

LOOE TOWN COUNCIL

K O N S E L T R E L O G H

Safeguarding Policy



Re-Adopted by Council:
15th May 2023

Next Review due: 31st May 2024



LOOE TOWN COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Looe Town Council recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all children and young people under the age 18 and vulnerable adults, over the age of 18, who may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability.

All people have the right to be safe from harm and must be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to that end, the Town Council adopts this policy that applies to, and must be followed, by all Town Councillors, staff, employees and volunteers (referred to as representatives of the Council).

The following principles are those upon which this Safeguarding Policy is based:

- The welfare of a child, young person and a vulnerable adult will always be paramount.
- The welfare of families, the vulnerable and the elderly will be promoted.
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families and vulnerable adults will be respected and listened to.
- Those people in positions of responsibility within the Town Council will work in accordance with the interests of those safeguarded and follow the policy outlined below.

This document is written in accordance with the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' produced by the Department of Health in 2015 and 'The Care Act' 2016 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). Personal information will be shared (confidentially) with the relevant authorities when a child, young person or vulnerable adult is deemed to be 'at risk'

Policy Statement

Prevention and Reporting of Abuse and Responding to Concern

It is the duty of every representative of the Town Council, whether that representative be a Councillor, staff, employee or volunteer, to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults and to report any abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The Town Council will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked to the activity of the Town Council or Council representatives.

Safe Recruitment, Support and Supervision of Workers

The Town Council will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, whether paid or voluntary. Council representatives routinely working with children, young people or vulnerable adults will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of those deemed to be at risk.

Safe Behaviour: A Code of Behaviour for Council Representatives

The Town Council will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults so that they are shown the respect that is due to them.

Safe Practice and Safe Premises

The Town Council is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults and will adopt ways of working with them that promote their safety and well-being.

Safe Community

The Town Council is committed to the prevention of bullying and abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Town Council will, within its scope of activities, ensure that the behaviour of representatives of the Town Council posing a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults is managed appropriately.

Responsible People

The Town Council has appointed the Town Clerk and/or the incumbent Mayor as the Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding. The Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding will oversee and monitor the implementation of this policy and any resultant procedures on behalf of the Town Council. In particular, the Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding will:

- advise the Town Council on any matters related to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and
- take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

Policy and Procedures

Each representative of the Town Council working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, whether paid or voluntary, will be given a full copy of this policy and resultant procedures and will be required to follow them.

A full copy of this policy and resultant procedures will be made available on request to any member of the local community.

This policy and resultant procedures will be monitored and reviewed at least annually.

Guidelines and Procedures

Responding to Concern

Understanding, Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Abuse or neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a vulnerable person by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Persons may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting: by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by one or more adults or children. Different forms of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse** which includes any form of physical harm.
- **Emotional abuse** which includes any emotional ill treatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional well-being.
- **Sexual abuse** which involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse may include non-contact activities such as looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect**, which is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health or development.

How to respond when someone wants to talk about harm or abuse

A person or child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect or they may share such information in groups when you are present. In these situations, you must:

- Listen carefully to the person.
- Don't directly question the person but give them time and attention.
- Avoid passing judgement on what you are told
- Never promise confidentiality or not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Explain what you intend to do to keep the person safe. Do not delay in taking action.
- Write down what is said, as described in the next section:

What to do when someone talks about harm or abuse

You need to make a careful written record of what has been said and observed as follows:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the conversation), including a description of any injury observed.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the person's appearance as well as what was said.
- Use the person's own words where possible.
- Write down any action taken
- Keep all hand written notes (even if subsequently typed up) as these may later be needed as evidence.

Responding to Concerns for a Child or Vulnerable Person, or Allegations of Abuse.

Where possible, concerns will be passed to the Designated Person for Safeguarding (or Deputy) but difficulty in contacting the individual(s) should not delay action being taken.

If there is concern that a child or vulnerable person may have been harmed or abused, the Designated Person for Safeguarding will act as follows:

- a. Where there is physical injury or symptoms of neglect:
 - Contact the Children’s Social Care Team or Adult Social Care Services if there are concerns that a child or person may have been deliberately hurt, is at risk of ‘significant harm’ or is afraid to return home. Do not tell the parents/carers or other people involved.
 - If a child or person needs urgent medical attention an ambulance will be called or they will be taken to hospital, informing the parents/carers afterwards of the action that was taken.
 - The hospital staff will be informed of any safeguarding / protection concerns.
- b. Where there are allegations or concerns of sexual abuse:
 - Contact the Children’s Social Care Team or Adult Social Care Services. Do Not try to investigate the matter
 - In the case of very severe sexual assault (such as rape), which may have occurred over the last few days and where it has not been possible to get an immediate reponse from Social Care, contact the police.
 - Do not touch or tamper with any evidence, such as stained clothing.
 - Do not tell other people including parents/carers; they could be involved.
 - Keep information on a need-to-know basis so that any alleged perpetrator is not ‘tipped off’.

Should the Designated Person for Safeguarding not feel that it necessary to refer the matter to the appropriate Social Care department but you (or anyone else) have serious concerns for the person’s safety, then you will contact the relevant authorities directly. The safety of the child or vulnerable person over-rides all other considerations and it is important to remember that sexual abuse is a serious crime.

If the allegation is against a Council leader who has responsibility for implementing the Safeguarding Policy, you will refer it directly to the appropriate Social Care department.

Third Party Allegations and Referrals

Where a third party alleges abuse towards a child or vulnerable person, your role is to gather as much information as possible from this person. You will advise the third party that the information they have provided will be shared with the Designated Person for Safeguarding and may result in a referral to Social Services Care Department with their details. This is so the Social Services Care Team can contact them if necessary.

Allegations Against Council Representatives

- The advice of the appropriate Social Care department, police and the Town Council’s legal representative will be sought before taking any action such as suspension of employment

- During an enquiry the Council Representative will be supervised as closely as possible without raising suspicion during the period between the matter coming to our attention, the authorities being informed and the appropriate action being taken.
- The suspension of a Council Representative following an allegation is by definition a neutral act but may be necessary because the priority is to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.

Care of Council Representatives

When an allegation/suspicion arises in Town Council managed facilities, a period of investigation will follow, which will be stressful for all involved.

- Support will be offered to the suspected perpetrator without compromising the children, vulnerable person(s) or their families
- Where an investigation is underway, this support will be provided with the knowledge of the authorities involved.

False Allegations

False allegations are possible: all allegations will be properly investigated in an endeavour to establish the truth.

Confidentiality

Town Council Representatives and/or the Designated Person for Safeguarding will gather only as much personal information as is necessary to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults and to be able to report to the relevant authorities in the event of an incident or allegation.

All information gathered by a Council Representative and/or the Designated Person for Safeguarding will be kept confidential and shared only on a 'need-to-know' basis. All information gathered will be shared with the relevant authorities.

Should it be necessary for the Town Council to retain any information in written or electronic format, then such information will be held in a secure location with restricted access by authorised personnel only.

Information retained by the Town Council in written or electronic format for the duration of an enquiry will be destroyed at the conclusion of the enquiry.

Re-Adopted by Council on 24th May 2022