



LEEK TOWN COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Approved 21st May 2024

Leek Town Council abides by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

- We recognise the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation has an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children 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, their parents' carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare.

Purpose

Leek Town Council will:

- Protect children and young people who receive Leek Town Council's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- Provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Leek Town Council including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Definitions

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.

Child Abuse: Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse within their family or harm outside of the family. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Neglect
- Non-recent abuse
- Online abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

Safeguarding children: Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:

- protecting children maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that 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 outcome.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/>.

Thresholds

Leek Town Council refer to and seek guidance from the Threshold Framework held by Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

The Threshold Framework 'Accessing the Right Help at the Right Time' is the overarching document for the whole of the children's workforce. This multi-agency threshold framework is a guidance tool that all agencies, professionals and volunteers can use to consider how best to meet the needs of individual children and young people. The Threshold Framework is available on the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board website www.staffsscb.org.uk.

The Prevent Duty

Some organisations in England, Scotland and Wales have a duty, as a specified authority under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty. These organisations include:

- Schools
- Registered childcare providers.
- Local authorities
- Police
- Prisons and probation services
- NHS trusts and foundations
- Other organisations may also have Prevent duties if they perform delegated local authority functions.

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. More information available on the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board website www.staffsscb.org.uk.

Training & Awareness

Leek Town Council will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its trustees, employees, volunteers and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g. contractors).

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children.
- Understand the difference between safeguarding children and child protection.
- How to spot the signs of abuse and neglect.
- How to respond to the indicators of abuse and neglect and keep children safe.
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children.
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board provide safeguarding children training for private and voluntary sectors Learning Zone – Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (staffsscb.org.uk)

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Leek Town Council expects all employees, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of significant harm* or contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed. For further guidance on information sharing and safeguarding see Leek Town Council Confidentiality and Information Sharing policies. www.leektowncouncil.gov.uk

**Please see SSCB Threshold Framework – Accessing the right help at the right time for definition*

Consent

Whilst professionals should in general discuss any concerns with the child, their parents / carers and where possible seek their agreement to making referrals

to Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support (SCAS), this should only be done where such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place the child or others at increased risk of suffering significant harm. For more information see the Threshold Framework on the Boards website www.staffsscb.org.uk.

Consent / agreement is not required for child protection referrals; however, you, as the referring professional, would need to where possible discuss with and inform parents or carers that you are making a referral as stated above, unless by alerting them you could be putting that child or others at risk.

Recording & Record Keeping

A written record must be kept about any safeguarding concerns. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Leek Town Council procedures on record keeping.
www.leektowncouncil.gov.uk

Safe Recruitment & Selection

There is a duty under Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 for Leek Town Council to be committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices, that reduce the risk of harm to children from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

Leek Town Council has policies and procedures that that cover the recruitment of all trustees, employees and volunteers. Leek Town Council safe recruitment and selection procedures and code of conduct. www.leektowncouncil.gov.uk

Social Media

All employees and volunteers should be aware of Leek Town Council's social media policy and procedures Leek Town Council social media policy and procedures and the code of conduct for safeguarding children on digital platforms.

Use of Mobile Phones & Other Digital Technology

All employees, trustees and volunteers should be aware of Leek Town Council's policy and procedures regarding the use of mobile phones and any digital technology and understand that it is unlawful to share images and content on any digital platform without the explicit consent of the person with parental responsibilities. Leek Town Council's policy/ procedures on the use of mobile phones and other digital technology.

Escalation

Professionals providing services to children and their families should work co-operatively across all agencies, using their confidence, skills and experience to make a robust contribution to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare within the framework of discussions, meetings, conferences, and case management.

On occasions situations may arise where there is professional disagreement in relation to safeguarding a child. Resolution is an integral part of professional joint working to safeguard children and this policy seeks to identify how such resolution can be achieved where there are professional differences of opinion.

All professionals have a responsibility to work together and to help to prevent disagreements from escalating where possible. This policy identifies a non-exhaustive list of potential areas of disagreement, guidance on resolving disputes and procedures to be followed when disputes cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation between professionals at front line level.

Whistleblowing

It is important that people within Leek Town Council have the confidence and support to come forward to speak or act if they have concerns that have not been addressed by the escalation process. Additional knowledge, advice and guidance must be sought from designated safeguarding leads at all times.

Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrong- doing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer. There is also a requirement by Leek Town Council to protect whistleblowers. Leek Town Council's whistleblowing policy.

Further information on 'Allegations of abuse made against a person working with children' visit [Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board website](#).

Important Contacts

Senior Lead for Safeguarding

Name: Denise Wheat
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Deputy Senior Lead for Safeguarding

Name: Victoria Johnson
Email Address: admin@leektowncouncil.gov.uk
Telephone Number: 01538 381271

Trustee for Safeguarding

Name: Cllr. Kate Nicholls
Email Address: kate.nicholls@me.com
Telephone Number: 07713 279304

Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support (SCAS)

0300 111 8007

Emergency Duty Service (out of hours) Tel No. 0345 604 2886

Or email: eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk

Police

Emergency – 999

Non-emergency – 101

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000