

PEWSEY PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is to provide a framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy aims to ensure that:

- All children, young people and vulnerable adults are safe and protected from harm;
- Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable children, young people and adults to feel safe and adopt safe practices; and
- Everyone, including Councillors, council staff, contractors are aware of the expected behaviours and the organisation's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Policy Statement

This policy develops procedures and good practice within the council to ensure that each person can demonstrate that there is an understanding of the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The council deplores the sexual exploitation of children and will not tolerate failure at any level to prevent harm, support victims and bring offenders to justice.

This policy has been developed in line with government legislation, publication and guidance.

Pewsey Parish Council takes seriously its responsibility under the current legislation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults; and to work together with other agencies to ensure that there are adequate arrangements within the council to identify and support those who are suffering harm. Where someone is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action will be taken to protect that person.

The council has a responsibility to make sure that it has an effective safeguarding policy and procedures in place and monitors that the council complies with them.

Pewsey Parish Council recognises that for this policy to be effective, it is essential that everyone working in and for the council has an understanding of what safeguarding is, know that 'safeguarding is everybody's responsibility', know how to access safeguarding information, know of any possible contribution that they may be required to make to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and how to access further advice, support or services.

Individual responsibilities

The council recognises that safeguarding is not just about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from deliberate harm. It also relates to health and safety; meeting the needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults with medical conditions; providing first aid; visits organised or sponsored by the council; internet or e-safety; appropriate arrangements to ensure security, taking into account the local context.

Additionally, it is recognised that safeguarding can involve a range of potential issues such as: bullying, including cyberbullying (by text message, on social networking sites, and so on), peer on peer and prejudice-based bullying; racist and homophobic or transphobic abuse; sexting; substance misuse; issues which may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and youth violence and other particular issues affecting children including domestic violence, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, extremist behaviour and radicalisation, forced marriage and modern slavery.

Everyone associated with the council maintains an attitude of 'it can happen here' and are aware of the signs and indicators of abuse.

Everyone has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Everyone has a responsibility to make themselves aware of opportunities to receive appropriate training in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.

Everyone knows how to respond to someone who discloses abuse, or for whom they have a concern, and the procedure to be followed in appropriately sharing a concern of possible abuse or a disclosure of abuse.

All residents are made aware of the council's responsibilities with regard to safeguarding through publication of the safeguarding policy.

When services are delivered by a third party or agency, the council will follow the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and check that the person presenting themselves is the same person on whom appropriate checks have been made. The council will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with and in the presence of children at any time. Community groups organising activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults are aware of and understand the need for compliance with the council's safeguarding procedures.

Should the council dismiss or remove someone because they have harmed a child or pose a risk of harm to a child or would have done so if they had not left, they will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any appropriate professional or regulatory body.

This safeguarding policy and procedure will be reviewed and updated annually.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, the council will:

- stay calm and listen carefully;
- reassure the person that s/he has done the right thing in telling you;
- not investigate or ask leading questions;
- let the person know that s/he will need to tell the relevant authorities;
- not promise to keep what they have been told a secret;
- inform the relevant authorities as soon as possible; and
- make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which will be signed, and dated.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information sharing is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. A key factor identified in many serious case reviews (SCRs) has been a failure by practitioners to record information, to share it to understand its significance and then take appropriate action.

- The council recognises that all matters relating to protection are confidential;
- The council will disclose personal information about a child, young person or vulnerable adult on a need to know basis only;
- Everyone is aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children, a young person or vulnerable adult;
- Everyone is aware that they cannot promise to keep secrets which might compromise the safety or well-being of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or that of another; and
- The council will always undertake to share its concerns with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), unless to do so could put the child, young person or vulnerable adult at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, the council will consult with the MASH.

Managing Allegations against individuals who work for us

The council is aware of the possibility of allegations being made against someone who works for the council, or volunteers that are working with or may come into contact with children, young persons or vulnerable adults. They can be made by children, young persons or vulnerable adults or other concerned adults.

Everyone in the council and volunteers have been made aware of the process to be followed if such an allegation is made.

In such circumstances the council will:

- report the matter to the MASH
- consider the safeguarding arrangements of the child, young person or vulnerable adult to ensure they are not in contact with the alleged abuser;
- consider the rights of the individual concerned for a fair and equal process of investigation;

- ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedure is followed, including whether suspending that person from work or volunteering for the council until the outcome of any investigation is deemed necessary;
- advise the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any other appropriate regulatory or professional body where the individual has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations founded or would have been if they have resigned.

Whistleblowing

The council recognises that a child, young person or vulnerable adult cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where the council fails to do so.

Everyone is aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude and actions of colleagues where these are inappropriate or unsuitable.

Supporting Staff and volunteers

Everyone will be advised on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour - such matters form part of our staff and volunteer induction and they have access to support and guidance when required or requested.

The council recognises that staff and volunteers working for the council who have become involved in the case of a child, young person or vulnerable adult who has suffered harm, or appears likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

The council supports this by providing an opportunity for them to discuss their anxieties with an appropriate person.

Prevention

The council recognises that it can play a significant part in the prevention of harm to a children, young person or vulnerable adult by providing them with effective lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. The council will support children, young people or vulnerable adults by:

- Establishing and maintaining an ethos, understood by everyone, which enables children, young people or vulnerable adults to feel secure and encourages them to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment ensuring that all children, young people or vulnerable adults know that there is someone within the council whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children and adults.
- Recognising that children, young people or vulnerable adults come from a variety of different cultural backgrounds. The council has developed policies to ensure that we embrace diversity in religion and faith, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

Training

Everyone has been provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy as part of the council's induction process.

Everyone will have access to appropriate safeguarding training which is regularly updated in order to keep it updated in line with local and national guidance/legislation.

Policy Review

The council is responsible for ensuring the regular review of this policy and any other policies that are relevant to safeguarding.