

ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Safeguarding Policy, Procedure & Guidance

It is not up to you to decide whether a child or vulnerable adult has or is suffering harm as a result of abuse or neglect, but it is up to you to report any concerns as soon as possible.

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I. Background

Andover Town Council delivers services which can bring employees, Members and volunteers into contact with children or vulnerable adults. This could be as either as the main part of their role or indirectly when carrying out their work such as a home visit, working outdoors in a public place or seeing customers in a reception area.

This policy is based on our responsibilities under the Children Act 2004, specifically Section 11 which places a duty on key people and public bodies, including councils, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

With regard to safeguarding vulnerable adults, this policy has been developed in accordance with guidelines produced by the Department of Health 'No Secrets' guidance and The Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. There are different issues to consider when dealing with cases of abuse of vulnerable adults.

This policy, procedure & guidance is approved by the member agencies of Hampshire Local Safeguarding Children Board. These requirements also apply to all other agencies in Hampshire County Council area providing services to children and young people or their families. The child protection standards in this procedure are consistent with Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board's Safeguarding Procedures, (2011) and the Government publications: ('Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2010) and ('What To Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused' (2006)). Please note that this document is designed to complement, and provide a context for, the more detailed Child Protection Procedures and does not replace them. For more detailed information see:<http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/>

All references to children in this document should be taken to apply also to young people and vulnerable adults.

2. Model Policy

Andover Town Council believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises it's responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person/vulnerable adult is paramount.
- all children/young persons/vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, vulnerable adults, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's and vulnerable adults welfare.

The purpose of the policy is:

- to provide protection for the children and young people who receive *Andover Town Council's* services, including the children of adult members or users.

- to provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, young person or adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, Council Members or anyone working on behalf of Andover Town Council.

We will seek to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults by:

- valuing them, listening to them and respecting them.
- adopting child, young people and vulnerable adult protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving children and parents or carers appropriately.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policies and procedures annually.

Scope of the Policy:

The policy is in respect of the Council's responsibility towards:

- Children and young people legally defined as any person under the age of 18. From this point the terms child or children will be used to refer to this group. (Children Act 2004).
- Vulnerable adults defined, for the purposes of this policy as anyone over the age of 18 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. (No Secrets DoH 2000).
- The employees of the Council who will come into contact with children or vulnerable adults during the course of their work
- Members of the Town Council when on Council business
- Volunteers who are performing a task or duty at the request of, or on behalf of, Andover Town Council
- Contractors when carrying out work on behalf of Andover Town Council
- The term 'parent/carer' is used throughout as a generic term to represent parents. Carers and guardians for both children and vulnerable adults.
- The policy covers all functions and services of the Town Council.

Child Protection is defined as:

- Protecting individual children identified as either suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is defined as:

- Protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of child or vulnerable adults health or development

- Ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are growing up and living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children and vulnerable adults to have optimum life chances

2.1 This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Town Council's

- Equality Policy
- Complaints procedure
- Disciplinary procedure
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Data Protection Compliance Policy
- Office Policy
- Standing Orders
- Members Code of Conduct

3. Procedures

Everybody shares responsibility for safeguarding children who may be in need of child protection services by identifying children or young people who may be at risk and alerting the appropriate service(s).

- All staff & volunteers must ensure that they are familiar with the child protection procedures for their setting and which staff member is responsible for child protection issues.
- Advice should be sought in the first instance from the designated or named person responsible for child protection support within the setting. This may be the designated teacher within a particular school or the designated lead for child protection within the education or early years service, or the named health visitor or doctor with particular responsibility for child protection within the health service. However, this should not preclude a direct referral to Children's Social Care particularly if there is any element of immediate risk.

Referrals must always be made to Children's Social Care, at Hantsdirect (telephone 0845 603 5620) if there are signs that a child under the age of 18 years, or an unborn baby:

- Is suffering or has suffered abuse and/or neglect.
- Is likely to suffer abuse and/or neglect.
- (With agreement of a person with parental responsibility) would be likely to benefit from family support services .
 - The designated or named person in your setting will support you in contacting Children's Social Care, at Hantsdirect (telephone 08456035620) to make a referral. They will be familiar with the procedure and will be able to advise you accordingly. The timing of referrals must reflect the perceived risk, and should normally be within one working day of recognition. If, for any reason, you cannot contact the designated or named person in your setting you should go ahead and contact Children's Social Care.
 - When a referral is made to Children's Social Care you must agree with them what the child and parents / carers will be told, by whom and when. Do not just leave messages. Always

Speak to someone. You must confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing, within 48 hours. Sometimes you will be asked to use a multi-agency referral form that can be found at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/childprotection.htm> Any Common Assessment Framework (CAF) that has been undertaken should be attached to the referral. Children's Social Care should acknowledge your written referral within one working day of receiving it. Should you not have had a response within 3 working days, contact them again.

- Under no circumstances should you speak to, or confront, the abuser. Do not share suspicions or information with any other person other than your line manager, Children's Social Care and the Police. Information given to Children's Social Care or the Police will be taken seriously, handled sensitively and shared only on a 'need to know' basis, wholly to protect the child. However, in order to ensure that children are safeguarded on the basis of proper evidence, the source of the referral cannot be kept anonymous
- If you have any concerns about an adult's behaviour towards children or young people (who is not an employee or volunteer working for the agency):-
 - Do not ignore it - the service will take any concerns very seriously.
 - You must discuss your concerns with the designated or named person within the Town Council, who will support you in liaising with the statutory agencies should any child protection matter arise.
 - Do not confront the adult but seek the advice of the designated or named person. If they are not available seek advice from Children's Social Care.

3.1 Dealing with Allegations or concerns against any employee, Member or volunteer Working for The Town Council

Concerns for the safety and well-being of children could arise in a number of different ways and in a range of settings. It is essential to act quickly and effectively if an allegation is made or if there is suspicion or concern about a professional or volunteer's relationship with a child, young person or group of children/young people, particularly if they have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to, a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If an allegation is made, or a concern arises, about a member of staff, member or volunteer, ensure that the named person in your agency is informed immediately who will contact the Hampshire County Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (telephone 0845 6035620). The LADO is available to provide advice or support in any allegations process, including advising whether or not immediate suspension of the person concerned should be considered. The Town Clerk must ensure that the Members of the Staffing Sub-Committee are made aware of concerns and that HR advice is sought at the earliest opportunity.

If the LADO is unavailable, or the concern is raised out of hours, you should contact Hantsdirect or the out of hours service or, in an emergency, the police.

Records should be secured and information sharing should be strictly limited to relevant staff/members and external professionals on a need to know basis.

The member of staff or volunteer should be treated fairly and honestly, helped to understand the concerns expressed, the process being followed and any outcomes of the process. Senior managers should seek advice from the LADO and Social Care/Police before informing the person who is subject to an allegation.

4. Guidance

4.1 Responding to a Disclosure

If a child tells you that they, or someone they know, is being abused:

- Listen to what the child is saying and take it seriously.
- Reassure the child who has made the disclosure that they have done the right thing.
- Give the child time to talk and do not probe or ask leading questions. Investigation is not your responsibility.
- Do not promise to keep secrets. All allegations of harm or potential harm must be acted upon.
- Explain to the child that you will share this information with a senior member of staff who will ensure the appropriate procedures will be followed.
- E-mails or text messages received detailing details of suspected abuse should be responded to as soon as possible or within 24 hours by contacting the child by phone or face-to-face to obtain further information.
- Record the event in accordance with your setting's procedures.
- All allegations against staff, even those that appear less serious, need to be followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation concerned.

All allegations will be considered by the Local Authority Designated Officer, who acts for the LSCB agencies to monitor allegations and ensure that the actions in response to the allegation are in accordance with the Hampshire Safeguarding Board Procedures.

- Advice on the storage of all documentation must be sought from the Town Clerk who must ensure that access is strictly limited to relevant staff and external professionals on a need to know basis.

4.2 Staff Conduct - Safe Working Practice

It is essential that all staff and members are conscious of how they should conduct themselves to minimise the risk of finding themselves as the subject of any child protection processes. All staff and members should be aware of the following summary of things to do and not to do when working with children.

“Do”

- Read and follow the child protection procedures.
- Report to the designated / named person any concerns about child welfare/safety.
- Report to the designated / named person any concerns about the conduct of other school staff/volunteers/contractors.

- Record in writing all relevant incidents.
- Work in an open and transparent way.
- Discuss and report any incidents of concern or that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a child.
- Report to the designated/named person any incidents that suggest a child may be infatuated with you or taking an above normal interest in you.
- Dress appropriately for your role.
- Only use e-mail contact with children via any authorised system.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children.
- Ensure you understand the rules concerning physical restraint.
- Where physical contact is essential for educational or safety reasons, gain the child's permission for that contact wherever possible
- Allow children to change clothes with levels of respect and privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.
- Avoid working in one-to-one situations with children.
- Avoid volunteering to accommodate children overnight.
- Be careful about recording images of children and do this only when it is an approved activity.
- Contact your professional association or trade union if you are the subject of concerns or allegations of a child protection nature.
- Fully co-operate with any investigation into child protection issues at your setting.
- Listen to children when they express concern (rumours) about staff which might appear to be just, and check facts v fiction.

"Don't"

- Take any action that would lead a reasonable person to question your motivation and/or intentions.
- Misuse in any way your position of power and influence over children.
- Use any confidential information about a child to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child.
- Engage in activities out of the workplace/setting that might compromise your position with children or young people.
- Establish or seek to establish social contact with children outside of the setting.
- Accept regular gifts from children.
- Give personal gifts to children.
- Communicate with children in inappropriate ways, including social networking and mobile telephones.
- Pass your home address, phone number, e-mail address or other personal details to Children.
- Make physical contact secretive.
- Meet with children in closed rooms without other staff being aware
- Use physical punishment of any kind.
- Confer special attention on one child unless this is part of an agreed plan or policy.
- Transport children in your own vehicle without prior management approval.
- Take, publish or share images of children or other children without their parents' permission.
- Abuse your position of trust with children
- Allow boundaries to be unsafe in more informal settings such as trips out.

5. Unaccompanied Children in Public Settings

There will be situations when young children visit public settings unaccompanied by their parent or carer. Whilst not wishing to discourage children from visiting places such as libraries, information centres and play or educational facilities, staff and members need to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the child and to inform parents / carers of their responsibilities. The way in which staff and members deal with unaccompanied children must be based on awareness of the responsibility of the parent or the loco parentis carer (Le. the one taking the responsibility of parent), and the duty of care the service to all children on the premises. In no instance would staff be expected to take on parental responsibilities for children in these settings. A suitable notice should be clearly displayed and staff should point to this poster when appropriate but especially if parents / carers are about to leave their children on the premises. For example:

NOTICE
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS
Welcome. We hope you enjoy your visit.
Please remember, this is a community space, open to all.
Keep your child safe & please don't leave them unaccompanied.
Children under 10 must never be left unaccompanied.
Parents and carers remain responsible for their children at all times.

A good practice response on discovering an unaccompanied child on the premises is to:-

- Try to avoid being left alone with a child. Try to ensure colleagues are present when you are dealing with unaccompanied children.
- Try to establish whether the child is allowed by the parent / carer to come and go alone.

If you are satisfied that the child is allowed to come and go alone then allow the child to leave. If you gather this information only from the child then you will need to use your judgment to ascertain whether the child is competent to leave alone.

Relevant factors may be:-

- Whether the child exhibits signs of nervousness.
- Whether the child appears to clearly understand your questions.
- Whether the child seems physically capable.
- Whether the child appears to know clearly and readily where he or she lives.
- How far the journey is.
- Whether you know of any particular hazards on the journey.
- The child's age and vulnerability.

If you are in doubt, encourage the child to remain on the premises until you have been able to contact a parent or carer. Children under 10 years of age should not normally be allowed to leave alone unless you know that in the particular case the parent/carer allows it. Ask the child if s/he is expecting to be collected by an adult. Even if the child is expecting to be collected soon, do not wait until closing time before taking the next step.

Try to contact the parent or carer. Ask the child for an address or telephone number.

6. Training

All staff must ensure that they attend child protection training in accordance with the requirements and standards of the Town Council.

Training will be organised and delivered in accordance with the requirements of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)'. The training will be informed by the HSCB Workforce Development Group.

The Town Clerk will monitor attendance at relevant training to ensure all relevant staff and members are aware of the procedures and have received relevant training.

7. Safer Workforce

Recruitment and Selection

Advertisement of posts and application packs should make explicit reference to the commitment of the organisation to Safeguarding including:

- Compliance with vetting & barring regulations
- Always use application forms (CV's should not be accepted)
- A minimum of two people should check for any gaps in employment history and explore these gaps during interview
- ensure at least one reference is from a previous employer and specifically asks if there have been any concerns or allegations about the applicants behaviour towards children; any disciplinary action and confirmation of the applicant's responsibilities.
Compare this information with that provided by the applicant. Any inconsistencies or concerns regarding the information provided in a personal reference must be followed up directly with the referee.
- ensure that any concerns arising from the applicant's medical reference are followed up directly with the applicant and with the employing agency's medical adviser. Seek to explore the applicants attitudes towards children and young people, their motivation for pursuing the role, and managing boundaries, at interview.
- Always ensure that any other uncertainty or inconsistency about the information provided about the applicant is followed up and resolved.
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If you need support with the process, seek advice on recruitment and selection from your HR advisors.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually.

Source Material:

4LSCB Safeguarding Procedures(2011) Hampshire. Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight Safeguarding Boards.

<http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/>

'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused', December 2006, HM Government
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page/dfes-04320-2006>

'Working Together to Safeguard Children', April 2010, HM Government

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00305-2010>

Useful Telephone Numbers:

Children's Social Care – HantsDirect	0845 6035620
Children's Social Care (out of hours)	0845 6004555
Vulnerable Adults Care – HantsDirect	0845 6035630
Vulnerable Adults Care – HantsDirect	0845 6004555
Local Authority Designated Officer	01962 876364
Hampshire Police	0845 0454545
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0808 8005000
Child-Line	0800 1111

9. Annex I- Child and Vulnerable Adult Reporting Form

Please provide as much information as possible

Your Name:
Your Position:
Child/adults' Name:
Child/adults' Address:
Child/adults' Date of Birth: (or approximate age)
Ethnicity of child/adult
Name (s) and address of parent/carer: (if applicable)
Name of school (if applicable):
Date and time of disclosure:

Your Observations:

Record Form A – A Disclosure of Abuse to a Child or Vulnerable Adult

Exactly what the child/adult said and what you said:

Remember to record details in the person's own words. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Action taken so far:

Your Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

This document should now be passed to Test Valley Borough Council's Safeguarding Officer