



SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

Ashington Town Council is committed to safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse, and exploitation.

Ashington Town Council make a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognise the right of every individual to stay safe.

This policy seeks to ensure that members and officers know how to respond if they see a potential safeguarding issue.

2. SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all staff, councillors, volunteers, and contractors working for or on behalf of the Council.

3. POLICY AIMS

To safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults with whom the Council comes into contact.

To ensure staff, councillors and volunteers are clear on their responsibilities to safeguard and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

To ensure consistent good practice across the Council.

4. LEGISLATION

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- i. Working together to safeguard Children 2010
- ii. The Children Act 1989
- iii. The Adoption and Children Act 2002
- iv. The Children act 2004
- v. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- vi. Care Standards Act 2000
- vii. Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- viii. The Police Act – CRB 1997
- ix. Mental Health Act 1983
- x. NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- xi. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

5. DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults wherever possible.

In contrast, **child and adult protection** is about responding to circumstances that arise.

A child is anyone under the age of 18.



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A vulnerable adult is anyone over 18 who is unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation. This may include a person who:

- ❖ Is elderly and frail
- ❖ Has a mental illness including dementia
- ❖ Has a physical or sensory disability
- ❖ Has a learning disability
- ❖ Has a severe physical illness
- ❖ Is a substance misuser
- ❖ Is homeless

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation, and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender, or culture. It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- ❖ Physical abuse
- ❖ Verbal abuse
- ❖ Sexual abuse
- ❖ Emotional abuse
- ❖ Bullying
- ❖ Neglect
- ❖ Financial (or material) abuse

6. SAFEGUARDING LEAD

The Executive Officer is responsible for leading safeguarding arrangements. This involves

- Ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, reviewed annually and followed.
- Acting as the main contact point for safeguarding issues.
- Maintaining contact details for reporting concerns, e.g. social services, police.
- Keeping appropriate records in relation to safeguarding activities.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE COUNCIL

Ashington Town Council has responsibility to ensure a Safeguarding Policy is in place and appropriate, that the policy is accessible to everyone and is implemented.

Ashington Town Council must ensure the policy is appropriate to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. The policy must be monitored and reviewed annually, or when changes are made to any of the legislation relating to this policy.

Sufficient resources must be allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented, and that staff have access to suitable training.

The Council must ensure that any volunteers working for the Town Council and having unsupervised access to vulnerable users will be required to be DBS checked.



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EVERYONE

All staff, members, volunteers, and contractors have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy, and to pass on any welfare concerns as set out.

It is expected that staff, members, volunteers, and contractors will report their safeguarding concerns.

We expect everyone at Ashington Town Council to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

It is not the responsibility of Ashington Town Council, or individuals to conduct their own safeguarding investigation, this will be undertaken by either Northumberland County Council or the Police.

8. SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Council endeavours to ensure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This includes:

- Applying thorough recruitment procedures including interviews, references, and DBS checks where eligible.
- Providing safeguarding training for staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers understand their role, responsibilities, and appropriate conduct.

9. REPORTING CONCERNS

Staff, councillors, and volunteers must report all safeguarding concerns to the Executive Officer. The Executive Officer will then respond appropriately, recording actions taken.

Concerns about the Executive Officer should be reported to the Chair of the Council.

In an emergency, or if someone is in immediate danger, dial 999.

10. SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

This is based on what is usually referred to as the "4 Rs":

RECOGNISE

All staff, members and volunteers should be able to recognise *potential* signs of abuse. However, it is not the responsibility of staff, members, or volunteers to decide whether abuse or harm has occurred, it is their responsibility to respond appropriately, by referring these concerns to the appropriate person or agency.

RECORD

Take a note of what you have seen. What happened? Why did it happen? When did it happen? What was said? Any other notable facts you can recall.

REPORT

Once the information has been recorded, make sure to share this via a referral.



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REFER

Ensure that the Council's appointed Safeguarding Officer is contacted. If there is an immediate risk of harm to the individual, contact the Police, or ring OneCall.

OneCall is one number for all adult social care, children's services, and community health enquiries in Northumberland. Helping the most vulnerable people to keep safe and well 24-7.

Telephone: 01670 536 400

Email address: onecall@northumberland.gov.uk

11. ALLEGATIONS MANAGEMENT

Ashington Town Council recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff, members, or volunteers within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation.

The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows:

First step: Any member of staff, member or volunteer from Ashington Town Council is required to report any concerns in the first instance to the Executive Officer. The Executive Officer will complete a written record of the concern.

Second step: Contact OneCall for advice.

Third step: Follow the advice provided.

If the concern relates to the Executive Officer, contact OneCall directly.

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The Executive Officer shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.