



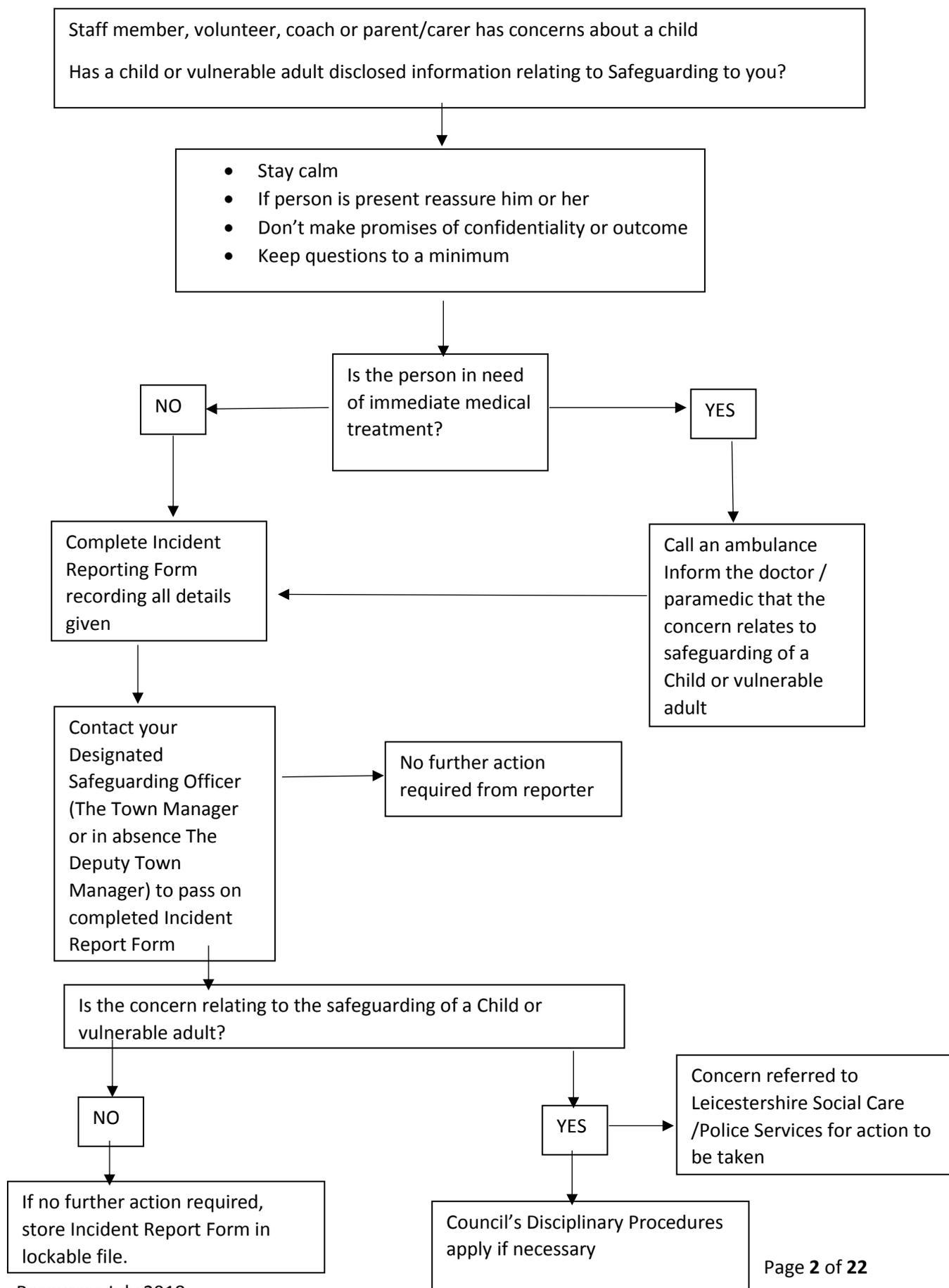
# **System Town Council**

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

Remember it is not up to you to decide if abuse has taken place, that is the role of Leicestershire's Social Care Services, BUT it is up to you to report ANY concerns.

We have a duty of care to respond to any issues that may concern us even if they don't involve our staff or services.

## Guide for dealing with concerns relating to actual or suspected abuse



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## Introduction

**This Policy will inform you what abuse is, what signs to look out for, what actions to take and what will happen next. Read it now and then keep it somewhere safe, this may just be the tool that helps you to save a child or vulnerable adults life.**

Every child has the right not to be abused. As an adult working with children we have a responsibility for their safety.

This policy is designed to ensure that you are equipped with the knowledge and information to enable you to follow the Town Council's Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding responsibilities.

It is not our job to establish whether or not abuse is taking place, it **IS** our responsibility however to report any concerns we have over the welfare of children or vulnerable adults. This duty extends to the identification of abuse, poor practice by internal members/staff of the Council, as well as allegations brought to the attention of the Council by a member of the public/community.

It is important to be aware that the Town Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure the duty of care for children and vulnerable adults. It is committed to ensuring that all children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised or activities provided by the Council.

The safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 recognises the needs for individuals who want to work or volunteer with vulnerable people, which includes all groups of vulnerable people including those who are young or elderly, to be vetted.

From 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012, this became the responsibility of the 'Disclosure & barring Service' (DBS).

The main aim is to prevent people who pose a known risk of harm from working with children and vulnerable adults. The DBAS will do this by assessing all relevant information including data held on the Police National Computer, disciplinary action taken by employers, and social services records. Anyone deemed unsuitable will be placed on a Barred List.

## 1.1 Policy Statement

The Town Council accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children and vulnerable adults, safeguard their well being and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or provided by the Council. We aim to do this by:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and vulnerable adults.
- Raising the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to children and vulnerable adults through the Council,
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well being of children and vulnerable adults to protect them from harm.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, and minimize risk to themselves.
- Responding to any allegations or misconduct or abuse of children and vulnerable adults in line with this Policy and Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Requiring staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Council's Children & Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Reviewing and evaluating this Policy and Procedures document on a regular basis,

## 1.1 Principles and Definitions or Vulnerability

This policy and these procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is the primary concern
- All children and vulnerable adults irrespective of their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual orientation have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- The term child, or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parent, carers and guardians.

- The term staff, elected members and volunteers is used to refer to employees, town councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for, or representing the Council.

There are four broad types of child abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Full definitions of these can be found in the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Procedures available from <http://lrsb.org.uk> and <http://lrsb.org.uk/advice-and-onformation-on-types>

## **2.0 Allegations against an external member of the community i.e. parent, carer, guardian, community member, public ETC.**

This policy and its producers inform all staff, elected members and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse, i.e. response actions.

Council staff may come across cases of suspected abuse either through direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, for example, running an activity or maintaining a playground. **It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. It is however your responsibility to report your concerns.**

**Your primary concern is to ensure that any relevant information is passed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, (The Manager to Syston Town Council), who will then determine any action or referral necessary to the relevant authority e.g. police or social care services without delay.**

## **2.1 Responding to Disclosure**

Abused children or vulnerable adults are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child is saying you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

### **Actions to be taken by the person being disclosed to:-**

- React calmly so as not to frighten them
- Take what the person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is being said by a person who has a speech impairment or differences in language.
- Avoid asking direct questions other than those seeking to clarify your understanding of what the person has said. They may be subsequently formally

interviewed by the police or social care services and they should not have to repeat their account on several occasions.

- Inappropriate and excessive questioning at an early stage may also impede the conduct of a subsequent criminal investigation,
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult but **do not make promises of confidentiality** which will not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer who has the authority to act.
- Tell them they were not to blame and that they were right to tell.
- Record them writing on the Children Incident Reporting Form (See Appendix 1) all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child's own words, immediately.

### **Actions to Avoid**

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Dismiss the concern
- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information than is comfortably offered – do not overpressure for a response.
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Should not suggest any action/s or consequences that may be undertaken in response to the disclosure.

## **2.2 Responding to Suspicions**

All suspicions, concerns and disclosures have to be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The Designated Child Safeguarding Officer has the responsibility to;

- Ensure that arrangements are made to identify staff who require training in child protection issues.
- Ensure that Report forms and copies of the policy and procedures are available. Record them, using appropriate forms and procedures identified.
- Represent the Council on formal investigations into allegations of abuse led by Social Care Services.
- Receive the appropriate training

In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Officer queries should be forwarded to the Deputy Manager at Syston Town Council, Community Centre, School Street, Syston, Leicester, LE7 1HN:

Telephone Number: 0116 260 7150

Email: [ursula@systontc.org.uk](mailto:ursula@systontc.org.uk)

Where the matter appears urgent and neither the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Deputy Manager are available, delay should be avoided. At such times contact should be made with Leicestershire Social Care Services. (see page 11 for key contacts)

## 2.3 Confidentiality

**Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned in the safeguarding of children. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:**

- The Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer who will be the sole contact henceforth.
- Social Care Services/Police
- The person making the allegation
- The alleged abuser if a member of staff

Where there is any possibility that a criminal act may have been committed care should be taken that no action taken may jeopardize any subsequent criminal investigation. This includes contacting the alleged perpetrator. Advice should FIRST be sought from the Police and/or Social Care Services; delay should not occur.

The responsible **Designated Safeguarding Officer** will:-

Ensure that the procedures are followed appropriately in consultation with Social Care services.

The designated officers will follow the police to ensure;

- The appropriate agencies are informed
- Information is recorded and stored appropriately
- Staff involved are supported as required

It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child or its family and child protection investigations that may follow.

Where a staff member is approached regarding an allegation, issues of confidentiality should be clarified early in the discussion, and that person informed that the member of

staff will, at the very least, have to disclose the conversation to the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer and that, depending on the severity of the information, it may be disclosed to Social Care Services or the Police.

## **2.4 Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form**

You need to fill in an Incident Report Form for all concerns, allegations and suspicions relating to the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults. (See Appendix 1 : Incident Reporting Form).

This needs to be done as soon as practicable to ensure all the facts are recorded. Use the same form for all disclosures and allegations and suspicions. Do not worry if all the boxes do not apply to your situation, it is purely to help you to remember as much relevant information as possible. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to take a lead on suspicions and report them to Social Care Services and or the Police to take the appropriate course of action.

## **2.5 Sharing Concerns with Parents, Carers or Partners**

Whilst delivering Town Council Services to children and vulnerable adults, there is a commitment to work in partnership with parents/carers and share concerns about their child or vulnerable adult. Therefore, in most circumstances it would be important for the Designated Safeguarding Officer to talk to parents or carers to clarify any concerns (but not the alleged abuser) For example if a child seems withdrawn there may be a reasonable explanation, which a parent can provide. In most cases this decision will be taken and followed up by Social Care Services as the professional body on protection issues.

## **2.6 When it is Inappropriate to Share Concerns with Parents, Carers or Partners**

There are circumstances when children or vulnerable adults can be placed at greater risk by sharing concerns with their parents/carers e.g. where the parent/carer is the one who may be responsible for the abuse.

When there are ongoing concerns regarding a parent or carer in relation to the alleged abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, the parent or carer should not be contacted about the allegation of abuse. Social Care Services and/or the Police will do this at an appropriate time.

### **3 Allegations against an internal employee/member of the Council e.g. Staff (Permanent, temporary, casual, contracted, volunteer) and Elected Members**

It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult arising from abuse or harassment by an employee/member of the Council should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and an incident report form completed. **(In the case of an allegation being made about the Designated Safeguarding Officer, this should be reported to the Deputy Manager to the Council, (Syston Town Council) for further action)**

There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse, but this should always be communicated to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for guidance and appropriate action.

Where an allegation is made against an elected member, this should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will refer the allegation to the proper authorities, and will also then engage the Monitoring Officer, Charnwood Borough Council, Southfield Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 2TX who has responsibility to address Member code of conduct issues.

#### **3.4 Support for the Reporter of the Alleged Abuse**

Strong feelings may be generated by the discovery that an employee or a member of the Council may be abusing a child or vulnerable adult. This can raise concerns among other employees or members and create difficulties in reporting such matters. The Town Council will fully support and protect all staff/members who, in good faith (without malicious intent) report his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child or vulnerable adult may be being abused.

#### **3.5 Types of Investigation**

Where there are allegations of abuse or concerns about poor practice of an employee or member there may be three strands of investigation:

1. Child Safeguarding investigation (externally led by Social Care Services)
2. Criminal investigation (externally led by the Police authority)
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (internally led)

In the first two incidences, the Council will not be involved in any form of investigation unless requested to do so by the Social Care Services or the Police authority and feedback on outcomes of any investigation will not usually be fed back to the Designated Safeguarding Officer involved unless there are outstanding misconduct issues to address.

As a Town Council employee, the usual terms and conditions for disciplinary investigations will apply. If this happens consideration will be given to suspension on full pay pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Council will assess each individual allegation on its own, considering the findings of any criminal investigation and respond to the outcome of the investigation in line with Council policy and procedures. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the Council will assess the appropriateness of the staff member returning to work in his/her previous environment.

#### 4 Key Contacts

Designated Safe Guarding Officer

The Town Manager  
Syston Town Council  
Community Centre  
School Street  
Syston  
Leicester  
LE7 3ZJ  
Tel: 0116 2607150

In the absence of the Designated Officer

Contact the Deputy to the Clerk  
To the Council at the same  
Address and Telephone Number  
(Above)

Children's Social Care Enquiries,  
Leicestershire County Council

0116 305 0005  
[childrensduty@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childrensduty@leics.gov.uk)

Leicestershire County Council  
Agency Referral Form to  
Children's Social Care

[www.leics.gov.uk](http://www.leics.gov.uk)

**(Home > Social Care & Health > Children & Families > Children & Young People at Risk)**

Leicestershire Constabulary

0116 222 2222

## Appendix 1

### Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

All information will be treated in strict confidence

|  |              |                       |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Date:</b>   | <b>Time:</b> | <b>Venue:</b>         |
| <b>Your Name:</b>  |              |                       |
| <b>Your Position:</b>  |              |                       |
| <b>Name of Child or Vulnerable Adult:</b>  |              |                       |
| <b>Gender M/F</b>  | <b>Age:</b>  | <b>Date of Birth:</b> |
| <b>Child/Vulnerable Adults religious and ethnic background:</b>  |              |                       |
| <b>Any identified disability or special factors:</b>   |              |                       |
| <b>Child or vulnerable Adults Address:</b>   |              |                       |
| <b>Other people living at the address (if known)</b>   |              |                       |
| <b>Tel No:</b>   |              |                       |
| <b>Next of Kin:</b>  |              |                       |
| <b>Address (if different from above):</b>  |              |                       |
| <b>Tel No (If different from above):</b>   |              |                       |
| <b>Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of someone else?<br/>Please give details:</b> |              |                       |

**Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: Include dates, times etc of any specific incidents:**

**Please describe any physical or behavioural indicators, which have been observed**

**Have you or anyone else spoken with the parent/family/carer(s)? If so, what was said?**

**Have you spoken or anyone else spoken with the person about their concerns and if so what was discussed.**

**Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details:**

**External agencies contacted (date and time)**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Police<br/>Yes/No</b>           | <b>If yes which:<br/>Name and contact number:<br/><br/>Details of advice received:</b> |
| <b>Social Services<br/>Yes/NO</b>  | <b>If yes which:<br/>Name and contact number:<br/><br/>Details of advice received:</b> |
| <b>Other (eg NSPCC)<br/>Yes/NO</b> | <b>If yes which:<br/>Name and contact number:<br/><br/>Details of advice received:</b> |
| <b>Date:</b>                       | <b>Signature:</b>  |

**Remember; do not discuss this with friends or colleagues. Arrange to see your Designated Safeguarding Officer urgently, they will initiate appropriate action.**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Promoting Good Practice with Children and Vulnerable Adults**

You will be better placed to avoid any misinterpretation of your actions and ensure the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in your care if you always engage in the following good practice. Failure to adhere to these could be perceived as poor practice and become a disciplinary issue. There seems a great deal to remember but do not worry you will probably find that you already do the majority of these things naturally.

- Always put the welfare of the children and vulnerable adults before any other agenda ie winning, finishing a project
- Provide a good role model of behaviour
- Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally with respect and dignity using positive constructive encouragement
- Stay vigilant for the safety of all children and vulnerable adults around you, not just the ones immediately in your care
- If you have to physically touch a child or vulnerable adults eg if they have fallen, then do so with consideration, never touch intimate areas and always tell the child or vulnerable adult what you are going to do
- Always wear appropriate clothing when working with children and vulnerable adults. Eg dress according to the duties to be undertaken in a manner befitting the responsible care of children and vulnerable adults. If you have a uniform this must be worn as part of your contracted condition of employment. Name badges must be worn where provided and/or identification that you are representing the Council must be worn at all times
- Maintain correct staff to child ratios
- Always have a register of children in your charge and make sure they are signed out when collected. Be aware of who is and is not authorised to collect the child and do not let them leave with anyone else without checking with a parent first
- Ensure a code of behaviour is established at the start of each session so that everyone knows what is expected of them and what is acceptable. If you have to discipline a child then do so in a positive constructive manner making sure that the child knows it is the behaviour and not the child that is not welcome
- Use appropriate language and explanations. (it is not always what is said but how it is said that can be of concern and of great importance)

#### **Practice that is NOT acceptable**

- Allowing inappropriate language of all parties to go unchallenged

- Transporting children should never be taken by just one member of staff or volunteer, no matter what the urgency is (always contact appropriate emergency service). There should always be two adults within your selected mode of transport
- Being alone with a child. If they are upset or need first aid then take them to one side but do not enclose yourself in a room
- Make sexually suggestive comments to or around a child or vulnerable adult
- Engaging in rough physical or sexually provocative play with a child or vulnerable adult
- Allowing or engaging in appropriate touching
- Inviting or allowing a child to stay in your home
- Taking children to your home, for however a short time
- Performing personal care for someone which they can do themselves or that you are not trained to do
- Forming inappropriate relationships with children in your care. N.B Remember this legally means a child up to 18 years of age
- Allowing allegations made by a child or vulnerable adults to go unchallenged, unrecorded or un-acted upon
- Giving home or mobile number to children (unless there is a good reason to do so) or obtaining children's mobile numbers or e-mail addresses

Abused children and vulnerable adults are more likely to discuss details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

What to do is a child or vulnerable adult discloses information to you:

- React calmly
- Take what the person says seriously
- Do clarify what the person has said but avoid asking detailed or leading questions
- Reassure the person that they were right to tell and **do not make promises of confidentiality**
- Be open and honest, explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Immediately record all details in writing, using the child or vulnerable adult's own words
- As soon as possible fill in the Incident Reporting Form see Appendix 1

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Dismiss the concern
- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information than is comfortably offered
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Say what might happen as a result of the disclosure

## **First Aid and treatment of Injuries**

If a child or vulnerable adult requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice should be followed:

- Be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and /or assistance is available
- Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries
- Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the child or vulnerable adult in language that they understand and their permission sought before any action is taken
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible
- The child's or vulnerable adult's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child's or vulnerable adult's interests and on professional advice not to
- A notification of Accident Form must be completed and signed and passed to the Manager to the Council (designated Safeguarding Officer).

## **For Transporting Children**

If it is necessary to provide transport for children the following good practice must be followed:

- You should only transport a child/children where there are two members of staff/adults present in the selected mode of transport
- Ensure where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children or vulnerable adults. These adults should be familiar with and agree to abide by the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- In addition to this, where practical, request written parental/guardian consent
- Always plan and prepare a detailed programme of the journey and method of transport, give details of the route, anticipated length of the journey and ensure copies with contact details are available for other staff and parents/guardians
- Ensure all vehicles are correctly insured
- All reasonable safety measures are taken, eg children in the back seat, seatbelts are working

## **Use of Contractors**

The Council and its staff, elected members and volunteers should undertake reasonable care that contractors doing work on behalf of the Council are monitored appropriately. Any contractor or sub-contractor engaged by the Council in areas where workers are likely to come into contact with children or vulnerable adults should have their own equivalent Safeguarding Policy, or failing this, comply with the terms of this policy.

**Example Consent Form**

All information will be treated in strict confidence

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Event: Activity  | Date:                    |
| Name of Child  | Date of Birth:           |
| Home Address:  |                          |
| Home Telephone Number:                                   | Mobile Telephone Number: |
| Medical Conditions (if any) asthma, diabetes, allergies: |                          |

- I can confirm that my son/daughter is in good health and I give my consent for my son/daughter to participate in the above event/activity
- I consent to any emergency treatment required by my son/daughter during the course of the event/activity
- I give consent for my son/daughter to be photographed during the course of the above event/activity and I consent to the photographs being used by the Town Council for bona fide promotional purposes. This also includes the use of the World Wide Web (internet).

Name of Parent/Guardian/Carer

**Signature**

**Date**

### Recruitment, Employment and Deployment

#### Applicant Information

All applicants, whether for paid or voluntary, fulltime or part-time positions, should complete an application form which should elicit the following information:

- Name, address and National Insurance Number
- Past career, relevant interests, any gaps in employment and reasons for leaving
- Relevant experience, educational qualifications, job specific qualifications and training
- Any criminal record
- The names of at least two people (not relatives) willing to provide written references that comment on the applicant's previous experience of, and suitability for, working with children where it is a requirement of the job.

The purpose of the self-declaration form is to collect information on criminal behaviour that is relevant to the position eg criminal records or investigations. The self-declaration form is requested in a separate sealed envelope and is not opened until the applicant is selected for an interview. If the applicant is not selected the form is returned unopened to the applicant. It should be made clear that effective measures are in place to ensure confidentiality of information under Data Protection legislation.

#### Checks and References

A minimum of two references must be taken up. Written references will be followed up by letter or telephone. References should include the applicant's suitability to work with children where it is a requirement of the job.

#### Induction and Training

Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regards to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice/concern of possible abuse. It is important that the recruitment and selection process is followed by relevant inductions and training. The induction and training should include:

- An assessment of the training needs required
- Clarification, agreement and signing up to the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees
- The expectations, roles and responsibilities of the job are clarified
- As a minimum we will expect all staff to have undergone formal training related to their job within six months of the employment with us. Refresher training will be required every three years.

## **Rehabilitation of Offenders**

The Town Council is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from working with the Council. This will depend on the nature of the position, the nature of the offence, how long ago and at what age the offence was committed and any factors which may be relevant. Failure to declare a conviction, caution or pending police action, will disqualify the applicant from appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light.

Further Information and guidance can be sought from the following:

### **RESOURCES**

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006:** A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Available from [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/workingtogether](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/workingtogether)

**NCVCCO Positively Safe:** A guide to developing safeguarding practices

**Department for Children, Schools and Families:** Stating Safe: Action Plan February 2008 Reference: DCSF-00151-2008

### **WEBSITES**

**Every Child Matters**

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

**Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

[www.lscb-llr.org.uk](http://www.lscb-llr.org.uk)

**Department for Children, Schools and Families**

[www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

**The National Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children**

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**The Department of Health**

[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

**The Independent Safeguarding Authority**

[www.isa-gov.org.uk](http://www.isa-gov.org.uk)

**Signed by**

**Town Manager:**

**Date:**

**Chair of Resources:**

## Equality Impact Assessment

We need to understand whether our services are meeting everyone's needs and that everyone who needs them has access to those services. We have developed an Equality Impact Assessment process for the assessment of any new or significantly changed policies, practices, procedures, functions and services.

Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments enables us to take action to prevent direct and indirect discrimination by ensuring that as far as possible any negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community are eliminated, minimised or counterbalanced by other measures.

Our ultimate aim is to improve our services. By making sure we have considered the potential impacts of a policy, strategy or plan at an early stage potential barriers or problems can be avoided and actions put in place these it can be fully incorporated into any decisions and not just a 'bolt-on' at the end. Working in this way helps us to integrate and mainstream equalities into our work. Likewise, when reviewing the effectiveness and performance of our services, we can use this procedure to identify equality issues and opportunities as an integral part of our review.