



Portishead Town Council Safeguarding Children Policy

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Contents

Section 1. Safeguarding Children Policy	3
Introduction	3
Policy Statement	4
Purpose	4
Scope	5
Commitments	5
Implementation	6
Section 2. Supporting Information	8
Key Points	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Safeguarding Children Legislation	8
Safeguarding Children	8
Definition of a Child	8
Abuse and Neglect	8
Wellbeing Principle	17
Recording and Information Sharing	17
Preventing Radicalisation to Extremism	17
Section 3. Appendix	17
Appendix 1 - Example Role Description: Safeguarding Lead	17
Appendix 2 – Sources of Information and Support	17

Section 1. Safeguarding Children Policy

Introduction

Portishead Town Council values young people and children as being a vital part of the Portishead and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in a healthy and safe environment.

Safeguarding is Everybody's business

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility including statutory, independent, and voluntary agencies as well as residents of the wider community. We will work together to prevent and minimise abuse.

Equality and Diversity

Each agency and organisation are committed to supporting the rights of children to ensure that every child, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has a right to equal protection from harm.

Doing nothing is not an option

The responsibility of an employee, Councillor or volunteer of Portishead Town Council is to ensure that if they have concerns about the welfare of a child they must report it and must **never** assume that others will do so.

Reporting a Concern

If you need to make a safeguarding referral the number for North Somerset Council is:

Tel: 01275 888801

Complaints

If you have reason to believe that concerns about a Safeguarding Children issue has not been appropriately addressed, you may make a formal complaint by contacting the complaints department at North Somerset Council:

Tel: 01275 882171

Please note: all references within this policy to 'Guidance' refer to the Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Department of Health (2016).

Policy Statement

The Care Act 2014 was implemented on 1st April 2015. The Policy replaces all previous Policy documents for the participating Local Authorities and reflects the new legal requirements of the Care Act 2014, together with its associated guidance.

The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how Local Authorities and other parts of government should protect children at risk from abuse or neglect. Local Authorities have new safeguarding duties.

In terms of the Care Act 2014 'Local Authority' means—

- (a) a county council in England,
- (b) a district council for an area in England for which there is no county council,
- (c) a London borough council, or
- (d) the Common Council of the City of London.

Therefore, Portishead Town Council is not directly responsible as a Local Authority - North Somerset Council is the Local Authority for the Portishead area. However, Portishead Town Council abides by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

Portishead Town Council recognises the welfare of children is paramount and that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse. Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Furthermore, Portishead Town Council is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

Actions taken by Portishead Town Council will be consistent with the principles of safeguarding children ensuring that any action taken is prompt and proportionate.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Portishead Town Council to safeguarding children and to ensure that everyone involved in Portishead Town Council is aware of:

- The legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding children.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding children.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of a child.
- How to provide an environment for children and young people to help them develop from childhood into adulthood and to provide support for them.

Scope

This Safeguarding Children Policy applies to all individuals involved in Portishead Town Council including Councillors, Officers, Volunteers and Residents and to all concerned about the safety of children whilst taking part in our organisation, its activities and in the wider community.

We expect our partner organisations, including for example, statutory organisations, suppliers, community groups, organisations, registered charities, and sponsors to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice as set out in this Safeguarding Children Policy.

Commitments

Everyone involved with Portishead Town Council is aware of the Safeguarding Children Policy and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of a child.

Any concern that a child is not safe is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with the Portishead Town Council Safeguarding Children Policy.

Portishead Town Council acts in accordance with best practice advice, for example, from North Somerset Council.

When a referral is made to Children's Social Care you must agree with them what the child and parent / carers will be told, by whom and when. Do not just leave messages. Always speak to someone.

Portishead Town Council will cooperate with the Police and the relevant Local Authorities in taking action to safeguard a child.

All Councillors, Officers and volunteers understand their role and responsibility for safeguarding children and have completed and are up to date with safeguarding children training and learning opportunities appropriate for their role.

Portishead Town Council uses safe recruitment practices and continually assesses the suitability of volunteers and staff to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals in this organisation and within the wider community.

Portishead Town Council shares information about anyone found to be a risk to children with the appropriate bodies. For example: Disclosure and Barring Service, Services, Police, Local Authority/Social Services.

When planning activities and events Portishead Town Council includes an assessment of, and risk to, the safety of all children from abuse and neglect.

This policy and related policies (see below) are reviewed no less than on a two-yearly basis and whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance as required by North Somerset Council, the Local Safeguarding Board, and/or National Governing Bodies or as a result of any other significant change or event.

Implementation

Portishead Town Council is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy.

In order to do so the following will be in place regarding safeguarding children:

- Appointing a nominated safeguarding lead (see Appendix 1).
- Adopting child safeguarding best practice through our policies and code of conduct for Councillors, Officers and volunteers, working within current legislation to safeguard children, including Section 11, Children's Act 2004 and guidance from North Somerset Council.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
- Using our safeguarding children policy to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Ensuring all young people, councillors, staff, volunteers, sub-contractors / contractors and parents are aware of our organisation's policies and their roles and responsibilities in response to safeguarding. Sub-contractors should have their own organisational policies and procedures in place for their staff to follow. These will be checked to ensure they meet our requirements and standards.
- Using appropriate procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, Councillors, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Building a safeguarding culture where Councillors, Officers and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.
- Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children or at least that they are within the sight or hearing of others.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

Portishead Town Council Members, Officers and Volunteers must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children.
- Make sexually suggestive comments, even in fun.



- Make derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to individuals.
- Ask people to do things that are potentially dangerous, illegal or otherwise unreasonable.
- Allow bullying.
- Let allegations a child makes be ignored or go unrecorded.
- Take chances when common sense, policy or practice suggests a more prudent approach.
- Take children alone on a vehicle journey unless in an emergency or with parental consent.
- Take children to their home.
- Meet up with children outside of their work with Portishead Town Council unless it is with the full consent and knowledge of the person's parents / carers and their manager.
- Never enter a house when a child is in there on their own.



Section 2. Supporting Information

Safeguarding Children Legislation

The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out the specific duties for Local Authorities, working with partner organisations and agencies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

The practices within this policy are based on The Care Act 2014 Care and Support Statutory Guidance (especially chapter 14) 2014 and Working together to safeguard children 2018 Statutory Framework reflecting recent changes to legislation, including:

- Integrated Care Boards: from 1 July 2022, integrated care boards have replaced clinical commissioning groups as a result of the Health and Care Act 2022
- Public Health England: has now been replaced by the UK Health Security Agency and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), which is part of the Department of Health and Social Care, and by the UK Health Security Agency. The Chief Public Health Nurse role has transferred to OHID
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021: references to the Domestic Abuse Bill should be read as the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- UK GDPR: references to the GDPR should be read as the UK GDPR. The UK GDPR is the retained EU law version of the GDPR. The UK GDPR sits alongside the Data Protection Act 2018.

Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 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.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Definition of a Child

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is 'anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.'

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance.



There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories relevant to children:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse

Wellbeing Principle

The concept of 'wellbeing' is threaded throughout UK legislation and is part of the Law about how health and social care is provided. Our wellbeing includes our mental and physical health, our relationships, our connection with our communities and our contribution to society.

Being able to live free from abuse and neglect is a key element of wellbeing.

Recording and Information Sharing

Local Government must comply with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR).

Information about concerns of abuse includes personal data. It is therefore important to be clear as to the grounds for processing and sharing information about concerns of abuse. Processing information includes record keeping. Records relating to safeguarding concerns must be accurate and relevant. They must be stored confidentially with access only to those with a need to know.

The purpose of Data Protection legislation is not to prevent information sharing but to ensure personal information is only shared appropriately. Data protection legislation allows information sharing within an organisation. For example:

- Anyone who has a concern about harm can make a report to an appropriate person within the same organisation
- Case management meetings can take place to agree to co-ordinate actions by the organisation

If a child wishes to make a disclosure, it must be made clear that the information they provide may not be kept confidential if significant risk of abuse is identified.

There are many situations in which it is perfectly legal to share information about child safeguarding concerns outside the organisation. Importantly personal information can be shared with the consent of the child concerned. However, the child may not always want information to be shared. This may be because they fear repercussions from the person causing harm or are scared that they will lose control of their situation to statutory bodies or because they feel stupid or embarrassed. However, if it is considered that a child is at risk of abuse then the matter should be referred to Safeguarding Body (North Somerset Council Safeguarding) as soon as possible.



Preventing Radicalisation to Extremism

The Prevent Strategy forms part of the UK's Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015). Its key objectives are to challenge the ideology that supports terrorism and those who promote it, preventing people from being drawn into terrorism by working with partner agencies, primarily the police, to divert people away from what could be considered to be linked to terrorist activity. Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme.

Prevent defines extremism as: *'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.'* Radicalisation is defined by UK Government within this context as *'the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups'*.

The Prevent Duty

Some organisations in England, Scotland and Wales have a duty, as a specified authority under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty. These organisations include:

- Schools
- Registered childcare providers
- Local authorities
- Police
- Prisons and probation services
- NHS trusts and foundations.

Other organisations may also have Prevent duties if they perform delegated Local Authority functions.



Section 3. Appendix

Appendix 1 - Example Role Description: Safeguarding Lead

The designated person, e.g. the Town Clerk, has primary responsibility for putting into place procedures to safeguard children. Duties and responsibilities include:

- Play a lead role in developing and establishing the Councils approach to safeguarding children and in maintaining and reviewing the implementation for safeguarding children in line with current legislation and best practice.
- Coordinate the dissemination of the Safeguarding Children Policy.
- Contribute to ensuring other policies are consistent with the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children.
- Advise on training needs and the development of its training strategy.
- Support the Chairman to co-ordinate the case management process.
- Manage liaison with, and referrals to, external agencies for example Local Authority social-care services and the police.
- Create a central point of contact for internal and external individuals and agencies concerned about the safety of children within the Town Council.
- Represent the Council at external meetings related to safeguarding.

Appendix 2 – Sources of Information and Support

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Tel: 0800 999 5428

National 24Hour Freephone Domestic Abuse Helplines

Tel: 0808 2000 247

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/Contact-us

NSPCC

The leading children's charity in the UK with services that help children who've been abused, protect children at risk and find the best ways to prevent child abuse from ever happening.

Tel: 0800 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Stop Hate Crime

Works to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity. Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.

24 hours service:

Telephone: 0800 138 1625

Web Chat: www.stophateuk.org/talk-to-us/

E mail: talk@stophateuk.org

Text: 07717 989 025

Text relay: 18001 0800 138 1625



By post: PO Box 851, Leeds LS1 9QS

Victim Support

Provides practical advice and help, emotional support and reassurance to those who have suffered the effects of a crime.

Tel: 0808 168 9111

www.victimsupport.com