



Whitland Town Council child and vulnerable adult protection policy

1. Introduction

As an organisation where Councillors, staff and volunteers occasionally work with children or vulnerable adults, Whitland Town Council councillors, staff, and volunteers have both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure the highest possible standard of care for those children.

Children or vulnerable adults may be abused regardless of their age, racial origin, social class, gender, culture, religious belief, disability or sexual identity. Most abuse is committed by those who are known to the individual and who are trusted by them. This can be from within or outside the family. Whitland Town Council is committed to providing a safe environment for all and to this end, this policy has been compiled. External Contractors, working on behalf of the Council, will be asked to adopt a suitable and relevant policy if their work brings them into contact with such individuals. The purpose of the policy is to safeguard all individuals who come into contact with representatives of the Council and to facilitate the best possible professional practice from the Council, its staff, contractors and volunteers. For the purpose of this policy “a child” means anyone under the age of 18. For the purpose of this policy a ‘vulnerable adult’ means any person who for reasons of physical or mental disability or trauma might be considered *especially* vulnerable at that time. This policy does not apply to employees of the Council who are under the age of 18. Such employees are covered by employment policies and legislation.

For the purposes of this policy ‘vulnerable person’ covers both a child and a vulnerable adult equally.

2. Policy statement

The Council is committed to ensuring that any vulnerable person is protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Council. We will endeavour to achieve this by:-

- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are effectively trained and supervised.
- Ensuring that our councillors, staff and volunteers, that work directly with children, undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check, where permitted by law.
- Sharing information about the protection of vulnerable people and good practice with partner organisations, councillors, employees, volunteers, parents and carers.

Decisions on which employees/volunteers will be DBS checked will be taken by the Town Clerk, in compliance with relevant legislation. Decisions on which councillors will be DBS checked will be taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the councillor and the Chairman.

Policy Aims

This policy is provided as one of the various policies made that should be adhered to by all councillors and those employed by Whitland Town Council, whether paid or unpaid, who will have direct contact with children or vulnerable adults. The aims are:-

- To create a healthy and safe environment at any Council related activity or event.
- To ensure children and vulnerable adults are listened to, and kept safe from harm.
- To ensure councillors, staff and volunteers, who work with such individuals, are well informed, supported and enabled to provide the best possible practice.

Policy objectives

The objectives are:-

- To raise the level of awareness of councillors, staff and volunteers about child and vulnerable adult abuse and its various forms.
- To raise the level of awareness in councillors, staff and volunteers about what individuals are entitled to be protected from in their lives using the guidance provided.
- To develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

3. Employment

Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers

All applicants who will work with children in the course of their job will complete a disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service to ensure that there are no irregularities in their background which may give cause for concern. All new employees, whether paid or unpaid, will be provided with this policy and asked to sign to confirm that they will abide by it. Application forms are designed to ascertain as much information as possible, such as, but not limited to:-

- Past career, relevant interests, any gaps in employment and reasons for leaving, educational, national governing body, First aid qualifications and child protection training.
- At least one reference is taken up, and where relevant followed up by letter or telephone. References taken up will ascertain the person's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults if relevant.
- It is made clear that all information remains confidential.
- Personal identification will be confirmed by reference at least two of the following documents: valid passport, current driving licence, birth or marriage certificate, National Insurance number or utility bill.

Induction and Training.

The recruitment and selection process is followed up by relevant training:-

- Staff are made aware that child or vulnerable adult abuse can and does occur and that it could be perpetrated by colleagues, who are members of staff or volunteers within the Council.
- Staff are made aware that children and vulnerable adults may find it very difficult to talk about abuse. They need to be listened to, taken seriously, and have their concerns acted upon.

- Staff are made aware of what they need to do in response to any concerns they may have.
- Staff should inform their line manager if they feel they need any specific training regarding matters raised in this policy.

4. Good practice

It is possible to reduce situations where abuse may occur. The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working with children or vulnerable adults:-

- Always be publicly open when working with these individuals. Avoid any situations where you and an individual are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Wherever possible, do not leave children unattended, however this will depend on age and circumstances.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally.

No Councillor, volunteer or staff member should ever

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate contact
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature that the child or vulnerable adult can do for themselves.

Everyone should be aware that it is not good practice to:-

- Spend any time alone with children away from others. When talking to children on your own ensure you can always clearly be seen by others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take children or a vulnerable adult to your home or any other building or location where they will be alone with you.

If it is considered that any of these situations may occur, plans on how to ensure the child is safe and sound must be made and agreed with the Clerk and Chairman and may only be enacted with the knowledge of the parents or guardians. At least two other people must be in agreement before the situation happens.

5. If there are concerns or allegations:

It is important that all staff, elected members and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. It is not the place of any Officer of the Council or Councillor to investigate allegations. However, staff, elected members and volunteers do have a duty of care to the child or young person which means they must report any suspicions they may have.

It is the duty of any member, or council employee or volunteer to report any concerns about a child being subject to abuse, receive a disclosure or are aware of Councillors, or colleagues behaving in an inappropriate manner. All reports should be treated as confidential and with respect to the person raising the concern regardless of the outcome.

DECLARATION [to be signed and dated by the Councillor staff member or volunteer]

I understand that Whitland Town Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. As a councillor, employee or volunteer of the Council I appreciate that it is important that I have taken the time to thoroughly read the above protection policy. By all relevant individuals being made aware of the policy, the intention is to ensure that all councillors, employees and volunteers are pro-active in providing a safe environment for all individuals. Any disciplinary measures required as a result of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.

I have read and fully understood the Child and vulnerable adult protection policy and hereby declare that I will carry out my role in line with policy statements and procedures contained therein.

Signed Name

Date