

Safeguarding Statement

The Parish Council is committed to safeguarding everyone who meets its service, staff, volunteers and agents and recognises that children and adults at risk from harm require safeguarding. We are also committed to promoting a culture of zero tolerance to any forms of abuse.

Introduction

This policy is a summary of the principles that guide the Council's approach to safeguarding children and adults at risk from harm, who are defined as:

- Children: a person under the age of 18
- Adults: a person who is or may need community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Our activities may result in Councillors, employees, volunteers and third-party employees acting as agents under the Council's direction being in contact with children or adults at risk of harm.

This policy applies to the Councillors, all paid employees, volunteers, agency and temporary staff, and anyone working on behalf of the Council. East Riding of Yorkshire Council will have their own policy for their Councillors and employees.

Type of Harm

This policy has been prepared based on current law and best practice guidance for the protection of children and adults at risk of harm.

There are several possible areas of harm which children and adults at risk of harm may be exposed to, including but not limited to:

Physical abuse

Sexual abuse

Psychological abuse including online bullying

Emotional abuse

Financial exploitation

Keeping Children and Adults at Risk of Harm Safe

The Council seeks to keep safe those children and adults at risk of harm it meets by:

- Ensuring there is a simple but robust reporting system, which employees and volunteers are aware of, and through which any employee or volunteer can raise their concerns.
- Ensuring ongoing staff and volunteer training where appropriate.
- Adopting safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers are never alone with children or adults at risk of harm.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Using safeguarding procedures to share any concerns with agencies who need to know in a timely manner.
- Creating and maintaining an open culture where any member of staff or volunteer can feel that they can raise concerns without fear of reprisal or bullying.
- Ensuring the Council has effective complaints and confidential whistleblowing procedures in place.
- Using existing procedures to manage and investigate any allegations against staff and volunteers.

Reporting Suspicions

Any member of staff or volunteer who has a concern about an actual or suspected case of abuse, or where they suspect an individual may pose a risk to children or adults at risk of harm, must, at the earliest opportunity and without delay, inform the Chair of the Parish Council. They must not discuss their concerns about an individual Councillor, employee or volunteer with the person in question.

No one should attempt to investigate a suspected case of abuse or individual themselves.

The Council supports a 'just' culture in which all staff and volunteers are expected to raise their concerns without fear of reprisal. Anyone reporting a suspicion of abuse will be supported, treated fairly and treated confidentially. Anyone not wishing to report any suspicions in person may do so in writing and if they wish, anonymously.

More information on the protection of anyone raising a concern can be found at

www.gov.uk/whistleblowing

Investigation of Suspicions

Any incident of suspected abuse that is raised should immediately be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Parish Council

At this time, a note or record of concern should be made in relation to the abuse/mistreatment of a child or adult at risk, a decision on further action will be made as soon as possible after the initial concern is raised. East Riding of Yorkshire Council has forms on their website and the appropriate one should be used depending on where the person lives. It is important to be aware that good quality written notes are essential as they may support any legal action required later; all safeguarding issues or concerns must be recorded as soon as possible.

Suspension

Where there is an allegation or incident concerning safeguarding, the disciplinary process may be modified in order to meet legal obligations. While not implying guilt, in certain circumstances it may be necessary to suspend an employee or volunteer pending an investigation. Any decision to suspend or make changes should be authorised by the Chair and one other councillor.

Third Party Reporting

An incident of abuse may be a criminal offence so, if there is any uncertainty with regard to the involvement of the police, then advice should be sought from them in the first instance. The police should always be informed in an emergency or where there is concern of immediate harm.

If appropriate the Council may also consider raising a safeguarding concern with the local authority. E.g. Joint Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults policy and Procedures, on the websites of East Riding Safeguarding Adults Board [ersab.org.uk] . Procedures can be different for children so please consult the local authority website.

All internal decisions on whether to report to a third-party should be clearly recorded together with the reasoning. Consideration should include:

- The seriousness of the accusation.
- Potential risk to others.
- What action the complainant or their guardian wants.
- Whether the situation would be best resolved through police intervention considering the complaint and the principle of proportionality.

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