns;
  - be the link person with relevant agencies;
  - attend appropriate training.

### Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour

25. CDC and SNC have published Safeguarding Guidance to support employees and elected members in understanding what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when working with children, young people or vulnerable adults (Annex A).
26. CDC and SNC have a duty to have a designated officer to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases. The Nominated Officer will have this designation.
27. This person has responsibility for:
  - Ensuring that each authority operates procedures for dealing with allegations in accordance with the local Safeguarding Boards' guidance resolving inter-agency issues;
  - Liaison with the Local Safeguarding Boards on any issues.

### Review Processes for Child Death, Domestic Homicide Review and Serious Case Review

28. All members of the Local Safeguarding Boards are required to provide a senior officer contact to the Board. This person will act as a first point of contact for any

## **Appendix 1**

review processes undertaken, including, but not limited to deaths of children, young people and vulnerable adults, domestic homicide reviews that the organisation is made aware of.

29. If you become aware of the death of a child, young person or vulnerable adult in the course of your professional duties you should immediately contact the Nominated Officer as well as calling 999.

### Appendix 1

#### Categories and signs of abuse

##### Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a person for whom they are caring.

##### Emotional abuse

Is the persistent emotional ill-treatment such as to cause severe adverse effects.. For example, it may involve conveying to children, young people and vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. It may involve causing children, young people and vulnerable adults to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or their exploitation or corruption. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment, though it may occur alone.

##### Sexual abuse

involves forcing or enticing a person to become involved in any way in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

##### Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's or young person's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs, and is likely to result in the serious impairment of health or development.

Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits of vulnerable adults.

### The Signs of Abuse

The following factors should act as indicators in situations of potential or actual abuse:

- unexplained or suspicious marks, bruises, fractures, burns/scalds or injuries to the mouth and eyes;
- poor physical condition or delayed speech and language development in children
- a change in behaviour or appearance;
- inappropriate sexual awareness in children
- a statement by a child or person that he or she has been victimised;
- distrust of others, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- difficulty making friends or socialising;
- prevention from socialising with other children, young people or adults.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.



**Appendix II**

**Nominated Officer**

Nicola Riley  
Shared Interim Communities, Partnerships and Recreation Officer  
01295221724  
[Nicola.riley@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Nicola.riley@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

### **Promoting Good Practice when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults**

It is possible to reduce situations in which abuse can occur and help protect employees by promoting good practice. The following guidelines should be used to ensure this can be achieved:

- Always ensure that you follow safer recruitment practices and undertake DBS checks;
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations;
- Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with equal dignity and respect
- Always put the welfare of the person first;
- Maintain a safe, appropriate and professional distance with children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children, young people and vulnerable adults to share in the decision making process;
- Make activities fun, enjoyable and promote fair play;
- Ensure that if any form of manual / physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with due care;
- Keep up to date with the appropriate technical skills and qualifications; ensure that if children are supervised that they are accompanied by at least two employees;
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol, use of appropriate language and topics of conversation in the company of children, young people and vulnerable adults; give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- Ensure that equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate to the age and ability of the person
- Ensure that high standards are maintained at all times.

### **Practice to be avoided**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of a senior officer, guardian or carer or the child's parent, for example:

- spending excessive amounts of time alone with children, young people and vulnerable adults away from others oversight;
- taking unaccompanied children, young people or vulnerable adults on car journeys, however short, on your own
- taking children, young people and vulnerable adults to your home.

Employees should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- make sexually suggestive comments to a person, even in fun;
- allow allegations made by a person to go unrecorded or not acted upon;
- do things of a personal nature for children, young people and vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves;
- invite or allow children, young people and vulnerable adults to stay at their home;
- constantly shout at and/or taunt a person.