



Peacehaven Town Council

Safeguarding Policy

Children, Young People and Vulnerable Persons

Peacehaven Town Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable persons that use its services and promoting a positive safeguarding culture and environment.

The purpose of this policy is to promote good practice in safeguarding those using Peacehaven Town Council facilities, to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

Children and young people are defined as those aged under 18. Safeguarding children from abuse and promoting their welfare means:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of these needs)
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of these care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect;

For example a person who:

- Is frail due to age
- Has drug or alcohol problems
- Has a learning disability
- Has mental or physical ill health or disability
- Has been trafficked for purposes such as forced labour or sexual exploitation
- Has been abused early in life and grown up in care (also known as Care Leavers or Looked-After Children), particularly when they reach age 18.

Vulnerability is related to how able an adult with mental capacity is free to exercise their own informed choice, without duress or undue influence, and to protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To whom this policy applies.

This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of Peacehaven Town Council, including employees, Councillors, volunteers, work experience, students or a commissioned capacity, for example contracted to do a piece of work.

It also applies to any individual hiring, leasing or using the Town Council facilities for the purpose of delivering any service to Children, young people or Vulnerable adults.

Legal frame work and definition of safe guarding

This Policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable persons in England, including:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Children act 1989
- The Care Act 2014
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Care Act 2014 includes a list of some types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different situations in which these may take place. The below is not an exhaustive list, and the Councils should not limit its view of what constitutes abuse or neglect to the examples illustrated.

Types of Abuse

- **Physical** – causing physical harm, including hitting, shaking, biting, grabbing, withholding food or drink, force-feeding, wrongly administering medicine, unnecessary restraint, failing to provide physical care and aids to living.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – including slurs, harassment and maltreatment due to a protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010)
- **Sexual** - including sexual assault, rape, inappropriate touching/molesting, forcing or enticing someone into sexual acts they don't understand or feel powerless to refuse; grooming a child or young person in preparation for abuse.
- **Institutional abuse** – including the use of the systems and routines which neglect a person receiving formal care e.g. in a children's home.
- **Emotional or Psychological** – persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection, including verbal abuse, shouting, swearing, threatening abandonment or harm, isolating, taking away privacy or other rights, bullying/intimidation, blaming, belittling, silencing, controlling or humiliating.
- **Neglect** – persistent or severe failure to meet a person's basic physical and psychological need. It will result in serious impairment of their health or development, and can include withholding shelter, food, drink, heating and clothing, failing to provide access to health, social and educational services, ignoring physical care needs, exposing a person to unacceptable risk, failing to ensure adequate supervision or unresponsiveness to the basic emotional needs of a child.

- **Financial or material** – illegal or improper use of an adult’s property, money or other assets without their informed consent or where the consent is obtained by fraud. It can include withholding money or possessions, theft of money or property, fraud, intentionally mismanaging finances, borrowing money and not replying.

Signs of abuse

There are many possible signs of abuse, none being conclusive on their own. Examples include:

- Unexplained injury / weight loss / cuts and bruises / dirtiness
- Changes in behaviour
- Depression / low self-esteem
- Lack of self-care / dehydration / abnormal eating pattern
- Harm to self
- Obsessive behaviour
- Bills not being paid
- An overly critical or disrespectful carer who may bully or undermine
- Isolation from usual network of friends, family or community

Policy Intention

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable person is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly.
- All staff, volunteers and elected Members of the Council have a responsibility to report concerns to the Town Clerk who will refer the matter to the relevant service for formal investigation. You must refer, you must not investigate.
- Ensuring that the Council practices safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and vulnerable people.
- Councillors, volunteers and other members of staff will not be subject to DBS checks unless their duties for the Council which requires regular contact with children and/or vulnerable people.
- Peacehaven Town Council has a ‘duty of care’ to protect others from harm; this includes a range of processes including risk assessment and health and safety practices
- No member of the Town Council, staff, helpers or other volunteers will have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable persons.
- All members of staff, helpers and volunteers will be made aware of this policy and the relevant procedures. Relevant training in this area will be provided
- Hirers of our facilities are made aware of our Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult policy and where appropriate, at the time of their booking, will be asked to produce a copy of their safeguarding policy.
- Town Council meetings are open to anyone to attend and arrangements in place to ensure the safety of everyone in attendance.

Confidentiality, record keeping and sharing information

Information about safeguarding concerns should be regarded as confidential. The information is not secret; however, Peacehaven Town Council will co-operate with investigations by East Sussex County Council Children’s or adult services, or the Police as applicable, and follow their advice to ensure that any risk to the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults is addressed.

Where a disclosure is made it is important that the staff member does not promise that child/young person/vulnerable adult to keep the information secret but it says that they will only disclose it to someone who can help them.

Supporting Documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents, including:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Members Code of Conduct
- Induction, training, supervision and support
- Complaints Policy

Policy Adopted: 12th September 2023

Policy Review Date: 11th September 2026