



Flintshire County Council

Corporate Safeguarding Policy

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Flintshire County Council Corporate Safeguarding Policy

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Safeguarding adults, young people and children is a priority for the Council; the Council take seriously its responsibilities to keep people safe. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy provides a framework for all Council services to safeguard and protect children and adults. This document outlines Flintshire County Council's policy on identifying and responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and adults.

1.2 "Safeguarding" is a wider concept than the protection of children and adults and deals with the promoting of:-

- Physical, emotional and mental health
- Protection from harm and neglect
- Education, training and leisure
- Contribution to society
- Social and economic well-being

It includes everything a Council can do to keep people safe, including minimising the risk of harm and accidents, taking action to tackle safety concerns and ensuring people grow up and live in safe circumstances.

1.3 Keeping children and adults safe is everyone's business, we all share a responsibility both corporately and individually to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults and protect them from others who may abuse them. Whilst Social Services is the lead Service for dealing with enquiries regarding allegations /concerns that children and adults may be suffering significant harm, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults whatever the role of the individual.

1.4 All Council employees, elected members, contractors and volunteers who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults in the course of their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare and to work to prevent, detect and report neglect and abuse. This policy applies to Flintshire County Council employees, councillors, volunteers and organisations commissioned to provide services on behalf of the Council. It also applies to organisations who receive grants from the Council.

1.5 Schools are required to develop their own Safeguarding policies to include their own employees, contractors and volunteers.

2.0 Legislative Context

2.1 The Council's responsibilities to keep adults and children safe is set out in a variety of legislation and Codes of practice, these are set out in Appendix 1. The policy is supported by the following internal policies and procedures:

[Customer Service Policy](#)

[Diversity and Equality Policy](#)

[Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) policy](#)

[Internet Usage Policy](#)

[Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)

[Social media Policy](#)

[Whistle blowing Policy](#)

3.0 Objectives and Principles of this policy

3.1 The following are the objectives of the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines:-

- To provide a framework to prevent, detect and report neglect and abuse.
- Ensure that appropriate steps are implemented to deal with any allegation or concern.
- To ensure Services are planned or delivered in a way which safeguards children and adults.
- Employees are able to conduct themselves safely.
- To highlight how Flintshire County Council undertakes its legal commitments in the field of safeguarding children and adults.
- To give assurance to members of the public, service users, councillors, employees and people working on behalf of the Council that there are clear arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children and adults.
- To provide Council employees and councillors with clear guidelines to identify when a child or adult may be at risk of harm.

3.2 The principles underpinning this policy and its application are:

- We believe that every child and adult (whatever their background, culture, age, disability, sex, ethnicity, religious belief, marital status, sexual orientation and transgender status) has a right to participate in a safe society without any violence, fear, abuse, bullying, exploitation and discrimination.
- We believe every child and adult has the right to be protected from harm, exploitation and abuse.
- We will put the welfare of children and adults at the heart of our policies and procedures.
- We will work closely in partnership with children, their parents, carers and adults and other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults.
- We will respect the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children and adults by listening to them and minimising any risks that may affect them.
- We will invest in preventative work and early intervention and try to avoid situation where abuse or allegations of abuse or harm may occur.
- We want to ensure a working environment where our employees feel confident to raise any concerns about any perceived malpractice within the Council.

3.3 Outcomes

We will measure the effect regularly and achieve the following high level outcomes:

- There is a clear understanding amongst employees, councillors, partner agencies and others working on behalf of the Council of the policies and guidelines for safeguarding children and adults.
- Robust corporate and service procedures are in place to ensure compliance with the policy.
- There will be consistency between this policy and the all-Wales procedures associated local protocols for safeguarding children and adults.
- Employees and councillors attend training
- Children and adults are safeguarded

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Every councillor, every employee, every volunteer and every contracted service provider has a responsibility to adhere to the procedures and guidance set out in this policy. By following the correct procedures and guidance, it is possible to ensure that the appropriate steps are implemented to deal with any allegation or concern, services are planned and delivered in a way which safeguards children and adults and employees are able to conduct themselves safely.

4.2 Every Portfolio within the Council has a key role to play and has to take full ownership of safeguarding. Every Portfolio needs to understand where safeguarding issues are most likely to arise in their particular service and ensure that employees receive appropriate training and are aware of this policy.

4.3 The Chief Executive has the general responsibility for ensuring that there is an effective safeguarding policy and procedures for children and adults in place and that they are implemented. However, there are some key officers who have specific responsibilities for safeguarding.

4.4 Chief Officer Social Services, Statutory Director (Social Services)

In line with the Code of Practice on the Role of Directors of Social Services under Part 8 (Social Services Functions) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Chief Officer Social Services is responsible for the following:

- Safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect is everyone's responsibility. However, the director of social services must show leadership to ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place both within the local authority and by relevant partners.
- The director of social services must oversee and report to councillors, on a consistent basis, regarding the operation, monitoring and improvement of child and adult safeguarding systems within the local authority.
- Defined arrangements with other officers within the local authority, particularly the head of adult services and head of children services, must be clear in relation to delegation and reporting arrangements related to safeguarding issues.

- Both Safeguarding Children Boards and Safeguarding Adult Boards must include a representative with a sufficient level of seniority from each local authority within the Board's area. This includes, but is not limited to, the director of social services. In the absence of the director, another officer who is acceptable to the director and of sufficient seniority may attend in their place.
- Each partner has equal responsibility for the exercise of functions of Safeguarding Boards, rather than being a specific local authority function. The director of social services must support effective partnership working and ensure safeguarding duties are effectively discharged collaboratively by Safeguarding Boards. These include in relation to:
 - Contributing to the review and development of policies and procedures to safeguard children and adults at risk;
 - Raising awareness of abuse, neglect and harm in a Board's area;
 - Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of local safeguarding measures;
 - Undertaking and ensuring lessons are learnt from Child Practice Reviews and Adult Practice Reviews;
 - Disseminating information about safeguarding best practice and learning;
 - Ensure practitioners across all safeguarding partners are receiving or have access to appropriate safeguarding training; and
 - Ensuring there are effective, understood and publicised arrangements for the reporting of children and adults suspected of being at risk of abuse or neglect.

Whilst every employee has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults, the Chief Officer, Social Services, is the Senior Officer in the Council with the final and indivisible accountability for this.

4.5 Chief Officer, Education and Youth

The Chief Officer, Education and Youth, is jointly responsible for chairing the Corporate Safeguarding Panel alongside the Chief Officer, Social Services.

Key tasks of the Chief Officer- Education and Youth include working to:

- improve the well-being of children and young people in the area;
- safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;
- ensure effective working between Public Service Board partners;
- promote strategic change for children and young people in the area;
- create a collaborative culture for decision making and improving performance; and
- promote the values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4.6 Designated Safeguarding Lead within each Portfolio

Every Portfolio within the Council will be required to nominate a "Designated Safeguarding Lead" who will be responsible for:

- being familiar with national safeguarding legislation (such as Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004); the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy; the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and the Policy and Procedure for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

- representing their Service on the Council’s Corporate Safeguarding Panel and contributing to the business of the Panel as required.
- attending the relevant training and development activities for “Designated Safeguarding Leads”.
- ensuring all staff within their area have had the relevant information / training;
- ensuring that safeguarding remains a ‘live’ issue within the service.
- co-ordinating a service wide assessment and audit of safeguarding practice and processes.
- keeping abreast with key developments within national, regional and local fora that have a safeguarding element e.g. North Wales Safeguarding Board activities and developments.
- raising relevant issues at the Corporate Safeguarding Panel.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for each Portfolio are as follows:

Portfolio	Contact
Community and Enterprise	Katie Clubb
Corporate Services	Fiona Mocko/Karen Armstrong
Education and Youth	Ian Budd/Claire Sinnott/Claire Homard
Organisational Change 1	Kate Leonard
Organisational Change 2	Gill Chapman
People and Resources	Sharon Carney
Planning and Environment	Sián Jones
Social Services	Neil Ayling/Ruth Hale/Jane Davies/Jayne Belton
Streetscene	Kate Wilby

4.7. Chief Officers

4.7.1 All Chief Officers, through their Management Teams, will be jointly responsible for ensuring that all the statutory requirements in terms of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults receive due consideration. This includes the quality, content and frequency of training provided and maintaining sufficient employee training records.

4.7.2 All Chief Officers must ensure that their employees are appropriately checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedures and that employees conform to the DBS policy and guidelines for Safeguarding Children and Adults. All Chief Officers must ensure that records are kept of every check that is made by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

4.7.3. All Chief Officers are will ensure that employees are aware of this policy and receive appropriate training.

4.8 Line Managers

Every Line Manager is responsible for ensuring that the employees for which they are responsible receive the training which they need, proportionate to their responsibilities. A Training Strategy will be prepared setting out which employees should receive safeguarding training and to what level. A priority will be the training of Designated Safeguarding Lead in each Portfolio.

4.9 Employees and Volunteers

All employees and volunteers are responsible for undertaking their duties in a manner which safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and adults. They must also act in a way which protects them against false allegations of abuse as far as possible and in accordance with this policy. They must bring issues of concern regarding the safety and welfare of children and adults to their manager who will notify Social Services. It is not an individual's responsibility to decide whether a person has been abused or not- it is the responsibility of Social Services to co-ordinate investigations.

4.10 Contractors, Sub-contractors or other Organisations funded by or on behalf of Flintshire County Council

Contractors, sub-contractors or other organisations funded by or on behalf of the Council are responsible for arranging checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Independent Safeguarding Authority. They are also responsible for ensuring that their employees comply with regulatory and contractual arrangements relating to safeguarding children and adults. Some organisations are also required to undertake an annual self-assessment of safeguarding arrangements, and to report outcomes, as part of contract monitoring arrangements. It is expected that this will apply to more organisations over time. Contractors are also responsible for informing relevant managers of the Council about any concerns they may have and to refer protection issues.

4.11 A copy of "Signs of Abuse and Modern Slavery" is attached in Appendix 2 and the "Code of Conduct and Safe Working Practices" at Appendix 3.

5.0. ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS

5.1 It is a requirement that every councillor attends training on safeguarding children and adults. A register will be kept of those attending and this will be reported as part of the performance monitoring arrangements co-ordinated by the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. The training will raise awareness amongst Flintshire councillors of this policy and guidelines and increase their understanding of the safeguarding procedures which exist within the Council and ensure that they recognise signs of abuse and know how to refer concerns to Social Services.

5.2 The Cabinet Member for Social Service and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management will be standing members of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel.

5.3 Members of the Corporate Resources and Overview Scrutiny Committee will receive information regarding the work of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel through the Annual Report. This will provide an opportunity for Members to scrutinise and challenge the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. Members of the Scrutiny Committee will receive information regarding the work programme of the Corporate Panel, the progress against this work programme and the main messages stemming from the performance management arrangements. The observations of the Scrutiny Committee will steer and influence the priorities of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel's work programme.

5.4 A copy of the "Good Practice Guidelines for Councillors- Safe Contact with Children and Vulnerable Adults" is in Appendix 4.

6.0. THE REFERRAL PROCESS

6.1. Recognition and Referral

Suspicion about abuse may take the form of 'concerns' rather than 'known facts'. Safeguarding concerns can arise in many different contexts, including when they are already known to Social Services. While concerns will not necessarily trigger an investigation, they help to build up a picture, along with concerns from other sources, which may indicate that they may be suffering harm.

6.2 Allegations of potential abuse against a colleague, carer, volunteer, agency or any other individual must be reported to Social Services. Employees/councillors with concerns regarding the safety of an individual, or the behaviour of a colleague towards children or an adult or who receive allegations of potential abuse against a colleague, carer, volunteer, agency should inform their manager who will notify Social Services. Councillors should report concerns direct to Social Services.

6.3 Concerns should be shared with Social Services as soon as a problem, suspicion or concern about a child or adult becomes apparent, and certainly within 24 hours. This will ensure the risks are managed and appropriate action is considered. It is not an option to 'wait and see' or to dismiss the concern as not relevant. Failure to report suspicions / allegations of harm or abuse in a timely or appropriate manner will be treated seriously and may be investigated in accordance with the Council's disciplinary policy. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people, is fundamental to good practice in safeguarding children and adults.

6.4 Social Services contact details:

Children- During office hours contact Social Services on 01352 701000
Outside of office hours, please telephone the Duty Social Worker on: 0845 0533116

Adults - During office hours contact Social Services on 01352 803444
or contact the Police directly if it is believed that a crime has been committed.

Outside of office hours contact the Police on 101.

Contact the police directly if it is believed that a crime has been committed.

6.5 Social Services will follow their own internal procedures on receipt of a referral to ensure that the right agencies and people investigate the abuse and that the adult or child is safe.

6.6 Employees must **not**

- investigate or ask leading questions
- agree to keep it a secret or promise confidentiality- but should give assurances that information will be shared on a need to know basis only so that the matter can be investigated in order to keep others children/adults safe
- touch or clear away evidence
- make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- contact the alleged abuser
- talk to other employees, councillors, friends or service users about the information that has been shared with you.

The Police must be contacted immediately if the child or adult is in danger.

Flow chart

Alert



Report concerns of abuse or neglect immediately to manager
(unless you suspect they are implicated, in this case report to their senior manager).



Manager should report to Social Services
(If an adult or child is in danger the police should be contacted)



Social Services will co-ordinate investigations and ensure adult or child is safe



Social Services will feedback the outcome of the investigation to the manager and initial alerter

7.0. COMMUNICATION

7.1 The Corporate Safeguarding Panel will develop an annual communication plan to raise awareness and understanding of safeguarding both internally and externally to ensure employees recognise the signs and know how to report concerns. Key safeguarding messages will be disseminated to the workforce following meetings of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel.

7.2 This policy will be cascaded widely to all employees and relevant partners.

8.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 Corporate Safeguarding Panel

The purpose of the Safeguarding Panel is to

- ensure that “Safeguarding” is everybody’s business in every Service within the Council working on the premise that “Safeguarding” is a wider concept than the protection of children and adults and deals with the promotion of:
 - Physical, emotional and mental health;
 - Protection from harm and neglect;
 - Education, training and leisure;
 - Contribution to society
 - Social and economic well-being.
- ensure that the Council has in place, and is operating, effective management and assurance processes and controls for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and fulfils its duties corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.
- consider matters referred to the Panel within its terms of reference and to drive forward improvements in safeguarding.

The full Terms of Reference for the Corporate Safeguarding Panel is in Appendix 5.

8.2 This Panel will receive information regarding the working practices and procedures of every Service in the Council, providing assurance that the Services are meeting their duties in accordance with the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines. In addition, the Panel will receive information regarding the performance management arrangements of every Service, to show that they are discharging their duties in a manner which safeguards children and adults.

8.3 The Corporate Safeguarding Panel will report to Cabinet on an annual basis. Every Cabinet Member will receive assurance from the Panel, that a clear work programme is in place and that the Council’s policies and procedures are robust in the safeguarding field. In the Annual Report, there will also be an opportunity for the Corporate Safeguarding Panel to highlight any obstacles or concerns they may have in terms of the response or performance of any Portfolio in the Council. Any lessons from Adults/ Child Practice Reviews will also be identified to Cabinet as part of the

Annual Report. Safeguarding will also be included within quarterly Improvement Plan reports.

8.4 The Chief Officer Team will also receive the annual report, with more frequent reporting as and when required. This provides assurance to the Chief Executive that safeguarding is receiving its due attention within the Council.

8.5 The Panel complements the role of the Regional Adult/ Children Safeguarding Children Board. These focus on ensuring that robust multi-agency arrangements are in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and that key partners have appropriate safeguarding systems in place. The role of the Flintshire Corporate Safeguarding Panel is to ensure effective oversight of safeguarding across the wide range of services which the Council provides and commissions.

9.0. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEWING

9.1. The Corporate Safeguarding Panel Annual Report will draw attention to the Council's performance in complying with the Corporate Policy and Guidelines. The Annual Report will be submitted to the Chief Officer Team, the Cabinet and to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In addition, on behalf of the Council as a whole, the Safeguarding Panel will report to the Regional Safeguarding Board as part of requirements under section 28 of the Children Act 2004.

9.2. It is proposed to submit the Annual Report every June. Specific attention will be given initially to the following Performance Indicators. It is anticipated that this dataset will evolve over time to better capture the breadth of safeguarding activity:

- % of employees receiving safeguarding training as they receive induction
- % of councillors attending safeguarding training
- Referral rates from services other than Social Services
- The percentage of adult protection Referrals completed where the risk has been managed – 16/17 Target = 98-100%
- % of reviews of children on the Child Protection register due in the year that were carried out within the statutory timescales – 16/17 Target = 98%
- % of initial child protection conferences that were due in the year and were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion – 16/17 target = not set
- Number of referrals from non- specialist teams

9.3. The Corporate Safeguarding Panel will undertake half yearly monitoring and review of relevant performance indicators. The Regional Safeguarding Children Board already receives core data on a regular basis. Any concerns regarding underperformance/slippage will be a potential "line of enquiry" in service challenges and will require a clear action plan to respond to the concerns.

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed every three years or if any amendments occur in legislation or in consideration of changes in working practices which may stem from incidents or allegations.

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APPENDIX 1

Children Act 1989 and 2004 - places a statutory duty on a range of organisations to make arrangements to ensure that their functions, and services provided on their behalf, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

[Working Together under the Children Act 2004](#)

The Welsh Assembly Government's "Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004" provides a framework for Education and Youth Services' safeguarding work and a basis for inter-agency and multi-disciplinary co-operation in referral, assessment, care planning, intervention and review processes. Education and Youth Services must also be compliant with:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006: Controlled Activities
- All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008;
- National Assembly for Wales Circular 34/02 Child Protection: preventing unsuitable people from working with children and young people in the education service; and
- Safeguarding Children in Education: WAG circular 05/08.

All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 - help safeguard children and promote their welfare

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 - identifies that children and adults may be vulnerable to ideologies that place them, their families and the general public in danger should they be enticed to act upon extremist beliefs. Identifying individuals at risk and determining what action is necessary to support them is complemented by the 'Channel' multi-agency intervention process which deters continued involvement.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 –this Act places a duty on the Council to ensure that every reasonable step is taken to protect adults and prevent crime and disorder when it undertakes its functions.

Education Act 2002- Statutory Guidance Keeping People Safe in Schools, sets out the legal duties that must be followed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18 in schools and colleges.

Equality Act 2010- Protects people from discrimination in employment and wider society. The Act places a duty on public bodies to:

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

European Convention Rights of the Child- is an international treaty to meet the needs of children, the rights in the treaty include protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation

Human Rights Act 1998- sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled they include Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment and Freedom from slavery and forced labour. The Act places legal duties on public authorities to respect human rights in their decisions and actions, they include right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman way.

Licensing Act 2003 - The Act sets out four licensing objectives which must be taken into account when a local authority carries out its functions. They are:

1. the prevention of crime and disorder,
2. public safety,
3. prevention of public nuisance, and
4. the protection of children from harm

Modern Slavery Act 2015 aims to eradicate modern slavery, which encompasses human trafficking, slavery, forced labour and servitude.

Social Services and Well Being Act 2014 introduces a strengthened, robust and effective partnership approach to safeguarding. It requires local authorities to arrange preventative services, including in relation to contributing towards preventing people from suffering abuse or neglect. Each professional and organisation must do everything they can, to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from abuse. The Act includes Statutory Guidance [Working together to Safeguard people](#)

Violence Against Women and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 aims to improve

- (a) arrangements for the prevention of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- (b) arrangements for the protection of victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- (c) support for people affected by gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

APPENDIX 2

Signs of Abuse and Modern Slavery

Children in Need

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly, by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them; or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

There are four types of child abuse. They are defined in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and Welsh Government guidance *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004* as follows:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- cigarette burns
- human bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds, with upward splash marks
- multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

N.B. Most children will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough-and-tumble of daily life. Injuries should always be interpreted in light of the child's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- depression or withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

Sexual Abuse

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. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital area
- bruising or bleeding near genital area
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia

- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

Neglect

Neglect is 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 involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive, but only serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too, to remember that many children may exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in the family or relationship problems between parents/carers. In assessing whether indicators are related to abuse or not, Social Services will always want to understand them in relation to the child's development and context.

Adults in Need of Protection

Categories of Abuse

There are many ways in which a vulnerable person may be abused. It is not unusual for an abused adult to suffer more than one kind of abuse. Accordingly, the impact of abuse and its seriousness for the individual must be evaluated in every case.

In safe Hands identifies five main categories of abuse:

Physical
Sexual
Financial
Emotional or Physiological
Neglect

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the unnecessary infliction of any physical pain, suffering or injury by a person who has responsibility, charge, care or custody of, or who stands in a position of or expectation of trust to, a vulnerable person. Physical abuse may also be perpetrated by on vulnerable adult upon another.

Sexual Abuse

Adult sexual abuse refers to the direct or indirect involvement of a vulnerable adult in sexual activity to which they are unwilling or unable to give informed consent, or which they do not fully comprehend, or which violates the social taboos of family roles, such as incest. Sexual abuse may also be perpetrated by one vulnerable adult upon another.

Any sexual activity that is not freely consenting is criminal. Where there is an abuse of trust, sexual activity may appear to be with consent, but is unacceptable because of the differences in power and influence between the people involved. Sexual abuse includes the involvement in prostitution or 'sex trafficking' of adults at risk.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse is the infliction of mental suffering by a person in a position or expectation of trust upon a vulnerable person. Emotional / psychological abuse may also be perpetrated by one vulnerable adult upon another.

Emotional and psychological abuse includes bullying, which is typically deliberate, hurtful behaviour repeated over time, which can include physical abuse but often is verbal (name-calling and threats). It can undermine self-confidence, may cause the victim to become more isolated and sometimes leads to self-harm.

Emotional and psychological abuse, including **bullying and harassment**, can be very subtle, for example taking the form of ignoring or excluding the victim. Such abuse may be direct, such as by not responding to the person, or indirect, such as by giving unfair preference to another person.

Emotional and psychological abuse may be cumulative, possibly building up over months or even years. It may involve one or more person and may be part of the culture within any institution, organisation or service.

Another example of psychological abuse is when a vulnerable adult is incited, induced or exploited to commit a crime or abuse. Examples of this include inciting to steal, to perform acts of violence and commit sexual crimes. There have also been examples of vulnerable adults being exploited to commit acts of radical extremism. In determining whether emotional and psychological abuse has taken place, it is the impact on the vulnerable adult that counts. Individual actions may not seem significant and may even be a one-off, but if they are part of a wider pattern of abuse experienced by the vulnerable adult the impact on them may be significant. Therefore, the wider context in which action is experienced by the vulnerable adult must always be considered in determining whether or not abuse has occurred.

Financial or Material Abuse

Financial or material abuse is any theft or misuse of a person's money, property or resources by a person in a position of, or expectation of, trust to a vulnerable person. Common forms of financial abuse are misuse by others of a vulnerable adult's state benefits or undue pressure to change wills. Financial / material abuse may also be perpetrated by one vulnerable adult upon another.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure of any person for whom there is an expectation of trust and /or the responsibility, charge, care or custody of a vulnerable person to provide that degree of care which a reasonable person in a like position would provide.

Neglect may be criminal or non-criminal. It may also be as a result of intentional or non-intentional acts or omissions.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. Traffickers and slave drivers coerce, deceive and force individuals against their will into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. Victims may be sexually exploited, forced to work for little or no pay or forced to commit criminal activities against their will. Victims are often pressured into debt-bondage and are likely to be fearful of those who exploit them, who will often threaten and abuse victims and their families. All of these factors make it very difficult for victims to escape. There is no typical victim of slavery – victims can be men, women or children of all ages and nationalities. Many victims are foreign nationals who are brought to the UK specifically so they can be abused and exploited for the benefit of others. Some are tricked into believing they are simply paying others to facilitate their journey to the UK, or that they are being smuggled here. Many often do not find out that they are destined for a life of abuse and servitude until after they arrive.

Not all victims of modern slavery are trafficked across the border. We know that the internal trafficking of victims to other parts of the country takes place, and other forms of modern slavery take place that involve no movement of the victim at all

Types of slavery include:

Child trafficking Young people (under 18) are moved either internationally or domestically so they can be exploited.

Forced labour/debt bondage Victims are forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to. Low wages and increased debts mean not only that they cannot ever hope to pay off the loan, but the debt may be passed down to their children.

Forced Labour Victims are forced to work against their will, often working very long hours for little or no pay in dire conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence to them or their families. It can happen in many sectors of our economy, from mining to tarmacking, hospitality and food packaging.

Sexual exploitation Victims are forced to perform non-consensual or abusive sexual acts against their will, such as prostitution, escort work and pornography.

Whilst women and children make up the majority of victims, men can also be affected. Adults are coerced often under the threat of force, or another penalty.

Criminal exploitation Often controlled and maltreated, victims are forced into crimes such as cannabis cultivation or pick pocketing against their will.

Domestic servitude Victims are forced to carry out housework and domestic chores in private households with little or no pay, restricted movement, very limited or no free time and minimal privacy often sleeping where they work. As it takes place in private households it is a deeply hidden form of exploitation.

Signs and symptoms

- Victims may show signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt, or appear withdrawn.
- Victims may rarely be allowed to travel on their own, seem under the control, influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work.
- Victims may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation, and / or living and working at the same address.
- Victims may have no identification documents, have few personal possessions and always wear the same clothes day in day out. What clothes they do wear may not be suitable for their work.
- Victims have little opportunity to move freely and may have had their travel documents retained, e.g. passports.
- They may be dropped off / collected for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night.
- Victims may avoid eye contact, appear frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers and fear law enforcers for many reasons, such as not knowing who to trust or where to get help, fear of deportation, fear of violence to them or their family.

APPENDIX 3

CODE OF CONDUCT AND SAFE WORKING PRACTICES

1. This code of conduct is a statement and is a description of the professional standards of practice that are required from all Council employees when undertaking their day-to-day duties.

2. The code of conduct reflects current practice and it is expected that employees can identify the following standards as those which they aim to emulate daily.

3. It is anticipated that this code of conduct provides a better understanding for members of the public using Council services of what is expected of the Council's staff and the manner in which the employer supports its employees to undertake work effectively and in a manner respectful of the needs of individuals.

4. Every employee should give a good example in terms of behaviour to ensure that children and adults are protected and safeguarded. The following guidelines provide details of examples of good practice which must be used, along with specific codes of conduct (e.g. Flintshire County Council codes of conduct), which could be relevant to roles, activities or specific events.

- You should always be open for the public to scrutinise you when working with children and adults and you should avoid situations where a councillor, employee, volunteer or service provider is with a child or children or vulnerable adult alone without anyone else to observe him or her.
- You should follow the required process for reporting incidents, e.g. an incident of health and safety importance.
- Children and adults have a right to privacy, equality, respect and dignity and a safe and positive environment.
- councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers must give priority to the welfare and safety of the child or adult before concerns for performance.
- If a child or adult arrives at an activity or service exhibiting signs or symptoms which cause you concern, you must act appropriately and follow the procedures outlined in the policy.
- Be aware of the need to ensure safe practices when meeting children and adults.

YOU SHOULD

- Work in accordance with this safeguarding policy. If in doubt, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead in your Portfolio.
- Work in an open environment (e.g. you should avoid private situations or those which cannot be observed and encourage an open environment, i.e. no secrets); Treat every child and adult fairly with respect and dignity.
- Put the welfare of each child and adult first.
- Ensure a safe and appropriate distance with participants (e.g. it is not appropriate to have a close relationship with a child or an adult).
- Create an equal relationship based on trust which empowers children and adults to share in the decision making process.
- Get the most current information about training and safeguarding issues.

- Be an excellent example – this includes not smoking, drinking alcohol or swearing in the company of children and adults.
- Make sure that photographic or filming equipment is used appropriately and a parent or carer of the participants has given their permission.
- Keep a record in writing of any injury which is sustained, along with any treatment administered in accordance with Council policy.
- Report any concerns immediately to your manager or to their manager if allegations have been made against him/her.

YOU SHOULD NOT

- Touch or allow inappropriate touching in any way, use force or inappropriate language or make suggestive sexual comments.
- Make a child cry as a means of controlling him / her, or use any behaviour control techniques not authorised by the Council's policy and procedures.
- Ignore allegations made by a child or adult. All allegations or disclosures of abuse by a child or vulnerable adult should be reported immediately to Social Services or the Police.
- Undertake tasks of a personal nature for children or adults which they could do for themselves.
- Invite or permit children or an adult to come to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Enter areas that have been specifically set-aside for the other sex.
- Use the internet, an electronic device or a telephone to access child pornography sites.
- Investigate reports of abuse.
- Promise to keep secrets or confidentiality.
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Contact alleged abusers.
- Spread confidential information concerning individual cases to anyone unless through recognised reporting procedures.

5. An employee who breaches any condition of the above code of conduct will face an investigation and could face disciplinary steps which could lead to dismissal and the possibility of a criminal investigation if there is evidence of illegal activity.

6. Volunteer services that breach the code of conduct will be suspended immediately. If there is evidence of illegal activity, the name of the volunteer will be drawn to the attention of the relevant authorities and he /she could face a criminal investigation.

APPENDIX 4 Good Practice Guidelines for Councillors – Safe Contact with Children and Vulnerable Adults

1. These guidelines are a statement and description of the standards of conduct expected from all members of the Council when having contact with children or vulnerable adults *in their office as a councillor.
2. The guidelines are supplementary to, and do not replace, the Members' Code of Conduct. The Members' Code of Conduct remains relevant whenever a member acts in his / her role as elected member, and also at any time in relation to not bringing the office or the Council into disrepute.
3. Some of the requirements of the Code are:-
 - To show respect to others and be mindful of them
 - To address equal opportunity for everyone, regardless of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion
 - Not to disclose confidential information without consent
 - Not to behave in a manner which would bring your office or the Council into disrepute
 - To report any behaviour likely to be criminal by another member or employee to the appropriate authority
 - Not to use your position inappropriately to cause someone advantage or disadvantage.
4. Members may come into contact with children and vulnerable adults through their position on a committee or working group, or through their role as local member. They may also come into contact with them when representing the Council on external bodies or taking part in events arranged by the Council. Every member of the Council has a corporate parent responsibility for looked after children, and every member also has a responsibility to follow good practice for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
5. The aim of these guidelines is to reflect current practice and it is expected that members identify the following standards as those which they aim to reach daily.
6. It is expected that these guidelines give a better understanding to members of the public of what is expected by councillors when they come into contact with them.
7. Every councillor should give a good example in terms of behaviour to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected and safeguarded. The guidelines below give details of examples of good practice that must be used

YOU SHOULD

- Become familiar with the Council's safeguarding policies and guidelines and the current procedures for reporting incidents etc.
- Attend training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Reporting concerns or allegations immediately to Social Services.
- Be open to public scrutiny at all times when working with children and young people, and try and avoid situations where you are alone with a child or children or vulnerable adult, with nobody to observe you.

- Respect children and adults' right to privacy, equality, respect and dignity and a safe and positive environment.
- Place the child or adult's welfare and safety above other considerations.
- Create an equal relationship based on trust which empowers children and adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Be an excellent example for children and vulnerable adults.

YOU SHOULD NOT

- Touch or allow inappropriate touching in any way, use force or inappropriate language or make suggestive sexual comments.
- Ignore allegations made by a child or adult; all allegations or disclosures of abuse by a child or adult should be reported immediately to Social Services of the Police.
- Invite or allow children or a vulnerable adult to come to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Enter areas in the Council's buildings that have been specifically allocated for the opposite sex.
- Use the internet, electronic device or telephone to access child pornography sites.
- Spread confidential information concerning individual cases to anyone unless through recognised reporting procedures.
- Investigate allegations of abuse.
- Contact the alleged abuser.

APPENDIX 5

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

1.1 To ensure that “Safeguarding” is everybody’s business in every Service within the Council working on the premise that “Safeguarding” is a wider concept than the protection of children and adults and deals with the promotion of:

- Physical, emotional and mental health;
- Protection from harm and neglect;
- Education, training and leisure;
- Contribution to society
- Social and economic well-being.

1.2 To ensure that the Council has in place, and is operating, effective management and assurance processes and controls for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and fulfils its duties corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.

1.3 To consider matters referred to the Panel within its terms of reference and to drive forward improvements in safeguarding.

2. Responsibilities of the Panel

2.1 To take an overview of the Council’s (and partner agencies) responsibilities towards safeguarding and examine ways in which the Council as a whole and partner agencies can secure the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults in the area.

2.2 To ensure that the Council and its departments are fully compliant with legislation and policy pertaining to safeguarding.

2.3 To ensure there are good joint working arrangements between Council departments and partner agencies, including working arrangements with the North Wales Safeguarding Boards

2.4 To monitor and scrutinise the performance of safeguarding activities across the Council supporting good practice and challenging and holding to account poor practice

2.5 To ensure that positive practices are maintained, lessons are learnt and changes made in the areas that require improvements.

2.6 To develop and oversee implementation of a Council wide safeguarding policy.

2.7 To develop and oversee implementation of a corporate Safeguarding Workforce Development Strategy and Training Plan

2.8 To develop and oversee implementation of an annual work programme for the Panel

2.9 To maintain a strategic overview of all developments, plans, policies and strategies for safeguarding and to make appropriate recommendations for action.

2.10 To produce an annual safeguarding report (that will link with the requirements for an annual report through the North Wales Safeguarding Board)

2.11 To ensure safe recruitment processes are implemented and adhered to across the Council

2.12 To ensure that thematic safeguarding issues are actively addressed across the Council e.g. human trafficking/ modern slavery/ child sexual exploitation.

2.13 To ensure Members are regularly updated on issues relating to safeguarding practice

3. Membership

3.1 Membership of the group will include:

- Chief Officer Social Services (Chair)
- Chief Officer Education and Youth (Vice Chair)
- Senior Manager for Safeguarding in Social Services
- Designated Safeguarding Leads from each Council Portfolio (see Appendix 1)
- Human Resources Service representative
- Corporate Services
- Elected member

3.2 In exceptional circumstances a Portfolio representative must be identified to attend a meeting if the named representative is unable to attend.

3.3 Additional members can be co-opted onto the Panel with the approval of the Chair.

3.4 According to the agenda individuals that are not part of the Panel may be invited to attend meetings to discuss and/or present key items.

4. Governance Arrangements

4.1 The group will meet on a quarterly basis (or more frequently if required)

4.2 Business support will be provided through Corporate Services

4.3 Designated Safeguarding Leads will be responsible for disseminating and obtaining information back into their service areas and will be accountable for the completion of actions and tasks attributed to their service area.

4.4 The corporate safeguarding group will report key risks, issues and performance to the Chief Officer Team on a quarterly basis and will act as the corporate conduit to the North Wales Safeguarding Boards for adults and children's.

4.5 Reporting to Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet

- Corporate Resources and Overview Scrutiny AND Cabinet will receive information regarding the work of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel through an Annual Safeguarding report. This will provide an opportunity for Members to scrutinise and challenge
- Reports detailing the specific work within individual Portfolios will be reported through the relevant Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the agreed forward work programme.
- Members of the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet will receive information regarding the work programme of the Corporate Safeguarding Group, the progress against this work programme and the main messages stemming from the performance management and quality assurance arrangements;
- The observations of the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet will be considered when determining the priorities of the Panel's future work programmes.