

WOULDHAM PARISH COUNCIL - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy promotes good practice in safeguarding those using Parish Council facilities and those involved in any of the activities of the Parish Council.

Definitions

Children and young people: Anyone under the age of 18 years and Vulnerable Adult:

Anyone over 18 who is:

- Unable to care for themselves
- Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
- Or may be in need of community care services

To whom this policy applies

- This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of WOULDHAM PARISH COUNCIL whether in a paid, voluntary or commissioned capacity.
- This policy also applies to any individual using the Parish Council facilities for the purposes of delivering any service to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Promoting a safe environment

In order to promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, the Parish Council will:

- Provide safe facilities and do regular safety and risk assessments.
- Ensure that employees, councillors, and leaders of activities of WOULDHAM PARISH COUNCIL are aware of the safeguarding expectations.
- Ensure that the policy for users of parish facilities includes a requirement that they are safe to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. (e.g. any adults who have regular unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults during the course of their duties should undergo appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks.)
- Ensure that attendees at functions or events organised by WOULDHAM PARISH COUNCIL are aware that parents are responsible for their children's safety and that the location of a dedicated safe place for lost children is clear.
- Ensure that leaders of events/functions/meetings make their members aware of the Parish Council's safeguarding policy and ensure that it is followed throughout the event.
- Ensure all adults involved in events/functions/meetings have valid enhanced DBS checks as appropriate and know where the first aid box is.
- Do risk assessments for individual activities.

Safe working practice

All those involved in Wouldham Parish Council activities must always follow the safeguarding policy and procedures. They must:

- Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults unattended with adults who have not been subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Plan activities to involve more than one person being present or at least in sight or hearing of others. Alternatively, record, or inform others of their whereabouts and intended action.
- Where possible, have male and female leaders working with a mixed group.
- Ensure registers are complete and attendees are marked in and signed out (all children must be collected by a teacher/parent/carer/ guardian unless agreed with the legal guardian).
- Ensure that photos or videos of individuals are not taken without written permission from parents/ carers.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have access to a first aid kit and telephone and know fire procedures. Ensure that where a child, young person or vulnerable adult needs assistance with toilet trips and when first aid is required, that this is carried out in pairs or in the latter case, that it is carried out where they can be seen.
- When working outside, ensure activities, breaks and clothing are suitable for the weather conditions and that shelter is available where possible.
- Ensure that staff, volunteers, children and vulnerable adults know where the lavatories are and who staff members are (identify uniforms) in case anyone has any questions.

Expectations of behaviour

All those involved in Wouldham Parish Council activities should:

- Ensure that communications, behaviour and interaction with users should be appropriate and professional.
- Treat each other with respect and show consideration for other groups using the facilities.
- Refrain from any behaviour that involves racism, sexism and bullying and in addition report any instances of such behaviour to group leaders, parish councillors, the parish clerk or parents and carers, as appropriate.

Allegations against staff and volunteers

- All staff and volunteers should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child or vulnerable adult.
- If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Clerk or Chair of the Parish Council.
- All staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice should be sought from the Clerk.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Recognising and Reporting Abuse Recognising abuse is not easy, and it is not the responsibility of council staff, elected members or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if there is significant risk. We do however have a responsibility to act if we think it may be happening.

If abuse or a safeguarding issue has arisen, it is the responsibility of all staff, Members and contractors to:

- Report concerns to line manager or designated officer as soon as possible
- Consider immediate safety issues of the person e.g. are emergency services needed
- Preserve evidence (there may be a crime)
- Record:
 - The nature of concern,
 - Date and time,
 - Name of victim,
 - Victims view and description in own words
 - Name of person causing harm if known
 - Appearance of victim
 - Any injuries observed
 - Any third-party allegation
 - Any questions that have been asked
 - Whether you have spoken to anyone else
 - Your name, date and who record given to

Monitoring and Record Keeping

The designated officer needs to ensure that a record is kept of any concerns about a child, young person or adult at risk and of any conversation or referral to statutory agencies. These details must be shared with the Chair and Clerk and be saved securely with password protection. The outcomes of any referral need to be followed up and a record kept of the outcome or any next steps or follow up actions.

What should be a cause for concern?

Staff and volunteers should be concerned by any action or inaction, which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child or vulnerable adult. Abuse falls into four main categories:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

All staff and volunteers coming in to contact with children need to have an awareness of safeguarding

Type of Abuse	Who it affects	Signs of abuse / Behaviour Indicator
Emotional – acts or behaviour which impinges on the emotional health of, or which causes distress or anguish to individuals. This may also be present in other forms of abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • Young People • Vulnerable Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats of harm or abandonment • Humiliation, shaming or ridicule • Harassment, bullying, intimidation • Control or coercion • Deprivation of choice or privacy • Deliberate social isolation • Infantilisation – treating an adult like a child • Disturbed sleep or tendency to withdraw to a room or to bed • Loss of appetite or over eating especially at inappropriate times • Anxiety confusion or general resignation • Extreme submissiveness or dependency in contrast to known capacity • Sharp changes in behaviour in the presence of certain persons • Excessive or inappropriate craving for attention • Self-abusive behaviour – self mutilation, head banging, hand biting • Loss of weight without apparent loss of appetite • Loss of confidence
Neglect and acts of omission – ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs which result in a situation or environment detrimental to individual(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • Young People • Vulnerable Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withholding help or support necessary to carry out daily living tasks • Ignoring medical and physical care needs • Failing to provide access to health, social or educational support • The withholding of medication, nutrition and heating • Keeping someone in isolation. • Failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the vulnerable person. • Inadequate supervision and guidance – leaving the child to cope alone, abandoning them or leaving them with inappropriate carers and failing to provide appropriate boundaries about behaviours such as under age sex or alcohol • Poor hygiene and cleanliness of a person who has assistance with their personal care • Unkempt or unsuitable clothing for the weather conditions/environment • Untreated illness or condition • Dehydration, weight loss, malnutrition • Repeated infections • Repeated/unexplained falls or trips • Worsening of health conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure sores • Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised • Sore or extreme nappy rash • Skin infections

Physical – the non-accidental infliction of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • Young People • Vulnerable Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inflicted physical injury, which is not satisfactorily explained • An injury where there is knowledge or suspicion that it was inflicted intentionally or through lack of care • Assaults on the body including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, resulting in injuries such as burns, abrasions, fractures, dislocation, welts, wounds or marks of physical restraint • Misuse of medication or medical processes, e.g. catheterisation • Inappropriate restraint or inappropriate actions or in actions • Multiple bruising that is inconsistent with the explanation given • Cowering and flinching • Bruises or marks resulting from a slap or kick • Abrasions, especially to neck, wrists and/or ankles • Unexplained burns • Scalds • Hair loss in one area, scalp sore to touch • Unusually sleepy or docile • Unexplained fractures • Frequent hopping from one GP to another or from one care agency to another • Untypical self-harm, emotional distress, low self esteem
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • Young People • Vulnerable Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape • Indecent assault • Indecent exposure • Exposure to inappropriate sexual behaviour or images/material • Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn • Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people • Having nightmares • Running away from home • Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or development age • Sexual drawings or language • Bedwetting • Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about • Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts • Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • Young People • Vulnerable Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, kicking and theft • Name calling, teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti and gestures • Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring • Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments • Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, erratic mood swings, reluctance to go to school, training or clubs, a drop in performance. • Physical signs such as stomach aches, difficulty sleeping, bed wetting, damaged clothes, bingeing on food, cigarettes or alcohol. • Shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

Financial – unauthorised, fraudulently obtaining and improper use of funds, property or any resources of a vulnerable person	• Vulnerable Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theft, fraud, exploitation Pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions Extortion of money, property and possessions by threat, coercion or fraudulent means Refusal to let the vulnerable person have access to their own money, property or possessions The perpetrator befriending the victim and then using their position of trust to gain financially from the victim – moving into their house to 'care' for them, becoming their appointee/attorney. Being over charged for services or tricked into receiving goods or services that they do not want or need.
Discriminatory Abuse – exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies mainstream opportunities to some groups or individuals	• Vulnerable Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unequal treatment Verbal abuse Inappropriate use of language Harassment Exclusion Discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, sexuality, disability, religion
Institutional Abuse – for example where the culture of a care home places emphasis on the running of the establishment and the needs of the staff above needs and care of the vulnerable person	• Vulnerable Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abuse by an organisation imposing rigid and insensitive routines; poor practices embedded in systems, unskilled, intrusive or invasive interventions; or an environment allowing inadequate privacy or physical comfort

Declaration

Wouldham Parish Council, is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and adults with care and support needs by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm and neglect. All members of Wouldham Parish Council should be proactive in providing a safe environment for children and adults with care and support needs who are involved in Parish Council activities.

Safeguarding Officers

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APPENDIX A

Summary of relevant legislation and Government guidance

2014 Care Act

The 2014 Care Act extended the definition of a vulnerable adult for safeguarding purposes, placing Adult Safeguarding boards on a statutory footing, to spearhead safeguarding activity in a local area. Under the Act local authorities must: Investigate, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and if so, by whom; set up safeguarding adults boards, arrange where appropriate, for an independent advocate to represent and support the adult if s/he has "substantial difficulty" in being involved in the process and where there is no other suitable person to represent and support them; co-operate with each of its relevant partners to protect the adult. In their return each relevant partner must also co-operate with the local authority.

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - March 2015

This HM Government Guidance was produced to help practitioners identify child abuse and neglect and take appropriate action in response.

Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018

The Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance sets out the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and provides a clear framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services. The guidance is issued under section 11 (4) of the Children Act 2004 and section 16 of the Children Act 2004.

Kent & Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures 2015

The Children Act 2004 obliges named statutory agencies to co-operate so as to improve the 'well-being' of children in their area with respect to their, physical and mental health; protection from harm and neglect; education, training and recreation; contribution to society; and emotional, social and economic well-being. Specified agencies are also obliged to make arrangements to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of children' by means of direct or indirect service provision. The Kent & Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures contains comprehensive multi-agency policies and procedures that are fully compliant with law and best practice.

Kent Safeguarding Children's Board – Guidance

This Guidance Page provides information and advice on handling specific safeguarding topics.

Information Sharing: 2018

Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. Information sharing is key to the Government's goal of delivering better, more efficient public services that are coordinated around the needs of the individual. It is essential to enable early intervention and preventative work, for safeguarding and promoting welfare and for wider public protection.

The aim of the guidance, and associated materials, therefore is to support good practice in information sharing by offering clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally, in order to achieve improved outcomes.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. The learning and development requirements (the seven areas of learning and development; the educational programmes; and the assessment requirements) and the legal requirements relating to welfare (child protection; suitable people; staff qualifications, training support and skills; key person, staff : child ratios; health; managing behaviour; safety and suitability of premises, environment & equipment, equal opportunities and information and records) apply to all children up until the 31 August after their fifth birthday.

Childcare Register

The Childcare Register has two parts, the compulsory register which relates to those who care for at least one child from 1 September following their fifth birthday up to the age of eight for a period or total periods of more than two hours in any one day and the voluntary register for providers, who care for children aged eight or over, until their eighteenth birthday. If providers choose to be included on either part of the register they must meet the requirements set out at all times when providing childcare. The law allows Ofsted to carry out inspections to check that providers comply with these requirements.

Sex Offenders Act 1997

The Sex Offenders Act 1997 requires sex offenders convicted or cautioned on or after 1 September 1997 to notify the police of their names and addresses and of any subsequent changes (known colloquially as the sex offenders register).

Sexual Offences Act 2003

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 was introduced to update the legislation relating to offences against children. It includes the offences of grooming, abuse of position of trust, trafficking, and covers offences committed by UK citizens whilst abroad. It also updates the Sex Offenders Act 1997 by strengthening the monitoring of sex offenders. The coalition government is currently consulting on further reform of the notification requirements for registered sex offenders (Home Office, 2011). Similar offences were introduced into other parts of the UK by the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (NI) Order 1974 (UK wide)

This Act/Order allows people not to declare convictions to employers which protects their privacy and counteracts prejudice against people with convictions seeking employment. However, people who are involved in situations where they have prolonged or sustained access to children are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation. This means that prospective employees, self-employed workers and volunteers must declare all criminal convictions relating to children, however long ago. These will be taken into account when deciding on their suitability for working with children.

Protection of Freedom Acts 2012

Chapter 1 of Part 5 amends the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which provides the framework for the vetting and barring scheme operated by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). In particular it changed the definition of 'regulated activity' and abolished the concept of 'controlled activity' which related to persons working (paid or unpaid) in ancillary posts or who had access to sensitive information relating to children.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The DBS searches police records and, in relevant cases, barred list information, and then issues a DBS certificate to the applicant to help them make an informed recruitment decision. The checking service currently offers two levels of DBS check; standard and enhanced. The order allows for applications to be submitted to a standard level. To qualify for the higher level of DBS check, the position must also meet one of the criteria set out in The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) Regulations. The DBS is committed to ensuring that they make fair, consistent and thorough barring decisions that are an appropriate response to the harm that has occurred and to the risk of harm posed. There are two main ways barring can come to them including autobars or referrals from an organisation that has a legal duty or power to make referrals to DBS when they have dismissed or removed an employee from working in regulated activity, following harm to a child or vulnerable adult or where there is a risk of harm. Additionally, where a person is cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring) offence with the right to make representations, the DBS will ask the person to submit their representations and consider them before making a final barring decision.

At Wouldham Parish Council the DBS process is managed by the Clerk and Admin Team, who will assist with determining eligibility, the level of check required and the frequency it needs to be renewed. This will be overseen by the full Council.

The Data Protection Act

- Provides a comprehensive and modern framework for data protection in the UK, with stronger sanctions for malpractice.
- Sets new standards for protecting general data, in accordance with the GDPR, giving people more control over use of their data, and providing them with new rights to move or delete personal data.
- Preserves existing tailored exemptions that have worked well in the Data Protection Act 1998, ensuring that UK businesses and organisations can continue to support world leading research, financial services, journalism and legal services.
- Provides a bespoke framework tailored to the needs of our criminal justice agencies and the intelligence services, to protect the rights of victims, witnesses and suspects while ensuring we can tackle the changing nature of the global threats the UK faces.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This is the same for Northern Ireland and Wales. This Act gives all organisations a legal responsibility to prevent injuries and ill health to employees and others, including members of the public. Much of this responsibility is delegated to staff who have control of work activities but the legislation also provides all employees with an obligation to take reasonable care of themselves.

The Council also has a duty to consider the suitability of the Health & Safety arrangements for any organisation undertaking any work on our behalf.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act brings together nine separate pieces of legislation into one single Act providing a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all; to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation; and to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.