



WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Town Council is committed to safeguarding the wholeness and wellbeing of every person in our community, of whatever age.
- 1.2 It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect of every member of our community, and particularly the abuse of those most vulnerable among us, including children and those from vulnerable groups.
- 1.3 The welfare of the child or adult at risk is paramount. All children and adults at risk without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or belief.
- 1.4 Wetherby Town Council is not a Children's Services Authority and it is not the role of the Town Council to investigate allegations of abuse.
However, all Councillors, members of staff, volunteers, contracted service providers and anyone working on behalf of and / or representing the Town Council have a responsibility to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child or adult at risk may be a victim of harm or abuse.
- 1.5 All those who work or volunteer with the Town Council will be made aware of this policy and of what to do if they have any concerns. There is guidance for those responding to concerns so that they are properly dealt with, including sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know and involve children, young people and families appropriately.
- 1.6 This policy applies to all situations within the Town Council's operation which could potentially involve children or adults at risk.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 The term child is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18.
- 2.2 The term adult at risk is used to refer to anyone aged 18 or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation, or may be in need of community care services.
- 2.3 'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 as:
 - Protecting children from maltreatment.
 - Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
 - Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
 - Undertaking that role to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 All Councillors, volunteers and staff of Wetherby Town Council must:
 - Understand and apply this policy and procedures in their activities.
 - Identify opportunities and undertake appropriate training to support them in their role.
 - Act appropriately at all times and be able to challenge inappropriate behaviour in others.



- Be able to recognise harm and know how to report concerns in a timely and appropriate way.
- 3.2 Members and managers of Wetherby Town Council must:
- Encourage all staff and volunteers to understand this policy.
 - Offer opportunities to undertake appropriate safeguarding training and refresher training.
 - Ensure the policy and procedure is adhered to and to undertake regular compliance audits.
 - Ensure that the Council's whistle-blowing policy is communicated to all staff and volunteers.
- 3.3 The role and responsibilities of the named person are:
- To ensure that all staff are made aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child or adult at risk may be subject to abuse or neglect.
 - Ensure that any concerns about a child or adult at risk are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
 - The named person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a child or adults at risk or breach of safeguarding policies and procedures, using the Council's incident and accident report form. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

4. TOWN COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

- 4.1 It is our policy that no-one shall work with children or adults at risk within the Town Council who:
- a) Has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning an offence against children as listed in the First Schedule of the Children and Young People's Act 1933; or
 - b) Has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against children and young people.
 - c) Is registered on the protection of Children Act, protection of Vulnerable Adults Act and List 99.
- 4.2 This means that:
- a) All who work for, or are being considered for employment with, the Town Council will be required to be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service and are expected at all times to conform with good practice in their work; and undertake safeguarding and child protection courses and other training as may be required.
 - b) Those responsible for the appointment of such employees (usually the Council's Staffing Committee) must take all reasonable steps, including obtaining Disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service, to ensure that persons who have been convicted or have received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against children or young people shall not undertake work, or come in to contact with children, young or adults at risk under the auspices of the Town Council.
- 4.3 The Council's named person, responsible for safeguarding issues, is the Town Clerk who is also the line manager of all other employees.



Employees have open access to the Town Clerk to facilitate discussion of any safeguarding issues of concern.

5. USERS OF COUNCIL FACILITIES, INCLUDING WETHERBY TOWN HALL

- 5.1 Users of Council facilities must satisfy the Town Council that they have adequate systems in place to safeguard the welfare of children and adults at risks by providing the Town Council with documentary evidence when requested.
- 5.2 Groups who hire Town Council facilities, or Wetherby Town Hall, for use with children and adults at risk will be required to:
- a) Have public liability insurance.
 - b) Have a suitable safeguarding policy and / or agree to work to Wetherby Town Council's policy and relevant guidance or best practice.
 - c) Ensure that group leaders make their members aware of their organisation's safeguarding policy and ensure that it is followed whilst using Town Council facilities or Wetherby Town Hall.
 - d) Ensure that leaders have valid enhanced DBS checks as appropriate.
 - e) Conduct risk assessments for individual activities.
 - f) Never leave children or adults at risk unattended with adults who have not been subject to a DBS check.
 - g) Plan activities to involve more than one person (either leaders or participants) being present.
 - h) Where possible have male and female leaders working with a mixed group.
 - i) Ensure registers are complete and attendees are marked in and signed out, with under 8s to be collected by a parent / guardian.
 - j) Ensure that where a child or adult at risk 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.

6. PHOTOGRAPHY

- 6.1 Councillors, members of staff, volunteers and contracted service providers should be vigilant at all times regarding people using cameras or videos within the Council's facilities and at events which involve children or adults at risk.
- 6.2 Consent must be sought from parents or guardians when cameras and other image recorders are used to picture children or adults at risk.

7. RECOGNISING THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

- 7.1 A basic definition of abuse is that it is abuse of power by a person who is developmentally and/or physically stronger than another, resulting in some distress, harm or neglect of necessary attention for the victim.



7.2 Child abuse is a term that describes all the ways in which a child's development and health are damaged by the actions or inactions of others, usually adults. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting: by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

7.3 Although different terms are used to describe particular types of abuse, these often overlap and many children or adults at risk suffer effects of a range of destructive forms of behaviour.

7.4 It is generally accepted that there are four main types of abuse. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (DoH, HO, DfEE, 2010). Below the definitions are listed signs and symptoms that may indicate abuse, but do not jump to conclusions as there may be other explanations:

7.5 **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or adult at risk. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child or adult at risk whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being the result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Signs of physical abuse may include: Unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention

7.6 **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or adult at risk such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's or adult at risk's emotional development.

It may involve making them feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing them to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child or adult at risk.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment to a child or adult at risk, though it may occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse may include: Reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden underachievement, attention-seeking, running away from home, stealing, lying.

7.7 **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or adult at risk to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of, or consent to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or the adults at risk in looking at or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.



Signs of sexual abuse may include: Pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings, being sexually provocative with adults, disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting, secretive relationships with adults and children, stomach pains with no apparent cause.

7.8 **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or adult at risk's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect the person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a person's basic emotional needs.

Signs of neglect may include: Looking ill-cared for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive, lingering injuries or health problems.

7.9 **Bullying**

Bullying is not always easy to define; it can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racism or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities).

Bullying will include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards a victim.
- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies.
- An outcome that is always painful and distressing for the victim.

Bullying may include:

- Other forms of violence
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive or offensive comments of a sexual nature.

Emotional and verbal bullying is more common than physical violence, it can also be difficult to cope with or prove.

Bullying can result in a person becoming vulnerable and isolated. These particular children or young people could then become an easy target for adult abusers. Concerns about bullying should be dealt with in the same way as concerns about child abuse.

8. **BECOMING AWARE OF A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE**

8.1 There are various ways in which you may become aware of a safeguarding issue:

- A third party or anonymous allegation is received.
- A child or adult at risk's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect;
- A child or adult at risk reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago;
- A written report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or adult at risk.
- You are approached by a child or adult at risk with concerns.



8.2 *Receive*

- Listen to the person.
- If you are shocked by what they are saying, try not to show it.
- Take what they say seriously.
- Accept what they say to you.
- DO NOT ask for (other) information.

8.3 *Reassure*

- Stay calm and reassure them that they have done the right thing in talking to you.
- Be honest with them, so do not make promises you can't keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer the child or person who is at risk.
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for them to tell you what happened.

8.4 *React*

- React to the person only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate them for details.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Explain what you must do next and to whom you must talk.
- Explain and if possible seek agreement that you will have to discuss the situation with someone else but will do so on a 'need to know' basis.

8.5 *Record*

- Make some brief notes at the time and write them up more fully as soon as possible.
- Take care to record timing, setting and personnel as well as what was said.
- Be objective in your recording – include statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

8.6 *Act Now*

- Discuss the matter with the Town Clerk (our 'named person') immediately or report the incident or concern to Leeds City Council or West Yorkshire Police.

9. HOW TO REPORT INCIDENTS OR CONCERNS

9.1 Our 'named person' is Mrs Iona Taylor, the Town Clerk.

9.2 Incidents or concerns about the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk in connection with the work of Wetherby Town Council should be reported to the Town Clerk who can be contacted in the following ways:

- Tel: 01937-583584
- E-mail: clerk@wetherby.co.uk
- Address: The Town Hall, Market Place, Wetherby, LS22 6NE

9.3 In the event of the Clerk's absence, incidents or concerns can be reported to the current Mayor whose contact details can be found online at www.wetherby.co.uk or to Leeds City Council or West Yorkshire Police directly.

9.4 Leeds City Council is the local authority with responsibility for children and adult social care services.

9.5 Incidents or concerns which are reported to the Town Clerk will automatically be discussed with or forwarded to Leeds City Council and / or West Yorkshire Police.



Incidents or concerns which involve a member of staff may also be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary measures.
Incidents or concerns which involve a Councillor may also be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

- 9.6 Concerns about a child can be reported to Leeds City Council in the following ways:
 - Tel: 0113 222 4403 (office hours).
 - Out of hours Emergency Duty Team: 0113 240 9536
 - E-mail: LeedsChildren@gcsx.gov.uk

- 9.7 Concerns about an adult can be reported to Leeds City Council in the following ways:
 - Tel: 0113 222 4401 (office hours).
 - E-mail: edt.ss@leeds.gov.uk
 - Out of hours Emergency Duty Team: 0771 210 6378

- 9.8 If you think a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger then you should call the police on 999.

This policy was prepared by Iona Taylor, Town Clerk.

Signed: *I. Taylor*

Dated: *12/6/18*

This policy was adopted by the Town Council at its meeting held on 12th June 2018:

Signed: *G. Moss*

Councillor Galan Moss, Mayor of Wetherby

Dated: *12/6/18*



This policy was subsequently reviewed, and approved without amendment by the Town Council on:

Date:	Signed by Chairman:

