

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm and abuse.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Abuse

- Abuse can be categorised into four types: emotional, sexual, physical and neglect.
- Abuse is a breach of someone's rights, and may be a single act or happen repeatedly over a period of time. Abuse may be deliberate, but may also be caused by neglect or ignorance. It can happen anywhere, including your home, or in a public place. In many cases, abuse is a criminal offence.

Legislative Background

Relevant legislation includes:

Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 among others. Further information can be found on the NSPCC web site, link at the end of this document.

Who has Responsibility for it?

- We all have an individual safeguarding responsibility
- Kent County Council is the Lead Authority for Safeguarding
- The government also requires other organisations to work in partnership with the KCC board
- Every reported incidence of abuse must be taken seriously and addressed with urgency

What has it got to do with my Local Council?

- Every Town and Parish Council also has a statutory duty to ensure the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- The safeguarding agenda reaches across all of the services of Town and Parish Councils and in a variety of ways.
- It applies to every organisation and individual (including volunteers, partners and contractors) that are involved in the work that own and Parish Councils do.
- This could be, for example, in looking after a play-space, running the village hall, providing a village event, and community and volunteer schemes.

Other reasons why safeguarding is a priority for Town and Parish Councils:

- Delegated or devolution of services from local authorities require commitment and arrangements for safeguarding;
- Adequate safeguarding policy & procedures are required by many grant giving bodies;
- There is a strong public expectation on public bodies to have effective and robust safeguarding arrangements in place;
- A Safeguarding policy is about protecting you too. It will provide Councillors and officers with advice and information to help ensure you don't put yourselves in situations where false allegations could be made against you.

Producing a Safeguarding Policy

As a Town or Parish Council, it is not your responsibility to investigate concerns but you should understand what your basic responsibilities are, how to recognise a potential situation and, if you have concerns or someone else raises them with you, how to deal with them.

A safeguarding or child protection policy is a statement that makes it clear what an organisation or group will do to keep children safe and discharge their statutory responsibilities.

It should:

- Include a statement setting out the organisation's commitment to protecting all children
- Say what the organisation will do to keep children safe and respond to concerns
- Tailor procedures to suit the needs of your organisation.
- Use words and phrases that will mean the most to the group or community.

- Involve people from different parts of the organisation to make sure the policy is relevant for everyone.

Reporting a Safeguarding Issue

Kent County Council have staff available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to talk to you about your worries.

During the day and in office hours

Concerned about an adult? Call **03000 41 61 61** (text relay 18001 03000 41 61 61) or email social.services@kent.gov.uk.

Concerned about a child? Call **03000 41 11 11** (text relay 18001 03000 41 11 11) or email social.services@kent.gov.uk.

Out of hours and in an emergency

If you need to contact us outside of normal office hours, for example during the night, call **03000 41 91 91**.

If you think someone is in immediate danger, the best thing to do is call 999 for the emergency services.

Tell us as much as you can. The more information you can give about what's happening and where it's happening, the better. Every report of abuse is taken seriously and all of them are investigated.

Don't assume that someone else will take responsibility. You could help to save someone's life. If you are worried, report it

Further Guidance

Further guidance can be found at the following web sites

Central Government:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people>

NSPCC

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/>