

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

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Child, Young Adult and Vulnerable Person Protection Policy

1. Definitions

Where the following terms are used in this policy they shall have the meaning indicated below:

Child(ren)	anyone under the age of 18 years;
Young Adult	generally a person ranging in age from their late teens or early twenties
Vulnerable Person	as defined by the Department of Health, a vulnerable person is aged 18 years or over and is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm
Parents	this term is used in its broadest sense and includes parents, carers and guardians.
Council	Barnt Green Parish Council
Council Representatives	employees, councillors, volunteers representing Barnt Green Parish Council.

2. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to make clear to all Council Representatives as defined above and contractors what is required in relation to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable people. Children, young people and vulnerable people have the right to participate, have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose, or their parents / carers choose for them. This policy will help to maintain a safe and positive environment for children and vulnerable adults.

3. Policy Coverage

This policy applies to all Council Representatives and contractors working in partnership with the Council. Under the Children Act 2004, the Council has a duty to co-operate with Worcestershire County Council in discharging its duties as a Children's Services Authority and to promote the well-being of children and young people. Worcestershire County Council is also the lead agency for the protection of vulnerable adults.

It is not the role of the Council to investigate allegations of abuse. However, all Council Representatives and contracted services providers have a responsibility to act when they suspect or recognise that a child or vulnerable adult may be a victim of significant harm or abuse. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Council's Risk Management Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Complaints Policy and Procedure, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

4. Child, Young Adult and Vulnerable Person Protection Statement

This policy affects all Council Representatives.

The Council recognises that all children and vulnerable persons have an equal right to protection from abuse accepting the moral and legal responsibilities associated with this.

The Council is committed to safeguarding children, young adults and vulnerable people ensuring that they are protected and kept safe from harm or abuse whilst engaged in services and activities organised and provided by, or on behalf of the Council.

Referrals of suspicion of abuse cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that during enquiries, the agency making the referral will be named.

The Council will not tolerate harassment of any Council Representative or contracted service provider or child/vulnerable persons who raises concerns of abuse.

5. Policy Statement

The Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable persons that use its services and will promote a safeguarding culture and environment.

6. The Council aims to do this by:

- (i) making Council Representatives aware of their statutory “duty of care” relating to children and encouraging good practice;
- (ii) creating safe and healthy environments for its services and activities;
- (iii) responding appropriately to any allegations;
- (iv) requiring Council Representatives to abide by this policy;
- (v) appointing a Child Protection Officer.

By doing so the Council will;

- (i) endeavour to keep children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse;
- (ii) report suspicion of abuse promptly and appropriately;
- (iii) always act in the best interests of the child or vulnerable person;
- (iv) proactively seek to promote the welfare and protection of all children and vulnerable people living in the local community;
- (v) endeavour to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable people through, as appropriate, its recruitment and selection policy and by reminding hirers of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- (vi) take any concern made by Council Representatives or contracted service provider or child / vulnerable adult seriously, treating it with sensitivity.

7. Procedures and Systems

Definitions of Abuse

- Abuse covers any form of physical, emotional, mental and sexual abuse including bullying, lack of care that leads to injury or harm. For vulnerable persons abuse may also be financial.
- Neglect is where people fail to meet a child’s or vulnerable person’s basic physical / psychological needs and is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development, e.g. failure to ensure that a child is protected from unnecessary risk of injury, or exposing them to undue cold.
- Physical Abuse is where physical pain or injury is caused, e.g. hitting, shaking, biting, etc.
- Sexual Abuse is where children or vulnerable persons knowingly or unknowingly take part in an activity that meets the sexual needs of the other person or persons involved. This includes inappropriate photography or videoing.

- Emotional / Mental Abuse is where there is persistent emotional ill treatment that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's or vulnerable person's emotional status e.g. bullying (including cyber and text bullying), constant criticism and unrealistic pressure to perform.
- It is important to recognise that disabled children may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have difficulties in communicating what is happening to them. Dependency on others for primary needs, e.g. feeding and clothing may make a person feel powerless to report abusive treatment.

Use of Video and Photography

The use of photographs and images of young people will be controlled to prevent possible misuse. In general, agreement will be sought from parents or guardians that images can be used as appropriate.

Consent must be sought from a parent or guardian prior to recording a recognisable child's image.

Unsupervised access to children or one to one photographic sessions is not permitted. Children's names should not be used in photographs or video footage, unless with the express permission of the child's parent or guardian.

Special Events – Photography

It is an unfortunate fact that some people have used children and young people's events as opportunities to take inappropriate photographs or footage of children, every attempt should be made to ensure that this does not happen.

Council Representatives and contracted service providers should always be vigilant. Anyone using cameras or film recorders for or on behalf of the Council should obtain consent from the parents of children being photographed or filmed before the activity commences.

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to cover Council services, events and activities the Council's expectations must be made clear in relation to child protection by checking the credentials of any photographers, ensuring identification is worn and by not allowing unsupervised access to children or one to one photographic sessions.

Responding to Allegations

If a person discloses abuse by someone else:

- Stay calm, take the allegation seriously,
- Allow the person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said, but DO NOT investigate,
- Only ask questions for clarification, do not ask leading questions,
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement. Reassure them that they did the right thing by talking to you,
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you MUST pass the information on, do not offer to keep secrets,
- Record the facts as you know them,
- Record your observations – a description of the child or young person's behaviour, physical and emotional state and any visible injuries.
- Refer the allegation immediately and directly to the Council's Child Protection officer. If the Child Protection Officer is implicated refer directly to the Executive Officer. If the Executive Officer is implicated, refer to the Chairman. All allegations must be referred, no matter how insignificant they seem to be, or when they occur.
- Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.

As soon as possible after the event as occurred:

- Write down notes, dates, times, facts, observations, and verbatim speech.
- Ensure the correct details are available, the young person's / vulnerable adult's name and address, and the name and address of their parent or guardian.
- Sign and date what has been recorded.
- Immediately contact the Social Services Department at Worcestershire County Council. Ask for a duty officer and indicate that you wish to discuss a matter of child / vulnerable person protection. Ask for the name of the person with whom you are speaking. Do not filter out or withhold any information. Ask if there is anyone else who should be informed.
- Inform the Local Authority's Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal Services, Bromsgrove District Council).
- Prepare a confidential file. Record all notes, conversations and advice from Social Services. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
- Store information in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection legislation.
- Follow the advice from Social Services; take no other action unless advised to do so by Social Services.

In the case of an emergency, where a child is in danger, phone 999 immediately.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child, their family, those who are the subject of allegations and any child protection investigations that may follow.

Recorded information should be handed over to Social Services or the Police and any copies stored in a secure place with limited access in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Council Representatives should not inform the child's parents or guardians. This will be done by Social Services.

Council Representatives should make no comment to the public or media.

Responding to concerns about the welfare of a child/vulnerable/young adult where there is no specific disclosure or allegation;

All Council Representatives and organisations contracted to provide services on behalf of the Council are encouraged to share concerns with the Executive Officer who will, if appropriate, make a referral to Social Services.

Recognising abuse is not always easy. The list below provides some indicators of abuse; however, the list is not exhaustive and contains only indicators, not confirmation, of abuse:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body e.g. cigarette burns, bite marks,
- bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching),
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent or which has not been treated adequately,
- sudden changes in behaviour, including becoming withdrawn or becoming aggressive, severe temper outbursts,
- reluctance to get changed e.g. for swimming,
- neglected in appearance, dirty or 'smelly',
- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others,
- inappropriately dressed for the conditions,

- fear of parents or carers being approached for an explanation,
- flinching when approached or touched,
- neurotic behaviour e.g. hair twisting, rocking,
- being unable to play,
- fear of making mistakes,
- self-harm,
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people, lack of trust in adults,
- sexual knowledge, which is beyond their age or development age,
- sexual drawings or language,
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about,
- not allowed to have friends.

8. **Child Protection Officer**

The Council's Child Protection Officer is Councillor Charles Hotham.

The role of the Child Protection Officer is to:

- ensure that procedures are in place to enable the Council's aims to be met;
- initiate appropriate action should any allegation of improper conduct be made.

9. **Confidentiality**

Council Representatives and contracted service providers must not discuss allegations of abuse, substantiated or not, with anyone other than in connection with the formal investigation. Where it is necessary to put in procedures to prevent continuing abuse the matter should be shared with the Executive Officer so that appropriate risk assessments may be undertaken.

10. **Prevention**

Recruitment - Prospective employees will be interviewed and previous, relevant experience will be noted. Two appropriate references will be taken up for all employees. All employees will undergo a probationary period.

All Council Representatives who are required to carry out duties that involve working with children or vulnerable people or whose roles mean they come directly into contact with children or vulnerable people will be checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and / or appropriate safeguarding agency. In line with best practice, these checks will be repeated every three years.

Training - The council will make the Child, Young Adult and Vulnerable Persons Protection policy available to all Council Representatives. Line managers will encourage good practice and identify any training needs required through the Council's Appraisal System. Members will be offered appropriate training on safeguarding children and vulnerable people.

All Council Representatives will be expected to read this policy.

Reporting - The Council is committed to maintaining an open culture where members, employees, volunteers, children, vulnerable persons, parents, guardians and carers feel able to express concerns both about child protection and issues of poor practice. In addition to the procedures outlined in this policy, the Council's Complaints Policy and Procedure are available to all members, staff, volunteers, and the general public.

Codes of Practice and Behaviour - These guidelines have been devised to protect children and vulnerable people from abuse, as well as to protect Council Representatives from situations where false allegations may occur.

The guidelines apply to those working with children or vulnerable persons involved in

activities organised by or on behalf of the Council or services provided by the Council.

Council Representatives must:

- Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their age, ethnicity, social background, ability, sexual orientation, culture or religious beliefs,
- Provide an example of good conduct they wish others to follow,
- Plan activities which involve more than one other person being present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others,
- Respect a person's right to personal privacy,
- Provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have,
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and aid identification of attitudes or behaviours they do not like,
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret their actions, no matter how well-intentioned,
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues, such as bullying, bereavement, abuse or personal development,
- Recognise that some children or vulnerable people will be more vulnerable to abuse than others and may face extra barriers in getting help because of their race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture,
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse,
- Be identifiable and wear a name badge where possible.

Council Representatives must not:

- Engage in physical horseplay, such as wrestling or tickling,
- Have any inappropriate verbal or physical contact with children or vulnerable people, or make suggestive remarks or gestures,
- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying etc.),
- Play physical contact games with children or vulnerable adults,
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts,
- Ask children or vulnerable adults to do things that are potentially dangerous, illegal or otherwise unreasonable,
- Exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues,
- Show favouritism to any individual,
- Rely on just their good name to protect them,
- Believe it could "never happen to me",
- Take chances when common sense, policy or practice suggest a more prudent approach,
- Allow allegations made to go unchallenged, unrecorded and not acted upon.

The Council takes its responsibility very seriously. Employees who breach these guidelines will face investigation and may face disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal. Volunteers in breach of the above Code of Conduct will have their services terminated with immediate effect and their parent organisation (as appropriate) will be informed. If a member does not adhere to the policy, there may be grounds for reporting their behaviour to the Standards Committee, where an investigation may be carried out under the Member Code of Conduct. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, Council Representative will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face a criminal investigation.

11. Procedure in Relation to Specific Services

Use of Contractors

Contractors, engaged by the Council in areas where workers are likely to encounter children and young people, should have a similarly robust Child Protection Policy, or failing this, must comply with the terms of this policy.

Contractors will be monitored by the Council's Executive Officer.

Although it is not the place of any Council Representative to investigate allegations, they do have a duty of care to children, young and vulnerable adults which means they must report any suspicions they may have.

In general, there are 3 situations that may require Council Representatives to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:

- responding to a child, young and vulnerable adult disclosing abuse;
- responding to allegations or concerns about a Council Representative based on personal observation or due to a complaint.
- responding to allegations or concerns about any other person.

Internet and Email

Please refer to the councils' Press and Media Policy.

First Aid

The administration of first aid to children, young adults and vulnerable people can present risks. Under ordinary circumstances, a child or young person can be administered with first aid only if their parent or guardian expressly permits this course of action.

When administering first aid, wherever possible, Council Representatives should ensure that another adult is present, or is aware of the action being taken. Parents/carers should always be informed when first aid is administered.

Child welfare is of paramount importance. In certain circumstances Council Representatives and contracted service providers may undertake first aid as a last resort, notifying parents / carers as soon as possible, to minimise a child's or vulnerable adult's distress.

12. Misuse of Procedure

Malicious complaints about a member or an employee(s) and/or serious and/or persistent abuse of these safeguarding policies and procedures will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through the Council's disciplinary process.

13. Policy Monitoring and Review

All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints will be recorded and monitored.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and will also be revised should the need arise relating to changing requirements, legislation and guidance, or in the light of experience.

14. Sources of Information

Barnt Green Parish Council
Child Protection Officer
Councillor Charles Hotham
26 Blackwell Road
Barnt Green
B45 8BU

0121 445 2930

ChildLine

Free helpline for children and young people in the UK. Children and young people can call to talk about any problem

www.childline.org.uk

0800 1111

NSPCC

Information for children and adults

www.nspcc.org.uk/html/home/needadvice/needadvice.htm


0808 800 5000

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

08457 909090

Reviewed: 20 June 2022


Signed [Robert Cholmondeley \(Jul 11, 2022 14:22 GMT+1\)](#)
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Chairman, Barnt Green Parish Council

Review date February 2024






23. Child and Young Adult and Vulnerable Person Protection Policy June 2022

Final Audit Report

2022-07-11

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