

Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Swaffham Town Council is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm, whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Town Council.

As the Town Council does not directly provide care or supervision services to children, it expects all children using its facilities to do so with the consent and the necessary supervision of a parent or other responsible adult.

This policy covers all elected and co-opted members, employees and any other volunteers who may be working in partnership with the Town Council.

2. Policy Objective

To ensure that where possible all facilities and activities offered by the Town Council are designed and maintained to limit risk to children and vulnerable adults.

To promote the general welfare, health and development of children and vulnerable adults by being aware of child and vulnerable adult protection issues and to be able to respond where appropriate as a local government organisation.

These guidelines have been devised to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, as well as to protect members, staff, and volunteers from situations where false allegations may occur.

To develop procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect.

3. Responsibilities & Procedures

A Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer will be appointed from within the Council and his/her responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring that before any Town Council organised event with children or vulnerable persons, the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer brief participants appropriately.
- Ensuring that members and Town Council staff are aware of the risk they may face in certain circumstances whilst carrying out their duties.
- Ensuring that whilst Town Council members and staff are unlikely to be involved with children during the performance of their duties, they are mindful of the risk they face.
- Ensuring that before any volunteers or paid members of staff are recruited to work with children and vulnerable persons they are interviewed, and two references taken up.

Decisions on whether any person should be DBS checked will be made by the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk.

As the Town Council does not directly provide care or supervision services to children, it expects all children using its facilities to do so with the consent and the necessary supervision of a parent or other responsible adult.

All new councillors are to be provided with a copy of the Child Protection & Vulnerable Adult Policy and are required to acknowledge they will abide by it.

Always work in an open environment (e.g., avoiding private or unobserved situations) where young people or vulnerable adults may be present. Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with young people or vulnerable adults away from others.

Be identifiable where appropriate, possibly with the use of lanyards and identification.

In line with the Prevent duty – to stop people becoming involved in terrorist activity or supporting violent extremism in all its forms – the council will ensure it does not work with or allow its premises to be used by organisations engaged in extremist activity or those that express extremist, hate motivated or discriminatory ideology or beliefs.

For both children and vulnerable adults if you suspect abuse:

- ensure that you listen carefully.
- make a note of what has happened or what you are worried about and keep any evidence.
- tell someone trustworthy, who can start to investigate the situation.
- do not confront the person you think is responsible for the abuse.

4. Reporting concerns

Alleged cases of abuse will be reported to Norfolk County Council either using the website:

- <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/report-concerns>
- telephone - 0344 800 8020 (Line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- any emergency in case of immediate danger, call 999.
- For concerns for vulnerable adults call Adult Social Services on **0344 800 8020**.

It is not the Town Council staff member and/or volunteer's responsibility to determine if abuse is occurring but to report their concerns.

Allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff or Councillor must be referred immediately to the Town Clerk who will refer the matter to Social Services at Norfolk County Council for investigation.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of Town Council staff or a volunteer these will be fully investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedures.

5. Definitions

The terms child, children or young person refers to anyone below the age of 18.

A vulnerable adult or adult at risk can be defined as any person aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support, either on a long-term or temporary basis (including for substance misuse, mental ill health, or domestic abuse).
- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and because of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

Abuse may be:

- Intentional or unintentional.
- Active or passive.
- Part of a pattern of behaviour or a single incident.
- Physical, Psychological, Emotional, or Sexual.
- Neglect.
- Self-neglect (when people do not look after themselves and this puts them at risk).
- Financial.
- Discriminatory.
- Manipulating to adopt radical ideologies and harmful behaviours.
- Modern Slavery

6. Legislation

Legislation that applies to this policy includes:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Child Protection Act 1989
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Children Act 2004

Swaffham Town Council Named Safeguarding Leads:

Leanne Jarrett – Deputy Town Clerk

Nicola Forrest – Community Engagement Officer