



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 37/15

13 APRIL 2015

The purpose of this paper is to ask Members to consider and adopt a revised Safeguarding Policy.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) As part of the preparations for an application to the Youth Offer Programme, a Safeguarding Policy was adopted.
 - b) As the first six months of the Town Council's responsibility for an element of that Programme has been completed, the two members of staff leading it have drafted a fuller version of a Safeguarding Policy based on the latest legislation and good practice.
 - c) A copy of their draft is attached to this Report for Members' consideration.
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2) SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

- a) Our Sessional Youth Worker Charlotte Denness has volunteered to take on the Safeguarding Officer role with the unanimous support of the Ventnor Youth Offer Partners' Business Meeting of 19 March 2015.
 - b) She has been allocated an additional hour a week to be taken flexibly for this role and paid at her current rate.
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3) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to adopt the draft policy and confirm Charlotte Denness as the Town Council's Safeguarding Officer.



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

All staff and volunteers will be made aware that positions working directly with children are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1994. All staff and volunteers will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check and will be subject to a period of probation. We will provide safeguarding training to be undertaken by all staff and volunteers. All staff and volunteers will be aware of these Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

1) RESPONSIBILITY

It is *everyone's* responsibility to uphold Safeguarding policies. All adults are to be aware and alert to the signs of abuse.

All staff, volunteers and adults in an environment with young people are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse and will:

- Create and maintain a secure environment where young people are encouraged to talk and where they are heard.
- Ensure young people know that there are adults within Town Council's Youth Offer Team who they can go to for help, advice and guidance.
- Record their concerns and report them to our designated safeguarding Officer.
- Empower young people to recognise, stay safe and speak out about abuse.
- Follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Ventnor Town Council and the Isle of Wight Council and take account of guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- Treat all disclosures seriously, whether they are direct or indirect.
- Provide copies of the Town Council's safeguarding policies and procedures to parents, carers and appropriate third parties.
- Recognise the active role of parents/carers in the wellbeing of every child; share concerns with parents/carers if appropriate and safe to do so.
- Use effective multi-agency working to ensure the safety of young people; cooperate with children's social care when needed.
- Be aware of who is the Safeguarding Officer.

2) ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can begin during pre-birth stages.

Children may be abused in a family or institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, adults, another child or children.

There are four main forms of abuse:

- *Physical:* hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scolding, drowning, suffocating and fabricated or induced illness.
- *Emotional:* severe and persistent emotional maltreatment that negatively effects a child's development. Conveying worthlessness, unrealistic expectations, over protection, limitation of exploration, failure to stimulate, prevention of social interactions, witnessing maltreatment of another and bullying.
- *Sexual:* forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This could include prostitution, inappropriate physical

contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts, involving children in looking at or in production of sexual images or activities and encouraging inappropriate sexual behaviours, child sexual exploitation.

- **Neglect:** persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs resulting in serious impairment of a child's health and development. Failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing and shelter, failure to protect a child from danger or harm, failure to ensure adequate supervision and failure to ensure access to medical care. It may also include unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

In addition:

- **Internet Risks:** the internet can be a tool for various forms of abuse, in particular, cyber bullying, revenge porn, sexual grooming, sexting, exposure to disturbing or explicit images and videos, over sexualisation, commercialisation.

3) HIGH RISK GROUPS

High Risk Groups include:

- Children in Local Authority care, fostering, adoption or institutional care
- Children from areas of deprivation
- Those living with personal or parental mental illness
- Special educational needs and disabilities
- Young Carers
- Children not independently mobile
- Those who are privately fostered
- Children in families where there is substance misuse such as drugs or alcohol

4) CONTACTS

KEY PERSONNEL	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Designated Safeguarding Officer for Ventnor Youth Offer	Charlotte Denness	07715376143	charlotte@ventnortc.org
Ventnor Youth Opportunities Officer	Laura Reid	07983678151	laura@ventnortc.org
Hants Direct (for those directly working with young people)		0845 0020095	
Hants Direct (Public Referrals)		0300 300 0117	
Isle of Wight Council Designated Safeguarding Officer	Paul Barnard	01983 823723	paul.barnard@iow.gov.uk
<i>If a child is in immediate danger call 999</i>			

5) SHARING INFORMATION

Laws surrounding privacy and confidentiality should not be used as a barrier to appropriate information sharing between professionals. Information sharing is essential for effective child protection and fear of legal constraints around privacy or breaching confidentiality should not stand in the way of this.

Golden Rules:

- Be open and honest
 - Seek advice and guidance
 - Always try to gain consent from both young person and parent if appropriate but do not let this be a barrier
 - Keep safety and wellbeing at the centre of decision making
 - Actions should be necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure
 - Always practice effective record keeping
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6) DISCLOSURE

There are two types of disclosure;

Direct: when a child tells you something in relation to abuse of themselves or others or you witness signs, or actions of abuse

Indirect: hearing of abuse of a child but not directly being told, for example overhearing a conversation between young people.

How to deal with a direct disclosure:

Do:

- Always take the child seriously
- Tell the child you need to share the information and cannot keep secrets. Ensure they understand what you have told them
- Let the child speak and give their own account
- Clarify using only open questions, if necessary (I.e. what, when, who and where)
- Thank the child for sharing and explain to them what you will do next
- Ask the child if they feel safe enough to return home and support appropriately
- Remain fully attentive and if in a one-to-one situation ensure you uphold safeguarding policy and safeguard yourself professionally (see Good Practice below)

Don't:

- React negatively, stay calm and collected
- Promise to keep secrets
- Promise that it will get better: it might not!
- Ask leading questions (e.g. did mum do this to you?)
- Place fault or blame
- Ask why

As soon as possible make notes of key points, key statements and observations, for example 'X disclosed that I observed and in my opinion'. Note date, time and place of disclosure and report to your relevant safeguarding lead.

Complete a full report of the disclosure – remember to sign!

Good record keeping: a record of disclosure can be key evidence for a child protection case and can improve multi-agency working by reducing the risk of misunderstanding.

- Use exact words
- Avoid jargon, slang and acronyms
- Use fact not opinion unless clearly stated that it is so
- Remember to sign it and add Date, Time and Place.

Follow up the case with child and your safeguarding lead.

It is good practice to be open and honest with parents and carers about any concerns.

However you *must not discuss* your concerns with parents or carers if:

- Sexual abuse is suspected
- Organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- Fabricated or induced illness is suspected
- Contacting parents or carers would put the young person, yourself or others in danger.

7) GOOD PRACTICE

- Never be alone with a young person unless absolutely unavoidable. If this is the case, be in a room with visual and audible access to others. Keep doors open. Tell another adult where you are, what you are doing and why.
- Personal safety – do not have out of agency relationships with young people i.e. Facebook, personal messaging, calls or emailing

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- Inform your manager if you feel something you have said or done could be misconstrued.
 - Leave personal problems at home. If you feel that are unable to do this, inform your manager.
 - Be cautious of sharing personal information with young people. Always keep your address and personal phone numbers private.
 - Do have an open mind and accept diversity. Encourage non-judgemental and unprejudiced working at all times. Do not allow personal beliefs, religious practises, experiences or political beliefs to effect this.
 - Consider the security of your personal activity on social media. If in doubt, ask your manager.
 - Do safeguard yourself, share your worries and concerns and have faith in the system. Do not feel solely responsible for a young person's safety.
 - Don't swear or use inappropriate language in front of young people.
 - Be aware – you are a role model to young people.
 - Don't encourage risky behaviour.
 - Don't gossip, pass judgment or bad mouth other staff, volunteers or young people in front of young people.