

Worcester City Council

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Safeguarding Policy

1.0 Introduction

This policy reflects the commitment of the Council to safeguard children and adults at risk. This policy sets out the Council's responsibility to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the supplementary guidance provided in the ['Safeguarding adults: multi agency policy and procedures for the West Midlands' document](#) and the ['West Mercia Consortium Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures for Safeguarding Children'](#). These documents provide further guidance and specific procedural information which should be referred to as appropriate.

We expect agencies and organisations and other stakeholders that we work with or who hire or manage our facilities, to adhere to our procedures as a minimum standard and operate their own effective safeguarding policy.

Whilst it is not our job to establish whether or not abuse has/is taking place, it is everyone's responsibility to report *any* concerns we have over the welfare of children or adults at risk. This duty extends to the identification of abuse, poor practice by internal members/staff or anyone working on behalf of/delivering or representing the Council, as well as allegations brought to the attention of the Council by a member of the public.

This policy outlines that the Council's primary concern is to ensure that information is recorded and passed onto the designated Safeguarding Advisors without delay, so that it can be actioned and referred to the appropriate agency.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to protect and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk using or receiving services provided or commissioned by the Council, and to support the Council's officers, elected members and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

This policy is for all members of Worcester City Council staff, elected Members, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for or representing the Council.

3.0 Scope

The Council recognises that Worcestershire County Council and West Mercia Police are the lead agencies in the county with regard to child protection and safeguarding. However, the Council also recognises that everyone has a responsibility for protecting children and adults at risk, including all employees and elected Members.

This means that Council Members, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers should take action when they suspect or recognise that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be a victim of harm or abuse.

This policy relates to all children under the age of 18 and adults at risk regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or cultural background.

This policy outlines how the Council will meet its legal obligations, provides clear guidelines for protecting and safeguarding children and adults at risk, and the process for reporting concerns or incidents of abuse.

This policy covers all Members, employees and volunteers at the Council, including those who work/represent or deliver a service on behalf of the Council.

4.0 Principles

The guidance provided in this policy and subsequent procedures is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children and adults at risk is the primary concern
- All children and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse
- It is everyone's responsibility to report *any* concerns about abuse
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Employees are expected to adopt and abide by the Council's Employee Code of Conduct and the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- The Council will recruit, train and supervise its employees and others working on behalf of the Council to follow the safeguarding procedures to protect children and adults at risk from abuse and to reduce the likelihood of allegations made against employees
- Work together in cooperation with other local authorities and other bodies in order to provide the most effective means of safeguarding children and adults at risk

Individual roles and responsibilities are included at 6.0. For further detail on the role of the Council's Safeguarding Advisors see Appendix 1.

5.0 Definitions

- The term **child, or young person**, is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years
- The term **parent** is used as a generic term to represent parent, carers and guardians
- The term **employee** refers to staff, elected Members, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for or representing the Council
- The term **adult(s) at risk** replaces the term vulnerable adult and refers to a person aged 18 or over who is in receipt or who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
- An **alert** is a concern that an adult at risk or child is or may be a victim of abuse or neglect. An alert may be a result of disclosure, an incident or other signs or indicators.
- The term **carer** refers to unpaid carers – for example; relatives or friends of the adult at risk. Paid workers, including personal assistants whose job title may be 'carer' are called 'staff'.
- **Council services** – this includes anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for or representing the Council for example; contracted service providers, shared services etc.
- The term **DBS** (Disclosure Barring Service) refers to merge of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority into the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). CRB checks are now called DBS checks. A DBS check may be needed for certain jobs or voluntary work when working with children or adults at risk.
- There are four broad **types of abuse**: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Full definitions can be found in *Chapter 1.3 West Midlands Consortium Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures for Safeguarding Children* available from <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>
- **Abuse** can also take the form of bullying. A definition and indicators of bullying can be found at Appendix 2
- A **referral** is the same as an alert; however an alert becomes a referral when the details lead to a safeguarding investigation/assessment relating to the concerns reported.
- A **Safeguarding Advisor** is responsible for giving advice and support to employees in responding to concerns regarding the safety and welfare of

children and adults at risk. Advisors are responsible for referring information to Worcestershire Safeguarding Children/Adult Board and ensuring the procedures stated in this policy are being adhered to.

- **Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB)** is the board that replaces the Area Child Protection Committee. WSCB coordinates work of broad partners to ensure that they are effective in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of Members, officers, volunteers and contractors are outlined below:

- a) Managing Director** is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring related procedures are implemented, monitored and consistently reviewed on a regular basis.
- b) The lead Member is the Leader of the Council** and they are responsible for ensuring the implementation, consistent monitoring and improvements of the safeguarding policy and related procedures
- c) Safeguarding Advisor** is responsible for dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children and adults at risk appropriately and in accordance with the procedures that are set out within the policy.
- d) Managers** must ensure that vacancies are assessed to determine whether a DBS is required and ensure that appropriate employees are subject to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks and that their staff comply with this policy and the related procedures.
- e) Team Managers** are responsible for ensuring that employees follow this policy and its related procedures and receive safeguarding training and the support they need in line with their responsibilities and level of contact with children and adults at risk.
- f) All Members, employees and volunteers** are responsible for carrying out their duties in a way that actively safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and adults at risk. They must also act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible. They must bring safeguarding concerns to the attention of safeguarding advisors.
- g) Commissioned services, contractors, sub-contractors or other organisations funded by or on behalf of the Council** are responsible for

applying the appropriate DBS checks, delivering safeguarding training reflective of their level of contact with children and adults at risk, and ensuring that their employees comply with their own safeguarding policy and procedures. The Council has a responsibility to monitor these requirements and ensure they are carried out.

7.0 Legal Framework

The Council, although not primarily responsible for children's social care or education or adult social care, has a legal duty to report and refer information regarding concerns about children or adults at risk to the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults/Children's board and Independent Safeguarding Authority as appropriate.

This duty is found in section 11 of the Children Act 2004, which places a duty on organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 also requires each local authority to cooperate with all relevant partners to improve the wellbeing of children in the authority's area, which includes protection from harm or neglect.

The Children Act 1989 gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Children's Social Care is the lead agency for making these enquiries, in conjunction with the Police where it is suspected that a criminal offence may have been committed.

8.0 Recruitment

The Council has a recruitment policy which must be followed for all staff appointments. The policy can be found on the Council's intranet or from People Services. In summary,

- All potential candidates will have to fill in the Council's Application Form
- Personal identification and academic/vocational qualifications will need to be verified
- References will be obtained on the applicant
- All prospective employees are required to undergo an interview under the guidelines of the Council's Recruitment Policy.
- When drawing up a job description for a post, managers will ensure that roles and duties relating to working with children or vulnerable adults are

clearly described in the job description over and above the standard safeguarding clause for all employees, and that the requirement to undergo DBS checks is stated.

- All applicants for work that involves direct contact or substantial unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk will be subject to DBS checking procedures, prior to any work being offered in a paid or voluntary capacity
- Existing employees that are moving into jobs which require direct contact with children or adults at risk will be required to undergo checks under the DBS checking procedure to which a satisfactory response must be received
- The council reserves the right to request a re-check at any time during this period
- Where a DBS check reveals any issues of concern (e.g. previous offences, warnings, cautions or Police concerns) a decision on appointment of an applicant must be taken by the relevant Service Manager (or higher level of management) in consultation with the People Services Manager. Where such concerns are raised in respect of an employee currently working for the Council, the relevant Service Manager must consult the People Services Manager in deciding what action to take.
- Councillors who have not already undergone DBS checks should review and complete the self-declaration form at Appendix 3 and forward to People Services if appropriate.

The Council's scope for working directly with children or adults at risk is limited. DBS checks should only be sought where a Member, employee or volunteer has substantial, regular or unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk as part of their duties or responsibilities for, or on behalf of, the Council. Guidance on when a DBS check is required can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance> or contact a safeguarding advisor.

9.0 Training

All employees must complete the regular Safeguarding, CSE and Prevent training that is provided and refresh that knowledge at appropriate intervals identified by the council.

Those employees working directly with children or adults at risk should complete training as appropriate to their role.

9.1 Induction

All employees will receive a formal induction on starting work and as part of that welcome to the council will be expected to complete safeguarding, CSE and prevent training. This is a condition of their probation and confirmation of appointment. New employees will then refresh this knowledge along with colleagues at appropriate intervals identified by the council but the training remains available to them at any time.

Safeguarding Advisors will be trained appropriate to their responsibilities and may need refresher training from time to time.

Line managers may identify additional training needs for any of their employees through the Council's appraisal system. The level to which training is needed will be decided between the employee, line manager and People Services.

Training will be available at any time for members and specifically made available to new members included in the member development programme.

10.0 Safeguarding Procedures

Members, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers should be vigilant at all times and comply with the procedures set out below.

10.1 Photography/Filming

Our minimum requirements are:

- The credentials of any photographers used should be checked prior to employment.
- The photographer must wear identification at all times during an event
- No un-supervised access to children and adults at risk or one to one photo sessions at events should be allowed
- The names and photographs of children or adults at risk must not be used unless with the express permission (written or verbal)¹ of the parent, guardian, carer or head teacher of the child.
- Written or verbal permission must be granted from a child's parent, guardian, carer or school before any picture of the child can be published in a council publication, website or social media feed or passed on for publication to any external media
- Any joint events with partners where photographs or film footage is taken must be made the responsibility of one of those partners and the

¹ Consent forms should be retained for as long as the photograph is in use/on file.

policy/procedures of that body adhered to. It is the responsibility of the body taking responsibility for the photographs or film footage to confirm permissions and whether partners can use the images.

- When the Council commissions professional photographers or invites the press to cover Council services, events and activities, the Council's expectations must be made clear in relation to safeguarding.

An example of photograph/video consent form is located at Appendix 6.

10.2 Unofficial photographic and filming opportunities taken by hirers and users of council venues and services

Our minimum requirements are:

a) Parks, open spaces and nature reserves

It is not practical to control unofficial filming and photography in parks, open spaces and nature reserves that are owned by the Council, if a member of the public has concerns they should be reported to the event organiser or directly to the police.

b) Sports centres, community centres and civic halls

These facilities may be visited by members of the public or hired for private functions. All hirers will be made aware of the Council's Safeguarding Policy; however it is the responsibility of the hirer to communicate their own safeguarding policy and arrangements to parents/carers.

c) The Guildhall

This facility may be hired for private functions/events e.g. civil ceremonies. Hirers will be responsible for communicating arrangements to guests at the event. If concerns are raised then the police should be contacted.

10.3 Internet and Social Media

All employees are expected to comply with the guidelines set out in the Council's [ICT Policy and Procedures](#). In summary;

- Users must not create, download, upload, display or access knowingly, sites that contain pornography or other 'unsuitable' material that might be deemed illegal, obscene or offensive
- Employees should take due care when emailing RESTRICTED information (such as the incident referral form) to an email address
- Any emails containing RESTRICTED information must be sent from a Council email account and only to an email account of the same i.e. "*@[councilname].gov.uk*"
- The use of social media sites is monitored, must be carried out with care and must not bring the council into disrepute.

Websites are filtered and blocked dependent on the content of that site. The Council's Web Officer also monitors the council website and Facebook page for unsuitable content.

11.0 Reporting and Recording Procedures

If any concerns are raised about abuse of a child or adult it is the employee's, Member's, volunteer's or contractor's responsibility to RESPOND and REPORT their concerns to a safeguarding advisor as soon as possible. Doing nothing is not an option. If it is not possible to contact any of the safeguarding advisors (a list of key contacts is included in section 17), contact should be made to Worcestershire Access Centre.

It is *not* the responsibility of any council employee, Member, volunteer or contractor to decide if abuse is taking or has taken place.

Information the person making the referral/raising the concern will need to know and pass on to the safeguarding advisor or county council child/adult services includes:

- Is the child/adult at immediate risk?
- Why am I worried about this child/adult?
- What am I worried about?
- When did these concerns start?
- How often are they happening?
- Who is best placed to respond?
- What level of service best meets this child's/adult's/family's needs?
- Has a conversation been held with the parents/carers and what has been their response?

An incident reporting form can be found in the Staffroom (Appendix 5). This form should be filled in by the person who is concerned, in as much detail as possible. This form can then be sent on to the safeguarding advisor to alert them of your concerns and allow them to take appropriate action.

12.0 Information Sharing and Consent/Confidentiality

Lawful information sharing is essential to promote and ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are safeguarded.

Data protection and Human Rights legislation are not barriers to the sharing of information where this is necessary to protect children, young people and adults at risk.

Information should be shared with consent when appropriate. Where consent cannot be obtained or is refused, information may still lawfully be shared if it is judged that it is necessary to do so to protect a child or adult from serious harm, or to ensure a serious crime is prevented, detected, investigated or prosecuted. If you have a concern about the safety of a child or young person, do not allow the withholding of consent to prevent you from sharing that information.

There may be occasions when the withholding of consent to information sharing by the parent or carer may in itself constitute a concern in respect of a child, young person or adult at risk's welfare.

RESTRICTED information will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Information Sharing Policy and Protocols. The Council protocols on information management, data protection and [information sharing](#) can be found in the Staffroom.

As a general rule, the consent of the parent, young person or adult at risk should be obtained wherever possible unless to do so would increase the risk of harm to them or it is considered that the young person or adult is not capable of giving informed consent.

13.0 Internal enquiries and suspension

The Council's safeguarding advisor will make an immediate recommendation to the Service Manager about whether to suspend or transfer to other duties an employee accused of abuse, pending a Children Services (CS)/Adult Services (AS) or Police investigation. The Council will assess all individual cases under the Council's disciplinary procedure to decide whether an employee should be reinstated and what action should be taken irrespective of the findings of the CS/AS or Police enquiries unless directed by the Police not to.

For further information on the Council's disciplinary procedure click on link: [disciplinary procedure](#) or contact People Services.

14.0 Allegations against a safeguarding advisor

If a safeguarding advisor is subject to suspicion/allegation the Managing Director or other safeguarding advisor will take appropriate action as outlined above.

15.0 Complaints about the safeguarding policy

If you have a complaint about the safeguarding policy or process that has been followed please forward to Worcestershire County Council.

16.0 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned in the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

17.0 Support for Staff

If an allegation is made towards another member of staff, full support will be given in line with the Council's whistle blowing policy. Contact HR for more information.

18.0 Key Contacts

Safeguarding Advisors for Worcester City Council:

Safeguarding Advisor	Role in Organisation	Contact Details
Mark Edwards	Human Resources Service Manager	Tel: 01905 722042 Out of Hours No: 07775017284 Mobile: 07775017284
Nina Warrington	Strategic Housing Service Manager	Tel: 01905 722494 Out of Hours No: 01684 311946 Mobile: 07867636769 or 07887501604
Rosey Badham	Housing and Welfare Options Team Manager	Tel: 01905 722272 Out of Hours: 07412 681846 Mobile 07412 681846
Ann Nicholls	Community Detached Team Project Leader	Tel:01905 722065 Out of Hours:07788570288 Mobile:07788570288

Safeguarding Contacts for Worcestershire County Council

Contact	Contact Details
Children Services	Access Centre (Family Front Door) General Number: 01905 822666 Out of Hours Number: 01905 768020 Email: socialcare@worcestershire.gov.uk
Adult Services	Phone: 01905 768053 or Adult Safeguarding Team for advice (does not accept referrals): 01905 843189 Email: socialcare@worcestershire.gov.uk
Local Authority Designated	Phone: 01905 846221 Email: lado@worcestershire.gcsx

Officers (LADO)	
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Other key contacts:

Contact	Contact Details
West Mercia Constabulary	Phone: 0300 333 3000
NSPCC 24hr Child Protection Helpline	Phone: 0808 800 5000 Text: 885858 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
Childline UK	Phone: 0800 1111 Web: www.childline.co.uk
Victim Support	Phone: 0845 3030900 Email: supportline@victimsupport.org.uk