

Polegate Town Council



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Number 38		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	22.05.23	Adopted at Annual Stat meeting
2	20.05.24	Adopted at Annual Stat meeting
3	19.05.25	Adopted at Annual Stat meeting
4	05.05.26	Adopted at Annual Stat meeting

1. Introduction

1.1 Polegate Town Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the Council through its services, activities, staff, councillors, volunteers, or contractors.

1.2 Everyone has the right to live free from abuse, harm and neglect, and the Council will take all reasonable steps to protect those who may be at risk.

1.3 This policy sets out:

- What safeguarding means in practice;
- The Council's duty of care;
- The responsibilities of councillors, staff, and volunteers; and
- How safeguarding concerns must be reported and managed.

1.4 The policy promotes a culture of vigilance, accountability, and timely action, ensuring that safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

- All employees of the Council (permanent, temporary, or casual);
- All councillors;
- Volunteers acting under the authority of the Council; and
- Contractors, partners, and external organisations working for or on behalf of the Council.

3. Definitions

3.1 Children and Young People

- A child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

3.2 Vulnerable adults

- Is, or may be, in need of community care services due to age, illness, or mental or physical disability; and
- Is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

3.3 Vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and relates to a person's ability to make informed decisions free from pressure or undue influence.

3.4 Where there is uncertainty, an adult should be assumed to fall within the scope of this policy.

4. Types of Abuse

4.1 Abuse may take many forms, including (but not limited to):

- Physical Abuse: Causing physical harm, inappropriate restraint, incorrect administration of medication, or neglect of physical care.

- Sexual abuse: Sexual assault, inappropriate touching, grooming, exploitation, or coercion.
- Emotional or psychological abuse: Intimidation, humiliation, verbal abuse, isolation, controlling behaviour or threats.
- Financial or material abuse: Theft, fraud, misuse of property or finances, or coercion in relation to money or possessions.
- Neglect: Failure to meet basic physical or emotional needs, including food, shelter, healthcare, supervision, or education.
- Discriminatory abuse: Abuse linked to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Institutional abuse: Neglectful or poor practice arising from systems or routines within an organisation.

5. Signs of abuse

5.1 No single indication proves abuse, but possible signs include:

- Unexplained injuries, weight loss, or poor hygiene;
- Changes in behaviour or mood;
- Low self-esteem, depression, or withdrawal;
- Self-harm or obsessive behaviour;
- Financial concerns such as unpaid bills;
- Isolation from family, friends, or the wider community; and
- A carer displaying controlling, threatening, or abusive behaviour.

6. Safeguarding Principles

6.1 Polegate Town Council recognises that:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount;
- Everyone has the right to protection from abuse and neglect;
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; and
- All concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

6.2 Safeguarding children means protecting them from maltreatment, preventing harm to health or development, and ensuring safe and effective care.

6.3 Safeguarding vulnerable adults means protecting them from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and upholding their human and civil rights.

7. Duty of Care

7.1 Polegate Town Council has a duty of care to protect people from harm.

7.2 This duty includes:

- Maintaining appropriate safeguarding and health and safety practices;
- Undertaking risk assessments where relevant; and
- Ensuring safe recruitment and selection procedures.

7.3 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be carried out where roles meets eligibility criteria, in accordance with relevant legislation.

8. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

8.1 All councillors, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns.

8.2 This includes:

- Suspected or disclosed abuse;
- Observed signs of abuse or neglect; and
- Poor practice by anyone acting for on behalf of the Council.

8.3 You **must** refer; you must **not** investigate.

8.4 Concerns must be reported immediately to the Town Clerk.

8.5 If the Town Clerk is implicated, concerns must be reported to the Chair of the Council. Safeguarding concerns must be referred to East Sussex County Council Children's or Adults Services as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the concerns arises.

8.6 Where a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of harm, or a criminal offence may have been committed, the Police must be contacted by calling 999.

8.7 Concerns must be reported even in full information is not yet available.

9. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

9.1 Safeguarding information is confidential but not secret.

9.2 Information will be shared with statutory agencies such as East Sussex County Council or the Police where necessary to protect individuals from harm.

9.3 No councillor, employee or volunteer must promise to keep safeguarding information secret.

9.4 Information must only be shared with those who need to know in order to act.

9.5 Accurate, factual records, of concerns and disclosures must be made promptly and stored securely.

10. Allegations against Councillors, Staff, or others

10.1 Any allegations that a councillor, employee, or contractor has:

- Harmed or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or vulnerable adult;
- or
- Behaved in a way that pose a risk of harm,

Must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately to the appropriate statutory authority.

- 10.2 Councillors or staff must report any allegation made against themselves to the Town Clerk or, where appropriate, the Chair of the Council.
- 10.3 Safeguarding investigations by external authorities' will take precedence over internal procedures
- 10.4 The Council will seek appropriate advice before taking any internal action and will provide suitable support to individuals involved.

11. Recruitment and DBS Referrals

- 11.1 Enhanced DBS checks will be required for roles involving regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults.
- 11.2 Individuals will not be permitted to begin unaccompanied work until appropriate checks have been completed.
- 11.3 The Council will make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service where legally required, including where an individual is removed from regulated activity due to safeguarding concerns.

12. Training and Awareness

- 12.1 This policy will be made available to all councillors, staff, and volunteers.
- 12.2 Appropriate safeguarding information and training will be provided where necessary to ensure individuals understand their responsibilities and how to respond to concerns.

13. External Organisations

- 13.1 External Organisations work with or on behalf of the Council may have contact with children or vulnerable adults must:
- Have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place;
 - Be made aware of this policy; and
 - Provide the Council with a copy of their safeguarding procedures on request.

14. Safeguarding Contact details:

- 14.1 Reminder: You must not investigate safeguarding concerns or allegations. You must refer them immediately in accordance with this policy.
- Emergency (immediate danger):
 - Police – 999
 - Police (non-emergency):
 - Dial 101
 - [Home | Sussex Police](#)
 - East Sussex County Council – Children's Services:
 - 01323 464 222
 - Out of Hours Dial: 01273 335 905

- [Report a concern about a child or a teenager | East Sussex County Council](#)
- East Sussex County Council – Adult Safeguarding:
 - Dial 0345 0 80 191
 - [Contact Adult Social Care and Health | East Sussex County Council](#)

National helpline may provide general advice and support but do not replace the Council's safeguarding reporting procedures:

- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
 - [Comprehensive child safety guide | NSPCC](#)
- Childline (Under 19s): 0800 1111
 - [Info and advice | Childline](#)
- Age UK Advice Line: 0800 678 1602
 - [Information and advice for older people and their loved ones | Age UK](#)

Statement prepared for adoption by Polegate Town Council at its meeting on 11.05.26

Signed by

Mayor of Polegate

Town Clerk/Proper Office/RFO