



Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

This policy will enable Withersfield Parish Council to demonstrate its commitment to keeping safe adults at risk and any children with whom it works alongside. The Parish Council acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Scope

The policy and procedures apply to all and any staff members. From herein, references to staff include staff, volunteers, trustees and Parish Councillors. The Parish Council will ensure that it has made clients aware of its safeguarding policy.

The Parish Council will provide all parishioners / clients with this policy and ensure they understand it. The Parish Council will also explain the reporting process should they be concerned about a fellow client or member of staff.

Policy Statement

The policy and procedures are in place in order for all and any staff to work to prevent abuse and know what to do should a concern arise. They will enable the Parish 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 abuse is supported.

Definitions

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

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.
- 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.”

Related Policies

This policy will need to be read in conjunction with the following Parish Council policies:

- Equality & Diversity
- Whistle Blowing & Sharing Concerns
- Equal Opportunities & Recruitment
- Data Protection
- Complaints Policy & Procedure
- Working with Volunteers
- Confidentiality Policy

Responsibilities of Withersfield Parish Council

THE PARISH 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 in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- 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 or child.
- g) Address what caused any abuse or neglect where appropriate if it occurred on Parish Council property or in an Parish Council workplace/office.

WITHERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL will:

- a) Ensure that all Councillors and staff are familiar with this policy and associated procedures.
- b) Work with other agencies within the framework of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.
- c) Act within its confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from adult clients 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 (If a child has disclosed or if the Parish Council 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 to Customer First as appropriate. i.e. if there is an immediate danger or the child/adult is at risk of harm.
- e) Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities to attend training and support staff in accessing training.
- f) Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of adults and children.

- g) WITHERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL has a Designated Safeguarding Lead and ensures that the Designated Safeguarding Lead understands their responsibility to refer incidents of abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (Police/Social Care). The contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be posted on Parish Council Notice boards.
- h) Respond appropriately when abuse has or is suspected to have occurred.
- i) Understand how diversity, beliefs and values of people who use services may influence the identification, prevention and response to safeguarding concerns.
- j) Ensure that all employees, volunteers, trustees and Parish Councillors, who come into contact with vulnerable adults and any children, have a DBS check in line with the requirements of the Independent Safeguarding Authority Vetting and Barring Scheme. This will include undertaking a DBS check on any potential trustee / Parish Councillor as well as all existing trustees / Parish Councillors.

Responsibilities of Parish Council Staff and Volunteers

- a) To follow the safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, particularly if 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) Always discuss any concerns about the welfare of any client or child with their line manager. If the line manager is unavailable, staff and volunteers must go direct to the DSL.
- d) Work collaboratively with other agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of people who use Withersfield Parish Council service.
- 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.

Responsibilities of Trustees / Parish Councillors

Trustees / Parish Councillors have a duty of care to prevent risks to the Parish Councils reputation as well as the people it helps.

Responsibilities of Clients

Parish Council clients, if any, will have a responsibility to act in accordance with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct when on Parish Council premises and to be aware that they have a duty to report any abuse, neglect or risk to other clients seen on Parish Council premises and offices.

Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

The Parish Council is committed to ensuring that all managers, staff, volunteers, trustees and Parish Councillors undertake training to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse. Parish Council is to ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any other key members of staff will have access to higher levels of safeguarding training.

Abuse and neglect can take many forms and the Parish 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.

Designated Named Person for Safeguarding

The Parish Council has an appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for leading safeguarding in the organisation. In their absence, the Chair will be appointed for any staff to consult with.

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

- a) Ensure that any and 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 referred to Customer First and/or the allocated social worker where necessary.
- 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, volunteer or Trustee, paid or unpaid.
- e) Consider any recommendations from the safeguarding process.
- f) Reinforce the need for confidentiality and to ensure that staff, volunteers and trustees are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security.
- g) Ensure that any and all staff working directly with clients who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision.
- h) Ensure staff, volunteers, trustees and Parish Councillors are given support and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome.

Training

All staff, volunteers, trustees and Parish Councillors should receive a basic safeguarding training at a level according to their role. This should be refreshed as a minimum every three years.

The Responding to People who have Experienced or are Experiencing Abuse

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

Responding if the Parish 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 vulnerable adult/child'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 him/her safe.

If you witness abuse or 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 Manager.
- f) To record what happened in the agreed place/file/log.

Allegations made against a Member of Staff

If a member of staff has information which suggests a member of staff has:

- a) Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a vulnerable adult/child.

- b) Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a vulnerable adult/child.
- c) Behaved towards a vulnerable adult/child in a way that has indicated she/he is unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults/children.

The member of staff should immediately report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in line with the Parish Council Whistleblowing & Sharing Concerns policy.

If appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult with/make a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). Follow the procedures for LADO referrals on the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website. LADOs can be contacted by e mail on LADO@suffolk.gov.uk or by using the LADO central telephone number: 0300 123 2044.

If the allegation is made about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, staff must inform the Chair of the Parish Council

Recording and Managing Confidential Information

The Parish 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 the Parish Council's 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 the Parish Council Data Protection Policy.

Disseminating/Reviewing Policy and Procedures

This safeguarding policy and procedures will be clearly communicated to any and all staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for ensuring that this is done.

The safeguarding policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Parish Council. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved in this process and can recommend changes. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to any and all staff and to the Parish Councillors.

Making a Referral

Please dial 999 if the person is in immediate danger.

To discuss whether or not a referral is required, you can call the Professional Consultation Line on 0345 6061499 to speak with a MASH social worker.

For Concerns about a Child

If you have a concern about a child or a young person, you will need to complete and submit a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) using the new secure Suffolk Children and Young People's Portal.

For Concerns about an Adult

If you have a concern about an adult and wish to make a safeguarding referral you will need to use the new Suffolk County Council Adult Care Portal. The first time you complete a form you will be asked to create a new portal account. It's quick and easy to register for an account and means the information you send to us is secure.