

Safeguarding Procedures

1. Reporting safeguarding concerns

If you have a concern that an individual is at risk of immediate harm or danger then you should dial 999 and report your concerns directly to the police.

If you have a concern that an individual may be a victim of abuse of any kind and would like to discuss your concerns in more detail then you can approach the safeguarding lead, your manager or telephone Children's and Adult Services at Hampshire County Council. If a safeguarding referral needs to be made then you should complete a Safeguarding Referral Form which can be found on Hampshire County Council's website.

The case should also be copied to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at **nbains@fareham.gov.uk** or **irickman@fareham.gov.uk** in her absence.

Aim to send the referral form within 24 hours of you identifying the concern.

In the event of a concern being raised out of normal office hours, contact can be made directly with Children / Adult Services on 0300 555 1373. This must be followed up with a completed referral form being submitted to the Designated Safeguarding Officer within 48 hours.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will create a record of the individual on SafetyNet, upload the referral form once it has been submitted to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and then close the record. No one else will be able to view this record unless it relates to an ongoing case and it is appropriate to share this information in the interests of safeguarding all (including staff) concerned.

Allegations of abuse may be subject to criminal proceedings so it is vital that once your concern has been escalated you do not try to intervene further as this could hamper the police investigation.

Safeguarding Procedures

2. Disclosure

This is when a child or vulnerable adult (or someone associated with them), tells you something that raises a concern that abuse is or may have happened. Disclosure can be defined as either:

- Full disclosure: where an individual gives you the whole story of what is happening to them including the name of the abuser/s;
- Partial disclosure: where an individual tells you only that "something is happening to them."

A disclosure can be deliberate or made as part of a normal conversation. Either way it must be reported.

During a disclosure by a victim of abuse

you should:

- stay calm and listen patiently;
- reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you ;
- ask clarifying questions to ensure that your understanding is the same as the individual making the disclosure;
- make the individual affected aware of the need to pass on any information they tell you, and that 'secrets' cannot be kept;
- explain what you are going to do with the information, and who it will be shared with
- try to ensure the disclosure area is kept; confidential and that it is not possible for anyone else to hear;
- attempt to make a written note of what is being said as soon as possible (this note should be kept for use as potential evidence in subsequent legal proceedings).

You should not:

- ask leading questions, appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry;
- press the individual for details (it is not your duty to undertake the investigation);
- make comments or judgements other than to show concern;
- promise to keep secrets or confront the abuser;
- risk contaminating evidence.

3. Reporting after disclosure

Advise the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately after the issue is identified, with:

- a record of the full conversation about the disclosure or suspicion of abuse on the referral form;
- only language used by the individual should be used, and assumptions in your own words should not be made.

A social worker from Children/Adult Services will assess the information to determine whether a formal investigation should commence, and may contact you directly for further information. You may also be contacted by the Police.

4. Where an allegation is made against an employee

Anyone who suspects that an employee of the Council or a councillor may be abusing a child or vulnerable adult must act on their suspicions immediately. This will not only protect vulnerable individuals but also colleagues from false accusations.

If you are an employee and have concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another employee, a councillor or other adult working on behalf of the Council:

- details must be recorded immediately;
- report your concerns to the HR Department/Line Manager/Head of Service or Director;
- it will be taken seriously and treated confidentially.

The HR Department will inform and work with the Local Authority Designated Officer (the Community Safety Manager) without delay.

Any investigation will be in line with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

The Council's 'Report a Concern' also allows staff to raise concerns in strict confidence. This policy is intended to encourage employees to raise serious concerns within the Council rather than ignoring a problem. It is available on the internal website.

Safeguarding Procedures

6. What to do when an allegation is made against a councillor

Anyone who suspects that a councillor may be abusing a child or vulnerable adult should immediately notify the Monitoring Officer for the Council. This is Sarah Robinson srobinson@fareham.gov.uk

7. Confidentiality, record keeping and complaints

Confidentiality

The right of a child or vulnerable adult to be protected from harm is paramount. While there are clear rules on confidentiality, if the needs of the individual affected outweigh the need for confidentiality, then the need of the vulnerable person takes precedence. However, where an allegation is made, and whilst it is being investigated, every effort should be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is essential that all employees, councillors and volunteers are briefed so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation, unless authorised to do so.

Record keeping

Safeguarding records will be stored on SafetyNet, a secure information sharing database which has robust governance and auto archiving functions to ensure that data protection legislation is complied with. The case on SafetyNet will be locked down to ensure that only those who need to know have access and unless it is a live case it will be opened and closed once the safeguarding referral has been made. If the need arises, the case will be reopened by the Designated Safeguarding Officer for additional information to be added or action taken.

Complaints regarding the Council's approach/response to safeguarding issues

When dealing with complaints, it is important to maintain an open culture. Staff, councillors, volunteers and others must feel able to express concerns about safeguarding issues and issues of poor practice when dealing with vulnerable people. An easy to follow complaints procedure for members of the public regarding staff is available.

8. Recruitment and training

Recruitment

Through the Council's recruitment procedures anyone who works directly with children or vulnerable adults, or may come into regular contact with vulnerable individuals during the course of their work, must have:

- a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (formerly known as a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check);
- their experience of working or contact with children or vulnerable adults fully explored, prior to appointment;
- appropriate checks of their employment history;
- training in recognising the signs of abuse, in reporting procedures, and in good working practice.

Pre-recruitment checks will always be carried out. This includes conducting a risk assessment for all posts to determine whether or not the duties of the post cause an employee to have regular access to children or vulnerable adults (this will apply regardless of the employment status of the post i.e. permanent, temporary or casual).

Managing Work Experience

All young people undertaking work experience with the Council will receive the same protection as we afford to our own employees.

Safeguarding Procedures

8. Recruitment and training (cont'd)

Training

The Council recognises that it has a commitment to ensure that all employees and Elected Members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities when working with children or vulnerable adults. The training process will help them to:

- be able to recognise the different signs of abuse, and what appropriate course of action should be taken in these circumstances;
- have an understanding of the potential risks to themselves, and ensure good practice is adhered to at all times;
- recognise signs of improper behaviour from others and take appropriate action.

All employees must undertake training, even if it is unlikely that they will come into contact with vulnerable groups.

9. Funding and grants

Where organisations and groups that work with children or vulnerable adults apply to the Council for grants, the granting of funds will be subject to a safeguarding policy being in place by the recipient organisation. Guidance to organisations or groups can be provided on adopting a safeguarding policy if needed.

10. Hiring facilities to others

Whilst Fareham Borough Council owns a range of premises, the only ones managed directly are the Civic Offices, Ferneham Hall and The Depot. These offices are primarily used for the provision of Council Services. The Council owns sheltered housing schemes and community centres.

Should any part of the premises be hired, any hirer who provides activities for children or vulnerable adults is required to adhere to current safeguarding legislation and guidance. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 must be observed to ensure that the premises are not being used by radical speakers or for the purposes of radicalisation.

11. Third Party Obligations

Contractors, sub-contractors and organisations (including voluntary sector) that are commissioned, funded by or working on behalf of the Council, that are involved in areas where workers come into regular contact with children or vulnerable adults, must have safeguarding children and vulnerable adult policies in place that comply with the terms of this policy.

These organisations must ensure that the correct DBS checks have been carried out for all relevant workers and provide staff with appropriate safeguarding training. All new contracts let by the Council, which involve providing services for vulnerable individuals, will include appropriate provisions for complying with the principles of this policy.

12. Photography and use of photographic equipment

If you are organising an event or meeting and would like to take photographs or record a video of activities, please check with the Community Safety Manager that this is acceptable to do.