**COLEFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

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**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**CHIILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE &VULNERABLE ADULTS**

# COLEFORD TOWN COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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* 1. **AIM OF POLICY**
  2. The aim of this policy is to set out the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults in Gloucestershire and how this will be implemented by Coleford Town Council (the Council) in the discharge of its duties.

## Policy Statement

The policy is in place in order for officers and councillors to work to prevent abuse and know what to do should a concern arise. They will enable Coleford Town Council to:

* + - Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm and abuse occurring.
    - Ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing the abuse is supported.
  1. Everyone, including children, young people and vulnerable adults, has the right not to be abused. The Council recognises the need to ensure their welfare when they come into contact with the services it provides.
  2. This policy applies to all members of staff of the Council, Councillors, volunteers and any individuals or organisations representing or who have a working relationship with the Council.

# SCOPE OF POLICY

* 1. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and all Council employees who, during the course of their employment, have direct or indirect contact with children and vulnerable adults, havea responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
  2. This overarching policy addresses both children and vulnerable adults safeguarding responsibilities. However, the Council recognises that there are also some distinct differences between these groups set out in the policy.

## Responsibilities of the Council

* + - To accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a Duty of Care for children, young people and adults at risk of abuse, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse.
    - To raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing and identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
    - To ensure that all staff, councillors, volunteers and any other individual working or acting on behalf of the Council are familiar with the policy and any associated procedures.
    - To work with partner agencies.
    - To act within its confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from adults before sharing information about them with another agency. 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.
    - To make a safeguarding referral as appropriate i.e. if there is an immediate danger or the child/adult is at risk of harm.
    - To ensure that all new staff, volunteers and councillors are provided with a copy of the safeguarding policy.
    - To ensure all contractors/partners working directly with the Council meets the safeguarding standards as expected by the Council (A copy of the safeguarding policy must be given to any contractor/partner).
    - To require all Councillors/volunteers and anyone paid to adopt and abide by this safeguarding policy and to understand their responsibilities therein.
    - To monitor and evaluate the policy annually or in the light of any changes to Government legislation and guidance.
    - To ensure there is a designated lead person for safeguarding at the Town Council, which is Mayor Nick Penny.
    - To ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes safeguarding children and safeguarding adults training for this role and that they attend refresher training every three years.
    - To ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that everyone is safe and secure in any facility or environment it provides or facilitates.
    - Enhanced DBS checks will be required if any Councillor, volunteer or paid member of staff is required is required to teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children or provides advice, guidance to children and/or is carrying out health care, personal care, assisting with cash, bills or shopping or with affairs or transportation for any adult.
    - To ensure records are kept of any referrals and any notes, records of conversations concerning that referral are kept in the folder and that it is stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people.
    - Meetings will only take place with at least one adult leader in addition to the Mayor present, all email correspondence will be sent to Cadets and their nominated unit leaders, and never to cadets alone, and that the Mayor, Clerk or Councillors will not be part of the Cadets social media groups.

## Related Policies

This policy will need to be read in conjunction with the following Council policies: Equality and Diversity, Data Protection, Working with Volunteers, Complaints Policy and any others deemed appropriate.

# DEFINITIONS

* 1. **Children and young people** are defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th

birthday” Children Act 1989

## Adults at Risk

An adult at risk is ‘any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support’

# A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over:

* Who is, or may be, in need of community care services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability
* Who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.
* For example, a person who:
  1. is frail due to age
  2. is suffering from mental illness or dementia
  3. has drug or alcohol problems
  4. has a learning disability
  5. has mental or physical ill health or disability
  6. has sensory loss e.g. hearing/sight impairment

# TYPES OF ABUSE

## ‘No Secrets’ produced by the Department for Health in 2000 described abuse as ‘a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons’. There are seven categories of abuse.

***Physical***: causing physical harm, including hitting, shaking, biting, grabbing, withholding food or drink, force-feeding, wrongly administering medicine, unnecessary restraint, failing to provide physical care and aids to living;

***Sexual***: including sexual assault, rape, inappropriate touching/molesting, forcing or enticing someone into sexual acts they don't understand or feel powerless to refuse; grooming a child or young person in preparation for abuse.

***Emotional or psychological***: persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection, including verbal abuse, shouting, swearing, threatening abandonment or harm, isolating, taking away privacy or other rights, bullying/intimidation, blaming, belittling, silencing, controlling or humiliating;

***Financial or material***: illegal or improper use of an adult’s property, money or other assets without their informed consent or where the consent is obtained by fraud. It can include withholding money or possessions, theft of money or property, fraud, intentionally mismanaging finances, borrowing money and not repaying;

***Neglect***: persistent or severe failure to meet a person’s basic physical and psychological needs. It will result in serious impairment of their health or development, and can include withholding shelter, food, drink, heating and clothing, failing to provide access to health, social and educational services, ignoring physical care needs, exposing a person to unacceptable risk, failing to ensure adequate supervision or unresponsiveness to the basic emotional needs of a child;

**Discriminatory**: including slurs, harassment and maltreatment due to a protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010);

**Institutional**: including the use of systems and routines which neglect a person receiving formal care e.g. in a children’s home.

# SIGNS OF ABUSE

There are many possible signs of abuse, none being conclusive on their own.

Examples include:

1. Unexplained injury / weight loss / cuts and bruises / dirtiness
2. Changes in behaviour
3. Depression / low self-esteem
4. Lack of self-care / dehydration / abnormal eating pattern
5. Harm to self
6. Obsessive behaviour
7. Bills not being paid
8. An overly critical or disrespectful carer who may bully or undermine
9. Isolation from usual network of friends, family or community

# SAFEGUARDING

* + 1. Safeguarding children from abuse and promoting their welfare means:
       1. Protecting children from maltreatment;
       2. Preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
       3. Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent witof safe and effective care;
       4. Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
    2. Safeguarding vulnerable adults means protecting them from maltreatment, and preventing injury or significant harm. Abuse violates an adult’s human and civil rights. It can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.
    3. A safeguarding concern arises if abuse is suspected or disclosed. Abuse can happen anywhere – at home, in a residential or nursing home, a hospital, in the workplace, at a day centre or educational establishment or in the street.

# REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

## A safeguarding concern arises if abuse is suspected or disclosed. Abuse can happen anywhere – at home, in a residential or nursing home, a hospital, in the workplace, at a day centre or educational establishment or in the street.

* 1. We all have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns over the welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults. This extends to the identification of signs of abuse,

poor practice by staff, councillors and others acting for or on behalf of the Council, and allegations brought to our attention by a member of the public. Reporting safeguarding concerns can prevent serious abuse or harm from happening, or from escalating.

* 1. Staff, councillors and volunteers must not attempt to investigate abuse themselves; neither must they confront anyone who is allegedly responsible for abuse nor tell them that allegations have been made about them.
  2. The officer responsible for receipt of concerns and forwarding them on is the Clerk. If the Clerk is absent do not wait for them to return to work.
  3. Report safeguarding allegations or concerns to Gloucestershire County Council Social Services at the earliest possible opportunity, and at least within 24 hours.
  4. Dial 999 if a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be in imminent danger or a criminal offence may have been committed
  5. On reporting a concern as much factual information should be provided as possible. For example:
* The child, young person or vulnerable adult’s name and address (and parents’/carers’

address if different)

* The reason for concern – a note of significant events or conversations should be made

as promptly as possible to assist with any referral and subsequent investigation. Evidence such texts or Facebook entries should be preserved

* Any other known factors which may be contributing to the problem
* Additional information such as age (or date of birth), ethnicity, religion, language and disabilities / specific needs.
  1. The safeguarding concern should still be reported whether or not the information is complete.

# CONFIDENTIALITY, RECORD KEEPING AND SHARING INFORMATION

* 1. Information about safeguarding concerns should be regarded as confidential. The information is not secret, however, and the Council will co-operate with investigations by Gloucestershire County Council Social services, or the Police as applicable, and follow their advice to ensure that any risk to the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults is addressed.
  2. Where a disclosure is made it is important that the staff member does not promise the child/young person/vulnerable adult to keep the information secret but says that they will only disclose it to someone who can help them.
  3. It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child or vulnerable adult, their family and any child protection investigation that may follow.

# ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A COUNCILLOR OR MEMBER OF STAFF

6.1 If someone witnesses behaviour by a councillor, member of staff, contractor, partner or an allegation is made about them that indicates that they have, or may have:

* + - harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or put them at risk of harm;
    - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or vulnerable adult or
    - behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults,

They must report it as a safeguarding concern to the Police and/or Gloucestershire County Council Social Services at the earliest possible opportunity.

* 1. A councillor or member of staff must report any allegation made against them to the Clerk or Chairman of the Staffing Committee.
  2. Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure (including in instances where the member of staff resigns or leaves). However, investigations by the responsible authorities will take precedence over internal council procedures relating to conduct. The Clerk or Chair of the Staffing Committee will liaise with the responsible authorities to agree the appropriate course of action.
  3. The Clerk or Chair of the Staffing Committee will seek advice from Gloucestershire County Council Social Services or Police prior to informing a member of staff of an allegation against them. The Clerk or Chair of the Staffing Committee will offer appropriate welfare support to the member of staff and ensure that they are kept appropriately informed during any investigation process.

6.5 In accordance with the law, the Council will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) any member of staff:

* + - who was dismissed because they harmed a child or adult;
    - who was dismissed or removed from working in a regulated activity because they might have harmed a child or adult otherwise;
    - who would have been dismissed for either of these reasons, but they resigned first; or
    - who works with children or vulnerable adults in regulated activity and has been cautioned or convicted for a relevant offence.

6.6 Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to councillors will be referred to the Monitoring Officer and dealt with in accordance with the Code of Conduct of Members of the Council.

# RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

* 1. Criminal record checks will be made where appropriate.
  2. Roles that involve “regulated activities,” such as caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults, require an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check. This may include checking whether someone is included in the two DBS ‘barred lists’ of individuals who are unsuitable for working with children and adults. DBS Checks must be obtained for staff and volunteers undertaking these roles, and they will not be permitted to commence unaccompanied work until they have been received. Members in civic roles, including the mayor, deputy mayor and any civic deputies, will also be subject to enhanced DBS checks.
  3. It is against the law for employers to employ someone, or allow them to volunteer for this kind of work if they know they are on one of the barred lists.

# INFORMATION AND TRAINING

* 1. Appropriate information will be made available to staff and councillors in the form of this policy and any necessary training.

# EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS LICENSED BY, OR WORKING WITH, FOR, OR ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL.

* 1. The Council works with and through a number of external organisations such as charities, contractors, other public sector bodies etc. Where these external organisations are likely to have significant contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults as a direct result of their work for, on behalf of, or in partnership with the Council, they are required to have safeguarding procedures, such as safe recruitment and selection processes, in place.
  2. They must be made aware of this policy and must provide the Council with a copy of their safeguarding procedure or undertake to act in accordance with the Council’s policy.

# HOW TO MAKE A SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL

* 1. **ADULT REFERRAL**

If you’re an adult experiencing abuse or neglect, or if you’re concerned about an adult possibly experiencing abuse or neglect, contact Gloucestershire County Council Social Services on 01452 426868 or email [socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care/keeping-people-safe/>

**Find out more about safeguarding adults with care and support needs**

The [Safeguarding Adults in Gloucestershire](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab) website, managed by Gloucestershire County Council, includes more about the safeguarding of adults with care and support needs, as well as links to other specialist organisations who can help. It has dedicated information for:

•    [Users of adult services](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-use-services-for-adults/) (potential victims of abuse and neglect)  
•    [Members of the public](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a-friend-relative-or-carer/) (such as friends, relatives or unpaid carers)  
•    [Professionals](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/i-am-a-professional) (such as paid carers)

This website also explains the role of the [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/safeguarding-adults-board/), which coordinates local organisations and services.

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE REFERRAL

**Report a child protection concern**

**If you are ever concerned that a child is in immediate danger, please call the police on 999.**

Everyone has a responsibility to refer a child when it is believed or suspected that a child:

* Has suffered significant harm and /or;
* Is likely to suffer significant harm and/or;
* Has developmental and welfare needs which are likely only to be met through provision of family support services (with agreement of the child’s parent).

**To report a concern if you are a member of the public**

**During office hours**

You can call Children and Families Front Door Service on 01452 426565 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).

You can also discuss your concerns with someone who works with children and families, such as your health visitor, social worker, school nurse or teacher (all schools have a teacher responsible for child protection).

**Out of office hours**

If you think a child is in immediate danger, please call the police on 999.

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) are available for emergencies, out of office hours, which cannot safely wait until the next working day. You can call them on 01452 614194.

EDT is not intended to provide the same level of service that is available during normal office hours.

**To report a concern if you work with children or young people**

**During office hours**

You can call Children and Families Front Door Service on 01452 426565 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).

**Out of office hours**

If the issue cannot safely wait until the next working day, please contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01452 614758 and provide us with as much information as possible.

**Enquiries needing an immediate response should be called in to prevent any delay. This would include:**

* When it is felt a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm
* When a child protection investigation is needed (because of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or chronic neglect)

**Request for service**

Please email a completed MARF to [childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk). Please use the link below to download the current form.

**Who to talk to if you are a child**

If you have been hurt by anybody, or an adult or another young person has done something that makes you feel upset or scared, it is important that you tell somebody so that you can get the support and protection you need.

Everybody who works or volunteers with children and young people has a responsibility to protect them from harm. Tell an adult you trust. This could be someone at your school, youth club, doctor’s surgery or any other place you attend. Tell them about what is happening and what you are worried about, and they should know how to get you the support and protection you need.

You can call Children and Families Front Door Service on 01452 426565 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm). If you need to speak to a social worker outside these hours because you are worried about yours, or someone else’s safety, then you can call our Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 01452 614194 to speak to a social worker.

You don't need to give your name if you don't want to.

Or you can speak to someone at Childline on 0800 1111. Calls are free and confidential. You can also contact someone through the [Childline website](https://www.childline.org.uk/).

**Who to talk to if you experienced abuse in your childhood.**

It's never too late to report abuse you experienced. Some people do not want to, some people may want to report their abuse to stop the offender abusing other children and for some, they find that reporting their abuse brings a sense of closure in their recovery journey, We know it is important that people do what is right for them. It is important to remember that it is never the survivor’s fault and they are not responsible for the actions of others. The perpetrator of the abuse  is responsible for their actions.

If you do decide to, you can speak to the police about what happened to you. You can report abuse to the police no matter how long ago it happened. You can start by calling 101 and briefly explaining what you're calling about. They'll make sure you're put through to the right team who can support you.

Crimes can also be reported via Gloucestershire Constabulary website: [www.gloucestershire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/](https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/)

# OUT OF HOURS REFERRAL

Emergency duty team out of office hours 01452 614194 or email [**edt@gloucestershire.gov.uk**](mailto:edt@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

If there is an immediate issue of safety then the Police should be called.

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**Coleford Town Council Making a Difference**