

KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction and Scope

This policy enables Council to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe adults at risk and any children for whom it provides services and events. Council acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

This policy is applicable to all employees, councillors and volunteers and to all Council activities. From herein, references to employees include volunteers. We will ensure that clients are made aware of this policy and the reporting process should they be concerned about another client or a Council employee.

We ensure that clients have their own safeguarding policy and adhere to DBS screening requirements where their activity is within scope of the relevant safeguarding regulations.

Our policy and associated procedures relate to both the safeguarding of adults at risk and to children.

2. Policy Statement

This policy and its associated procedures are in place in order principally for employees to work to prevent abuse and know what to do should a concern arise. They will enable Council to:

- promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm and abuse occurring; and
- ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.

3. Definitions and Guidance

Adults - Adults at risk are defined in the Care Act 2014 as individuals aged over 18 who:

- have needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs);
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Children - A child is defined in the Children Act 1989 as:

- anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or are in hospital.

Guidance on recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse is provided at Appendix 1.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Council will work to:

- a) prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs and children;
- b) promote the wellbeing of any adults and children at risk in safeguarding arrangements;
- c) safeguard adults at risk with whom our activities bring us into contact;
- d) promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults and children concerned;
- e) raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect;

- f) provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult at risk or child; and
- g) address what caused any abuse or neglect where appropriate if it occurred on our property.

3.2 To this end, Council will:

- a) ensure that all employees are familiar with this policy and its associated procedures and who to report concerns to at Council;
- b) work with other agencies within the framework of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership;
- c) act within its Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies, however, the safeguarding of a child or an adult who is at risk, or if a crime has been committed, will override any need for consent (If a child has disclosed or if Kesgrave Town Council staff have concerns about a child, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead judges that a referral to Social Care is needed, they will inform the child that they need to tell someone else but will not need to gain consent.);
- d) make a safeguarding referral (see below) where appropriate e.g. if there is an immediate danger or the child/adult is considered to be at risk of harm;
- e) ensure that employees are aware of their responsibilities to attend training and support them in accessing training;
- f) keep up to date with developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of adults at risk and children;
- g) appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead and ensure that they understand their responsibilities;
- h) respond appropriately when abuse has or is suspected to have occurred; and
- i) understand how diversity, beliefs and values of people who use Council services may influence the identification, prevention and response to safeguarding concerns.

3.3 Responsibilities of Council Employees

- a) To comply with this policy at all times where concerns arise about the safety or welfare of an adult at risk or a child.
- b) To participate in safeguarding training and maintain current working knowledge of safeguarding.
- c) Discuss any concerns about the welfare of any adult at risk or child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Clerk.
- d) Work collaboratively with other agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of people who use Council services.
- e) Remain alert at all times to the possibility of abuse.
- f) Recognise the impact that diversity, beliefs and values of people who use services can have.

4. Designated Named Lead for Safeguarding

The Events & Estate Manager has been appointed the Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for leading safeguarding in the organisation. In their absence, the Town Clerk will be available for employees and councillors to consult with.

The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are to:

- a) Ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that an adult or child at risk may be experiencing or has experienced abuse or neglect.
- b) Ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and, where appropriate, referred to the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.
- c) Follow up any safeguarding referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed.
- d) Manage and have oversight over individual complex cases involving allegations against an employee or councillor, paid or unpaid.
- e) Consider any recommendations from the safeguarding process.
- f) Reinforce the need for confidentiality and to ensure that staff and volunteers are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security.
- g) Ensure that employees working directly with clients who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision.

- h) Ensure employees are given support and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; and that they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome.

5. Training

We are committed to ensuring that all employees undertake training to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. We will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any other key members of staff will have access to higher levels of safeguarding training.

Training should be refreshed as a minimum every three years.

6. Procedures for Responding

Council recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. It also acknowledges that taking action to address cases of adult at risk abuse is never easy.

6.1 Responding if Council receives an allegation:

- a) Reassure the person concerned.
- b) Listen to what they are saying.
- c) Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.
- d) Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- e) Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- f) Ask questions to ensure you gather the full facts but do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions.
- g) Use the individual's own words where possible.
- h) Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- i) Tell the child or vulnerable adult what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep them.

6.2 If you witness abuse or there is clear evidence abuse has just taken place, the priorities will be:

- a) To call an ambulance if required.
- b) To call the Police if a crime has been committed.
- c) To preserve evidence.
- d) To keep yourself and others safe.
- e) To inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- f) To record what happened in the agreed place/file/log.

6.3 Allegations made against an Employee or Councillor

If an employee has information which suggests another employee or councillor has:

- a) behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or an adult at risk;
- b) possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or adult at risk;
- c) behaved towards a child or adult at risk in a way that has indicated they are unsuitable to work with children or adults at risk

the employee should immediately report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

7. Making a Referral

If deemed appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will call a MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Professional/Social Worker on 0345 6061499 to consult on whether to make a formal referral to the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership using its [online facility](#).

If the allegation is made about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the employee must inform the Town Clerk who will consult with the Chair of Council before making the above call.

8. Recording and Managing Confidential Information

Council is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information regarding safeguarding issues should be shared only with those who need to know. For further information, please see our Confidentiality and Data Protection policies.

All allegations/concerns should be recorded in the agreed place/file/log where safeguarding concerns are recorded. The information should be factual and not based on opinions.

Record what the person tells you, what you have seen and names of witnesses if appropriate.

The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with Council's Data Protection Policy.

9. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

In 2012 the DBS became responsible for monitoring the suitability of individuals to work with children and adults at risk and the need to provide criminal record certificates. It has a duty to maintain both children's and the adult's barred lists, which prevent individuals on the lists from working with children and adults at risk.

Council has undertaken an assessment (see Appendix 2) to determine whether any employee should be subject to a DBS check and has determined that none fall within the scope of the regulations to do so regarding our statutory duties. However, to ensure the safest possible procedure when arranging events we have decided to have these checks in place for all employees.

Policy effective from: 02 June 2025

Date for next review: 02 June 2028

[Based originally on the Community Action Suffolk template last updated via the Suffolk Association of Local Councils in May 2023.]

Appendix 1: Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Abuse and neglect can take many forms and Kesgrave Town Council will always consider the circumstances of an individual case.

Abuse in adults includes:

Discriminatory

Including forms of harassment, bullying, slurs, isolation, neglect, denial of access to services or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, religion or because someone is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. This includes racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia or any other form of hate incident or crime.

Domestic Abuse or Violence

Including an incident of a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse, by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexual orientation. This includes psychological/emotional, physical, sexual, financial abuse; so, called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Financial or Material

Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

Modern Slavery

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive, and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Neglect and acts of Omission

Includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to access appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Organisational (sometimes referred to as Institutional)

Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example in relation to care provided in a person's own home. This may range from one off incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Physical

Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Psychological (sometimes referred to as emotional)

Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber-bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Sexual

Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual assault, sexual acts, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. It also includes sexual exploitation which is exploitative, situations, contexts and relationships where the person receives 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, mobile

phones, cigarettes, gifts, money) or perceived friendship/relationship as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing sexual acts.

Self-neglect

Includes a person neglecting to care for their personal hygiene, health or surroundings or an ability to provide essential food, clothing, shelter or medical care necessary to maintain their physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing and general safety. It includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Abuse in children includes:

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse and exploitation that fall within these categories. They are child exploitation, cyberbullying and online abuse, criminal exploitation, County Lines, trafficking, modern slavery, domestic abuse, FGM, honour based abuse, grooming, missing.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts. People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be people in positions of trust; they may also be relatives, friends, neighbours, or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

Appendix 2: Council Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Need Assessment

Introduction

In reference to the NALC advice note by its in-house solicitors and last updated on 7 October 2013, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 established the DBS. This comprises the former Independent Safeguarding Authority and the Criminal Records Bureau, and became responsible for monitoring the suitability of individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults and the need to provide criminal record certificates.

The DBS has a duty to maintain both children's and the adult's barred lists, which bar individuals who appear on the lists from working with children and vulnerable adults. DBS checks may be needed for employees, workers, or volunteers or individuals working under a contract for services.

Who in general needs a DBS check?

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 confirms the types of paid or unpaid work or particular jobs that require a DBS check. The general position is that employers cannot ask about spent convictions with the exception of those that will never become spent.

Do local council staff, councillors or volunteers need DBS checks?

The activities described do not refer to work or jobs that are specific to local councils. Reference is made to work that involves "regulated activity" relating to children or vulnerable adults as referred to in Parts 1 and 2 of Schedule 4 to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Regulated activity relating to children (i.e. a person under the age of 18) means:

- (a) it is mentioned in paragraph 2(1) of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to the 2006 Act; and
- (b) it is carried out frequently by the same person or the period condition is satisfied.

Paragraph 2(1) includes teaching, training, instruction of, care for or supervision of children. If another person supervises the person in question, the activity is not regulated. The period condition is satisfied if the person carrying out the activity does so at any time on more than three days in any period of 30 days, or overnight. The term "frequently" is not defined in the 2006 Act because it is intended to take its normal, everyday meaning.

[As the activities of employees, Councillors or volunteers acting on Council business do not fall into the above definition, Council is entitled to take the view that DBS checks are not required.]

"Regulated activity" for vulnerable adults is defined in paragraph 7 (1) of Part 2 of Schedule 4 to the 2006 Act and includes (i) the provision to an adult of health care by or under the direction or supervision of a health care professional and (ii) the provision of assistance in relation to general household matters to an adult who is in need of it by reason of age, illness or disability.

[As the activities of employees, Councillors or volunteers acting on Council business do not fall into the above definition, Council is entitled to take the view that DBS checks are not required.]

The annexe also lists as positions which require DBS checks in relation to children "any work in a further education institution or 16 to 19 Academy where the normal duties of that work involve regular contact with children" and "any position which otherwise involves regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of children." "Regular" is not defined in the 2006 Act. It would include activity that occurs on an ongoing basis over a period of time.

[As the activities of employees, Councillors or volunteers acting on Council business do not fall into the above definition, Council is entitled to take the view that DBS checks are not required. Providers associated with Council's Youth Provision almost certainly do and we have a duty to ensure these organisations are compliant.]

NALC is sometimes asked whether councillors or council staff who sit on youth council committees require checks. This would depend on the facts in each case. For example, if a councillor or member of council staff is regularly left alone with or supervises children, then this will amount to a regulated activity, and a DBS check will be necessary. Examples of other

occasions when DBS checks may be needed for certain positions include lifeguards at local council swimming pools, youth club leaders, or volunteers for local council-run social clubs for the elderly. If the activity is included in the Annex, councils are required to request DBS checks for such persons.

If the work undertaken means a person will or is likely to come into contact with children (for example, a council cleaner because the council's offices and meetings venue is next to a children's playground), it is NALC's view that this contact will not in itself be sufficient to warrant a DBS check being performed for such a person.

[As the activities of employees, Councillors or volunteers acting on Council business do not align with either of the above descriptions, Council is entitled to take the view that DBS checks are not required.]

Assessment last reviewed: 17/03/2025