

HARTINGTON UPPER QUARTER PARISH COUNCIL

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Hartington Upper Quarter Parish council recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk who interact with council services, facilities, and activities.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to protect these individuals from harm, abuse, or neglect and to ensure that all councillors, employees, volunteers, and contractors understand their responsibilities.

1.3 This policy applies to all councillors, employees, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of the Council. It also extends to third-party organisations or individuals hiring Council-owned premises or facilities.

2. Definitions

2.1 Child or Young Person: Anyone under the age of 18.

2.2 Adult at Risk: Anyone aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing (or is at risk of) abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse, neglect, or the risk of it.

2.3 Abuse: May consist of a single act or repeated acts. It can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, neglectful, discriminatory, or psychological.

3. Policy Principles

3.1 The welfare of the child, young person, or adult at risk is paramount.

3.2 All individuals, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, have an equal right to protection from emotional or physical harm.

3.3 All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Council: Will ensure that all its activities, facilities, and services are managed safely. The Council will review this policy annually.

4.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): The Council appoints Councillor Jackson as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. They will act as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns, maintain secure records, and liaise with local authority safeguarding boards or emergency services.

4.3 Councillors, Staff, and Volunteers: Must maintain high standards of behaviour when working with children or adults at risk, be familiar with this policy, and know how to report a concern. They must never subvert this policy or attempt to investigate allegations themselves.

5. Safer Recruitment and Training

5.1 The Council will follow safer recruitment processes for any roles involving substantial or regular contact with children or adults at risk.

5.2 Where a role qualifies as a "regulated activity" under the Protection of Freedoms Act, the Council will require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before the individual takes up the post.

5.3 The Council will provide appropriate safeguarding awareness guidance or training to staff and councillors as required by their roles.

6. Use of Council Facilities by Third Parties

6.1 Any organisation, community group, or individual hiring Council-managed facilities (such as the parish hall or playground) for activities specifically targeting children or adults at risk must provide a copy of their own Safeguarding Policy.

6.2 Booking agreements will state that failure to comply with appropriate safeguarding practices will result in the immediate termination of the hire agreement.

7. Responding to and Reporting Concerns

7.1 It is not the responsibility of anyone within the Council to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, it is their absolute duty to act on any concerns.

7.2 Immediate Danger: If a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, the emergency services must be called via 999 immediately. The DSL must be informed afterward.

7.3 Non-Emergency Concerns: If a member of staff, councillor, or volunteer becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, they must:

- Make a clear, objective, written record of what they saw, heard, or were told (using the individual's exact words where possible). Do not interview or question the person further.

- Report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within 24 hours.
- The DSL will review the report and, if appropriate, make a formal referral to the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Team (Children's Services or Adult Social Care) or the Police.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

8.1 All records relating to safeguarding concerns will be treated as highly confidential and stored securely by the DSL in accordance with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

8.2 Information will only be shared on a "need-to-know" basis with statutory agencies (such as Social Services or the Police) to ensure the protection of the individual at risk.

[End]