

Great Aycliffe Town Council



CHILD, YOUNG PERSON AND ADULT PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Child, Young Person and Adult Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy

Introduction

- 1 Every child has the right to grow up and develop to their full potential in a secure, safe environment, free from exploitation. Every adult has a right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- 2 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a general duty on every local authority:
 - To safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and
 - So far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.
- 3 The Town Council works hard to provide a safe environment for everyone to enjoy our facilities. As part of our commitment to that safe environment the Town Council acknowledges that we have a duty of care to the children, young people and vulnerable adults using our services and facilities.
- 4 The definition of children and young people for the purpose of this document will be deemed as anyone under the age of 18 years. Such children regardless of age, disability, culture, gender, language, racial origin or religious belief have the right to protection from abuse.
- 5 A vulnerable adult is defined as being in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect.

Policy Objectives

- 6 To seek to safeguard and promote the interests, feelings and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom the Town Council works.
- 7 To take all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, degrading treatment or discrimination and in doing so respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- 8 To require staff, volunteers and Members to adopt and abide by the Child, Young People and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

- Some children, young people and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of all vulnerable members of the public.

Responsibility

- 9 The Pre-School staff has a separate Child Protection Policy in line with their specific requirements. This policy applies to all other staff, councillors and volunteers in the remainder of the Council's facilities and services.
- 10 The Town Council is committed to a sound recruitment policy, provision of support, appropriate training and adequate supervision to all staff to enable them to work with parents, carers and other organisations to ensure that the needs and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults remains paramount.
- 11 Any group, organisation or agency working with the Town Council will be expected to have their own Safeguarding policies and must be willing to work within the guidelines of the Great Aycliffe Town Council's Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 12 The Pre-School Manager is the Safeguarding Officer for St Oswald's Pre-School, supported by the Deputy Manager who undertakes the role of Safeguarding Co-ordinator. The Town Clerk is the Safeguarding Officer for Great Aycliffe Town Council, its facilities and services.

Abuse – Children and Young People

- 13 Child Abuse takes many forms, the main types are:
 - Physical (e.g. hitting and kicking)
 - Verbal (e.g. name calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti and gestures)
 - Emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring)
 - Sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments)

It can include:

- A parent who pushes too hard
 - A coach who adopts a win at all costs philosophy
 - A player who intimidates inappropriately
 - An official who places unfair pressure on a person
- 14 The damage inflicted by child abuse and bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children and young people to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). There are a number of signs that may indicate that a child or young person is being abused or bullied:

- Behaviour changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotional up and down, a reluctance to go to school, training or sports club.
- A drop off in performance at school, or standard of play.
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bedwetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol.
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

Effects of Abuse

- 15 Children and young people at any age can be subjected to abuse of all the above forms. The effects of abuse can be so damaging that if not treated, they may follow an individual into adulthood. For example, adults who may have been abused as children may find it difficult to maintain a stable, trusting relationship, they may become involved in anti-social activities such as drug taking, prostitution, be emotionally unstable and there is a possibility they may abuse a child themselves in the future.
- 16 A number of studies have suggested that children and young people with various forms of disabilities are at increased risk of abuse to various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and an inability to protect themselves, this situation can be further aggravated by the child's inability to communicate the problem. Children and young people from ethnic minorities that experience racial discrimination and bullying may be equally powerless to protect themselves.
- 17 The misery caused by child abuse has a dramatic and often long term effect on the lives of the victims, it is in our power to reduce the possibility of such events within our facilities through vigilance, responsible actions and a commitment to protect the children we come into contact with.
- 18 Indications that a child or young person may have been abused include:-
 - Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts and burns, particularly on parts of the body not normally prone to injury.
 - Inconsistent explanation for an injury.
 - Someone else - a child or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a child.
 - A child describes what appears to be an abusive act against them.
 - Inappropriate sexual awareness.
 - Unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or sudden outbursts of temper.
 - A child engages in sexually explicit behaviour in games.
 - A child is distrustful of adults particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
 - Becomes increasingly dirty and unkempt.
 - Has difficulty in making friends.
 - Displays variations in eating patterns, including overeating or loss of appetite
 - Weight loss for no apparent reason
 - Is prevented from socialising with other children.

- 19 This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the above signs is not proof that abuse has taken or is taking place. It is not the responsibility of council staff to decide that abuse is taking place but is their responsibility to act on any concerns. However, it is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may be other reasons for changes in behaviour, such as a death in the family or the birth of a new baby.

Abuse – Vulnerable Adults

- 20 Adult abuse takes many forms, the main types are:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, pushing, restraining, denying food or water)
- Psychological (e.g. emotional abuse, threatening to abandon or hurt, humiliating, controlling, isolating)
- Sexual (e.g. indecent exposure, harassment, inappropriate touching)
- Domestic abuse (e.g. from close friends, partners, family)
- Discriminatory abuse (e.g. on the grounds of race, sex, age, disability)
- Financial (e.g. internet or doorstep scams, stealing money or valuables)
- Neglect (e.g. not taking proper care of someone vulnerable)

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

- 1 The Council recognises the difficulty of assessing a potential abuse situation. Even experts have difficulty at times in recognising a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. It is accepted that council staff are not experts in this field. However, all suspicions and or allegations of abuse must be taken seriously and responded to in a speedy and appropriate manner. Staff are, therefore, expected to discuss any concerns they have regarding the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult with their Line Manager. The Line Manager will then discuss these matters with the Town Clerk who will decide on the most appropriate course of action.
- 2 It is not your responsibility to decide if abuse has occurred involving a child, young person or vulnerable adult; however it is your responsibility to take action regardless of how small your concern.
- 3 You must:
 - Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with children and young people or that may be unacceptable in a relationship of trust.
 - Remember that someone else might misinterpret your action, no matter how well intentioned.
- 4 What to do if a child or young person tells you s/he is being abused.
 - REMEMBER – a child or young person’s welfare is paramount and this must be the most important consideration.
 - Stay calm, ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
 - Listen carefully, tell and show the child or young person that you are taking what they say seriously.
 - Reassure the child or young person and alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, do not pass any judgements.
 - Do not probe further once the child or young person has made the initial disclosure to you. Any suggestion that your questioning have put ideas into the child’s head could be damaging to any subsequent prosecution.
 - Be honest and explain that you may have to tell someone else to stop the abuse.
 - Do not make false promises to the child or young person, i.e. promising confidentiality when you may have to disclose all that has been said to other authorities at a later stage.
 - Make a written statement note of what the child or young person has said as soon as possible after the event.
 - If the child or young person suggests that the abuser is on the premises or a member of staff, do not approach the individual - **JUST OBSERVE**.
 - Maintain confidentiality - only inform your Line Manager. At this stage the Line Manager will decide on the next course of action.
- 5 It is crucial to note that this is only a process of observation and that at no point in time should any person working on behalf of the Council feel that they should be actively seeking out abuse or an abuser. The responsibility of all people working

on behalf of the Council is to ensure that if they have concerns about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult they must report it and must never assume that others will do it.

EMERGENCY ACTION

In some cases it may be important or an absolute necessity to protect a child or young person. In these cases you should

- Wherever possible take immediate action to protect the child or young person from the immediate harm or possible immediate harm.
- Inform your Line Manager immediately.
- Contact First Contact or the Police as soon as possible. If necessary, dial 999 and report the incident or your concerns to the Police.

N.B. The Police are the only agency with statutory powers for the immediate protection of children. In urgent cases do not delay making a referral – make it straight away and make it direct.

PROTECTING YOURSELF

Child abuse has carried quite a high profile over recent years, so much so that many people feel uneasy when dealing with children or young people, feeling that innocent gestures and behaviour may be seen in some people's eyes as inappropriate. Common sense must prevail; in order to prevent such accusations, the following suggestions should be observed.

- Restrict physical contact with children and young people to only that which is necessary.
- When dealing with children and young people in emergency situations i.e. administering first aid, ensure where possible there is another responsible adult with you whether that be parent, carer or another member of staff.
- Report directly to your Line Manager any behaviour by staff or public that you feel is inappropriate or suspicious. Do not discuss the subject with any other staff or member of the public.
- Never take children or young people alone in your car.
- Never take children or young people to your home or where they will be alone with you.
- Never allow children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Always be publicly open when working with children or young people. Avoid situations, where as a coach or carer you are left completely unobserved.
- Never let allegations a child or young person makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never do things for a child or young person of a personal nature that they are capable of doing themselves.
- Never make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
- If during the care of a child you accidentally hurt them, the child seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report the incident as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of the incident. Parents or carer should be informed of the incident.
- Don't believe it could not happen to you.

Should you suspect or be informed that child abuse has taken place you should:

- Inform your Line Manager immediately. The Manager will decide on the next course of action to be taken.
- If your Manager is not available contact the appropriate officers at First Contact (Children) or Social Care Direct (Adults) on 03000 267979. The Duty Officer will offer advice and guidance on any given situation and if necessary inform any other relevant parties.
- Keep evidence of everything you have observed/heard.
- Contact Police if needed.
- There is also a NSPCC Help Line Tel: 0808 800 5000 for experienced advice about possible abuse situations.
- If you feel unsure as to whether parents are involved in a suspected abuse you should not approach the parents on the subject as this could place the child or young person at further risk. This is a very difficult situation to assess therefore advice should be sought from any of the above under such circumstances.

Codes of Practice and Behaviour – Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

By defining what is and is not acceptable behaviour, good practice can be promoted and opportunities for abuse minimised.

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by any employee, or person working on behalf of the Town Council constitutes acts of gross misconduct and will therefore be grounds for termination of employment.
- Sexual activity with children or vulnerable adults is prohibited; a mistaken belief about a child's age or vulnerable adult's ability is not a defence.
- Exchanging money, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour are prohibited.
- Grooming children or vulnerable adults to take part in sexual activities of any nature is prohibited.

Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff

Child abuse does occur outside the family setting. It has been suggested that when child abuse takes place in a public setting it is very rarely a one-off event. It is essential that all staff involved with children are aware of this fact and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

Seek Advice

It may be that the person is unclear whether allegations that are made constitute abuse or poor practice and are therefore unsure of the action to be taken. It is essential, for this reason, that the person in charge (usually the Line Manager) informs the Town Clerk of the situation and where necessary obtains advice from appropriate officers at the County Council who can be contacted at First Contact (Children) or Social Care Direct (Adults) on the same telephone number of 03000 26797. It is possible that this may be just one of a series of instances of which you are unaware that could constitute something more serious.

It is acknowledged that any suggestion that a member of staff is or may be abusing a child will raise concerns amongst other staff, including the inherent difficulties in reporting such matters. However, it is important that any concerns for the welfare of a child/children, young person or vulnerable adult arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff should be reported immediately.

Great Aycliffe Town Council will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Any concerns must be discussed with the Town Clerk where the best course of action will be decided. It is crucial that allegations are taken seriously and any appropriate action taken to protect the welfare of the individual involved.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, there are three types of investigation possible.

- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

- A criminal investigation.
- A child protection investigation.

If, following consideration by the person in charge, the allegation is clearly one about poor practice then the person in charge will deal with this situation as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is one of poor practice against the person in charge, then the Town Clerk will decide how the matter will be dealt with and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

If the allegation is one of abuse and/or one against the person in charge then the Town Clerk must contact First Contact (03000 267979) at Durham County Council and act upon their advice.

Line Managers must be informed immediately of any allegations of abuse made against a member of staff. They will then make an immediate decision as to whether the individual should be temporarily suspended from duty pending further investigations.

If the person in charge is unable to contact the Line Manager for whatever reason they should send the individual concerned home on full pay and ask them to contact the Line Manager by 12 noon the following day by which time a decision will have been reached as to the length of suspension if one is deemed necessary.

Irrespective of a Durham County Council, Ofsted or Police Investigation the Town Clerk will assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct and disciplinary procedure to decide whether a member of staff can be reinstated and if so how it can be handled with sensitivity.

In circumstances where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police, Durham County Council or Ofsted the management may reach a decision based on the information that is available which could suggest that on the balance of probability is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults will always remain paramount.

Consideration will always be given to what support can be given to the child, parents, vulnerable adult, carers and members of staff.

Taking Photographs

Today's technology such as camera phones, digital cameras and video create the opportunity for misuse. Therefore, parental or carer consent must be obtained before any child young person or vulnerable adult is photographed or filmed.

Any member of staff wishing to record images at a Town Council event must:

- Refer in the first instance to the Council's Photographing and Filming Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy, following its guidelines and obtaining written consent where required.
- Gain permission from the senior member of staff in charge of the event.

If in doubt do not take the photo or ensure that all participants are facing away from the camera.

Taking or recording images in the following areas will not be allowed under any circumstances and will be classed as gross misconduct and lead to instant dismissal:

- Showers
- Toilets
- Changing rooms

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated according to Data Protection requirements.

Information will be stored securely in locked storage with limited access to designated people only.

Any electronic data concerning the case will be password protected.

THE MAIN FORMS OF CHILD ABUSE

Although this information relates specifically to child abuse, many of the points are also applicable to vulnerable adults.

Physical Abuse

Where an adult physically hurts or injures a child by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, and biting. Including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing ill health to a child. The administering of alcohol, inappropriate drugs and poison can also be considered as physical abuse. In a sports situation physical abuse might occur when the nature and intensity of the training disregards the limitations of the child's immature and developing body.

Sexual Abuse

Children, girls and boys alike are abused by adults, male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs. It may involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse could take the form of full intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling. Showing children pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse.

Swimming or related activities involving physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may occur and go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused may lead to abusive situations developing.

Child Exploitation

Child exploitation is the act of using a minor child for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (via the internet).

Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent lack of love and affection that adversely affects a child's development. A child may be constantly shouted at threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Emotional abuse may also occur when there is constant over protection, which prevents a child from socialising.

Emotional abuse in sport might include situations where a child is subject to unrealistic pressure by the parent or coach, or bullied in order to consistently perform to high expectations.

Neglect

Where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs, like food or warm clothing. Children may also be constantly left alone or unsupervised, being deprived of love, affection or attention.

Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullies come from all walks of life, they bully for a variety of reasons and may even have been abused. Typically, bullies can have low self-esteem, be excitable, aggressive and jealous. Crucially they can have learned how to gain power over others and there is increasing evidence to suggest that this abuse of power can lead to crime.

Vulnerable children are particularly open to abuse and any Town Council action must represent the best interests of the child.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Peer on peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age and where everyone directly involved in peer-on-peer abuse is under the age of 18.

CHILD/YOUNG PERSON/VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Your Name:	Position:
Name of Child or Adult:	Age: Date of Birth:

Any special factors eg, disabled or non-English speaker	
Parents/Carers Names:	
Home Address:	
Telephone number:	
Details of any other children living in the home (if applicable)	
Date of incident:	Time of Incident:
Your observations:	
Exactly what the child, young person or vulnerable adult said and what you said: (Remember to record the actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)	
Details of any actual evidence eg bruising, bleeding, physical, changes in behaviour of child, vulnerable adult or parent or any indirect signs. Continue on separate sheet if necessary	
Action taken so far, if any:	

If you have spoken to the parents/guardian/carer, what was said:	
Have there been allegations against anyone? If yes, provide details:	YES / NO
Have you consulted anyone else about this? If yes, provide details:	YES / NO
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? If someone else, please provide details:	

name of the officer you are handing the report to	position of the officer you are handing the report to
--	--

Date:

Signature of Reporting Officer:

Signature of Accepting Officer:

Note

Once both parties have signed the report the person submitting the form should retain a copy for future reference. All forms, correspondence and reports related to this matter should be held in strictest confidence and stored/filed in a secure cabinet with restricted access.

 GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL Photographic Consent Form To be used by persons appearing in photographs, films or videos
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By signing this form, you are giving consent for the child, young person or vulnerable adult for whom you are responsible, to appear in photographs, films or videos taken by Town Council staff, freelance or other photographers attending Great Aycliffe Town Council events. A child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Uses for photos or films may include displays and exhibitions, our website and social media, annual reviews, leaflets and posters produced for fundraising, leaflets and posters produced to illustrate our work, press releases in the Town Council newsletter and other regional media. The Town Council does not employ a photographer and has no control over the use of photograph or video taken by anyone other than its own staff. Town Council staff will always wear an official identification badge.

Children who are in special circumstances, eg, in the care of the local authority, under any kind of court or care order, on Child Protection registers or in open adoption should not be photographed. This policy has been agreed in order to protect the interests of the child or young person.

By signing the form parents/carers will be confirming that the child, young person or vulnerable adult is not in any of the special circumstances outlined above.

Name of Child/Adult: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Name of parent/guardian/carer: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Signature: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Great Aycliffe Town Council recognises that you may wish to withdraw your consent for personal reasons. You can do this at any time by writing to us.

General Data Protection Regulations

The information on the consent form will be held and used for administrative purposes eg to contact you in the event of a problem and is a requirement of being a youth councillor. Under the provisions of GDPR, your personal data will be treated in a secure and confidential manner and will not be kept for longer than necessary by signing this form you are giving us permission to hold and use this data.

If you have any questions about the personal information that we hold about you or wish to exercise your relevant rights under the GDPR, please contact The Data Controller, at The Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6QF, or by email at info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk. You can view our full privacy notice at www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/council-democracy/data-protection

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

First Contact – 03000 267979

Adult and Health Services
Telephone: 03000 267979

www.durham.gov.uk

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership

<https://durham-scp.org.uk/>

NSPCC 24 Hour HELPLINE
0808 800 5000

Police (ask for the Child and Family Protection Unit)

Durham Constabulary
Child and Family Protection
Police Headquarters
Aykley Heads
Durham
DH1 5TT

Newton Aycliffe Police Office
Central Avenue
Newton Aycliffe
Co Durham
DL5 5QH

Email –
customerservicedesk@durham.police.uk
Tel: 101
Minicom - 01913752090

Hospitals

Bishop Auckland General Hospital
Cockton Hill Road,
Bishop Auckland,
County Durham,
DL14 6AD

Tel: 01388 455000

Darlington Memorial Hospital
Hollyhurst Rd,
Darlington,
County Durham,
DL3 6HX

Tel: 01325 380100

University Hospital of North
Durham
North Rd,
Co Durham,
DH1 5TW

Tel: 0191 333 2333

University Hospital of North Tees
Hardwick Road
Stockton on Tees
Cleveland
TS19 8PE

Tel 01642 617617

National Drugs Help Line

National No: 0800 776600

Domestic Violence

Domestic Outreach – Harbour Support
County Durham
Tel: 03000 202525

Wear Valley Woman’s Aid Refuge
Tel: 01388600094

Darlington Women’s Refuge
Tel: 01325 364486

Panah Black Women’s Refuge
PO Box 27
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE3 1EU
Tel: 0770 945 5688

Victim Support

Local Area Victim Support
Saddler House
Saddler Street
Bishop Auckland
DL14 7HF
Tel: 01388 664111

County Durham Victim Support Line
Tel: 0800 138 2020

Sexual Assault Referral Centre

<https://www.newcastlesafeguarding.org.uk/contact/>

Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre

<http://www.rsacc-thecentre.org.uk/>