

Kidsgrove Town Council

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

Kidsgrove Town Council is committed to ensuring the protection of vulnerable people at risk through the development and implementation of effective policies and best practice. Council, staff and volunteers recognise and accept the responsibility to develop and raise awareness of the issues involved in working with adults at risk.

Relevant legislation and guidance relating to the protection of vulnerable people at risk are reflected in this policy.

Who is a vulnerable person at risk

The safeguarding duties apply to any vulnerable person who:-

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs).
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Designated person for safeguarding

The current designated safeguarding lead for Kidsgrove Town Council is the Town Clerk

If the designated person is unavailable or you are unsure which person to contact, please contact a member of staff at Victoria Hall.

This policy is based on the following principles:

- Provision of an environment in which vulnerable people at risk feel safe and valued.
- All vulnerable people at risk, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- A **designated person for safeguarding** will be identified (as above) for all matters affecting vulnerable people at risk, and to identify appropriate training opportunities.
- All Councillors, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns to the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding.

We will aim to safeguard adults at risk by:-

- developing and adopting a set of guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for working with adults at risk, which all trustees, staff and volunteers are aware of and adhere to.
- exercising a *Duty of Care* and, when necessary, share information and/or concerns in a confidential manner with the appropriate outside agency e.g. Social Services.
- following the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- developing a time specific induction period when all new Councillors, staff and volunteers are introduced to guidelines for working with vulnerable people at risk and policy and procedures.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.
- reviewing and updating our policy and practice annually.

This policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:-

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers.
- Recruitment and vetting of staff and volunteers.
- Supervision of Kidsgrove Town Council activities.

Dealing with cases of abuse

Six Safeguarding Principles

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

1. Definitions of abuse

Abuse may be defined as the wrongful application of power by someone in a dominant position. It involves an imbalance of power and exploitation without a full and informed consent. Abuse can take several different forms and may be a single act or repeated acts.

Please see Appendix 3a for a further breakdown of categories and types of abuse.

2. Recognising and Responding to Abuse

There are many potential indicators and signs of abuse, most of which may also be signs of other forms of injury or ill health. Those working with adults at risk should familiarise themselves.

Please see Appendix 3b for a list of potential signs of abuse.

3. What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred

1. You must report the concerns immediately to the designated person

The role of the designated person is to:-

- Obtain information from staff, volunteers, family members and carers who have vulnerable people at risk protection concerns and to record this information.
- Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.
- Consult with a statutory relevant at risk protection agency such as the local Social Services department to clarify any doubts or worries.
- Make a referral to a relevant at risk protection agency or the police without delay.

The designated person has been nominated by Kidsgrove Town Council to refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of designated person, the matter should be brought to the attention of a member of Kidsgrove Town Council staff.

2. Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

3. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the relevant at risk protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is up to you to contact the relevant at risk protection agencies directly.

Allegations of physical injury or neglect

If a vulnerable person at risk has a symptom of physical injury or neglect the designated person will:-

1. Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or concerns about the safety of the adult at risk. The family member or carer should not be informed by the Kidsgrove Town Council in these circumstances.
2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The designated person will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
3. In other circumstances speak with the family member or carer and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the adult at risk. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.
4. If appropriate the family member or carer will be encouraged to seek help from Social Services. If the family member or carer fails to act the designated person should in case of real concern contact Social Services for advice.
5. Where the designated person is unsure whether to refer a case to Social Services then advice should be sought from a relevant at risk protection agency.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse the designated person will:-

1. Report this to the Social Service duty social worker for vulnerable people at risk directly. The designated person will not speak to the family member or carer.
2. If the designated person is unsure whether or not to follow the above guidance then advice from Social Services will be sought.
3. Under no circumstances should the designated person attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the designated person is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services whose task it is to investigate the matter.
4. Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse should normally be reported to the designated person, their absence should not delay referral to Social Services.

4. Responding to an adult at risk making an allegation of abuse

- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow the person at risk to continue at his/her own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the person at risk that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Establish their views and what they would like to happen next.
- Be aware that evidence may be needed.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said using the person at risk own words as soon as possible, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- Make the referral.

Helpful statements to make

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the person at risk says).
- Thank you for telling me.
- It's not your fault.
- I will help you.

Do not say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure that this is true?
- Why? Who? When? Where?
- Never make false promises.

Do

- Call for help if necessary from emergency services.
- Ensure the person's safety.
- Act within the individual's wishes, as far as possible.
- Reassure them that they will be supported.
- Report to the designated person as soon as possible.

Do Not

- Promise not to tell anyone.
- Act within the individual's wishes if it would put them or others at risk.
- Be judgemental.
- Contact the alleged perpetrator or anyone else in the allegation.
- Touch or move anything/ contaminate evidence.

5. What to do after an adult at risk has talked to you about abuse

The procedure

1. Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told) you should write down exactly what the person at risk has said and what you said in reply and what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered) You should record the dates, times and when you made the record. All handwritten notes should be kept securely.

You should use the form "Reporting Suspected Abuse". This form is attached at the back of this policy. (Appendix 2). This will be used in conjunction with an Incident Reporting Form.

2. You should report your discussion with the designated person as soon as possible. If this person is implicated you need to report to the Mayor or Chair of Staffing at Kidsgrove Town Council. If both are implicated report to Social Services, for contact details see Appendix 1.

3. You should under no circumstances discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.

4. After a person adult at risk has disclosed abuse the designated person should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for an adult at risk to return home to potentially abusive situation. On these rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

6. Recruitment and appointment of workers and volunteers

In recruiting and appointing workers Kidsgrove Town Council will be responsible for the following:-

- We will identify the tasks and responsibilities involved and the type of person most suitable for the job.
- We will draw up the selection criteria and putting together a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience.
- All applicants should apply in writing and their application will cover their personal details, previous and current work/volunteering experience.
- We will make sure that we measure the application against the selection criteria.
- If relevant to the post applicants need to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to work with persons at risk. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) requires that people applying for positions working with persons at risk must declare all previous convictions. A Disclosure and Barring (DBS) Check will be undertaken and assessed. They are also required to declare any pending case against them. It is important that your applicant in this particular category understands that all information will be dealt with confidentially and will not be used against them unfairly.
- We will ask for photographic evidence to confirm the identity of the applicant e.g. their passport.
- We may request to see documentation of any qualifications detailed by the applicant.
- We will always interview our candidates and ask for two references.
- We will request two written references from people who are not family members or friends and who have knowledge of the applicant's experience of working with adults at risk if relevant to the post. We will ask the referee to also comment on their suitability for working with adults at risk.
- If relevant to the post we will ensure that our successful applicant has obtained the Enhanced DBS as required from the Disclosure and Barring Service. They will need to show the ECRC before we will confirm them in post.
- We will include our safeguarding adults at risk policy in the induction process.

7. Allegations against a member of staff

We will assure all staff/volunteers that Kidsgrove Town Council will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a person at risk. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:-

- A criminal investigation
- An adult at risk protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and persons at risk protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Designated Person or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Mayor or Chair of Staffing at Kidsgrove Town Council who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not the Kidsgrove Town Council should initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a person at risk has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Designated Person, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the adult at risk in question.
- The Designated person will refer the allegation to the Social Services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- The parents or carers of a person at risk will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services department.
- If the Designated Person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Mayor or Chair of Staffing at Kidsgrove Town Council who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

3. Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The Designated Person in conjunction with the Mayor or Chair of Staffing will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and Social Services enquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or police enquiries the Kidsgrove Town Council will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Kidsgrove Town Council must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the person at risk should remain of paramount importance throughout.

8. Supervisory arrangements for the management of Kidsgrove Town Council's activities and services.

We will aim to protect adults at risk from abuse and our team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines:-

- We will keep a register of the events and activities in which we are involved where people at risk are present.
- We will keep a record of times we are present in relation to the above and sign in and out using the attendance logs provided by the host Kidsgrove Town Council.
- We will keep a register of all team members (both paid staff members and volunteers).
- We will keep a record of all sessions including monitoring and evaluation records.
- Our team members will record any unusual events on the accident/incident form.
- Where possible our team members should not be alone with an adult at risk, although we recognise that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful.
- We recognise that physical touch between people and persons at risk can be healthy and acceptable in public places. However, our team members will be discouraged from this in circumstances where an adult and person at risk are left alone.
- All team members should treat all adults at risk with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions.

9. Support and Training

Kidsgrove Town Council is committed to the provision of people at risk protection training for all relevant team members.

Appendix 1

Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

If you have any concerns about an adult at risk being abused you should inform the designated person detailed below.

Kidsgrove Town Council

Name

Job/Role

Address

Tel no

Important contacts outside the Kidsgrove Town Council

Staffordshire County Council Social Services

Phone: 0300 111 8007

Online enquiries can be made by visiting:

Children:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Care-for-children-and-families/Childprotection/Report-a-concern-online.aspx>

Adults:

staffordshirecares@staffordshire.gov.uk

A trained member of staff will be available to help you between 8:30am - 5:00pm, Monday-Thursday (excluding Bank Holidays) and 08:30am - 4:30pm Fridays

To report a concern outside of these hours, please contact the **Emergency Duty Service**

Phone: 0345 604 2886

Text: 07815 492613

Other numbers

Staffordshire Police, non Emergency	101
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Action on Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141
Care Quality Commission (CQC)	03000 616 161

**If you believe someone is at immediate risk of harm
you should call the emergency services on 999**

Appendix 2

Reporting Suspected Abuse - Recording Sheet

Kidsgrove Town Council

Name of person reporting

Name of adult at risk

Age and date of birth

Ethnicity

Religion

First language

Disability

Family Member/Carer's name(s)

Home address/Tel no

Are you reporting your concerns or reporting someone else's. Please give details.

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns:

Details of harm caused to adult

Immediate action required to protect adult

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the adult at risk? If so, what was said? Did they agree to a referral?

Have you spoken to the family member/carer(s)? if so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, please give details?

Are there any others at risk? If so, please give details?

Have you consulted anybody else? Please give details

Person reported to and date of reporting

Signature of person reporting

Today's date

Action taken

Notes relating to adults views and wishes, information relating to mental capacity and views of yourself making the referral

Appendix 3a.

Categories and Types of Abuse

Physical abuse

- Bodily assaults resulting in injuries e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions
- Bodily impairment e.g. malnutrition, dehydration, failure to thrive
- Medical/healthcare maltreatment

Sexual abuse

- Rape, incest, acts of indecency, sexual assault
- Sexual harassment or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting
- Sexual abuse might also include exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts and encompasses sexual harassment and non-contact abuse

Psychological/emotional abuse includes:

- Including threats of harm, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, enforced isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- Humiliation
- Bullying, shouting, swearing

Neglect and acts of omission

- Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services
- The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating – importantly, it may not always be clear in the case of an adult at risk, who is responsible for the neglect

Financial or material

- Including theft and fraud
- Exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Discriminatory abuse

- Including racist, sexist, or based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Self-neglect

- Including failure to take care of own basic needs
- Neglecting care for personal hygiene and surroundings and hoarding

Modern Slavery

- Including slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, coercion, deception, and life of inhumane treatment

Organisational abuse

- Including denial of rights, denial of access to family, friends, Doctor, Solicitor, denial of access to money or information
- Neglect, poor care practice, threats of punishment, loss of personal possessions and evictions to ensure compliance, lack of choice of meal times, bed times due to the fact it makes it easier for the Kidsgrove Town Councils

Domestic abuse

- Including threatening behaviour, intimidation, violence
- Between family members or those who are or have been intimate partners. Includes sexual, financial, emotional, physical and "honour based" violence

Appendix 3b.

Signs of Abuse

Physical abuse signs

Note: Some ageing processes can cause changes which are hard to distinguish from some aspects of physical assault e.g. skin bruising can occur very easily due to blood vessels becoming fragile.

- A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries
- Bruising in well protected areas, or clustered from repeated striking
- Finger marks
- Burns of unusual location or type
- Injuries found at different states of healing
- Injury shape similar to an object
- Injuries to head/face/scalp
- History of GP or agency hopping, or reluctance to seek help
- Accounts which vary with time or are inconsistent with physical evidence
- Weight loss due to malnutrition, or rapid weight gain
- Ulcers, bed sores and being left in wet clothing
- Drowsiness due to too much medication, or lack of medication causing recurring crises/hospital admissions

Sexual abuse signs

- Disclosure or partial disclosure (use of phrases such as 'It's a secret')
- Medical problems, e.g. Genital infections, pregnancy, difficulty walking or sitting
- Disturbed behaviour e.g. depression, sudden withdrawal from activities, loss of previous skills, sleeplessness or nightmares, self-injury, showing fear or aggression to one particular person, repeated or excessive masturbation, inappropriately seductive behaviour, loss of appetite or difficulty in keeping food down
- Behaviour of others towards the adult at risk

Psychological/emotional signs:

- Isolation
- Unkempt, unwashed, smell
- Over meticulous
- Inappropriately dressed
- Withdrawn, agitated, anxious not wanting to be touched
- Change in appetite
- Insomnia, or need for excessive sleep
- Tearfulness
- Unexplained paranoia, or excessive fears
- Low self esteem
- Confusion

Neglect signs

- Physical condition poor
- Clothing in poor condition
- Inadequate diet
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Failure to be given prescribed medication
- Poor personal hygiene

Financial or material signs

- Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills
- Unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions
- Extraordinary interest by family members and other people in the adult at risks assets

Discriminatory signs

- Lack of respect shown to an individual
- Signs of substandard service offered to an individual
- Exclusion from rights afforded to others, such as health, education, criminal justice

Self-neglect signs

- Not engaging with a network of support
- Unwilling or unable to meet necessary care to meet needs
- Unable to make reasonable and informed decisions due to mental disorder, illness or acquired brain injury
- Unable to protect themselves against exploitation or abuse
- Refusing essential support without which their health & safety needs cannot be met and the individual lacks the insight to recognise this

Modern slavery signs

- Signs of physical or psychological abuse, malnourished, withdrawn
- Not allowed independent travel
- Seem under the influence of others, reluctant to seek help
- Don't interact with the neighbourhood
- Few or no personal belongings or document
- Avoid eye contact, appear frightened or hesitate to talk to strangers
- Living/working in the same place

Organisational signs

- Poor standards
- Inflexible routines
- Lack of personal belongings and stark or unhomely environment
- Deprived environmental surroundings and lack of stimuli
- Inappropriate physical intervention
- Inappropriate use of power
- Denial of visits by friends or family

Domestic abuse signs

- Signs can be the same as any type of abuse or neglect

Other signs of abuse

- Inappropriate use of restraints
- Sensory deprivation e.g. spectacles or hearing aid
- Denial of visitors or phone calls
- Failure to ensure privacy or personal dignity
- Lack of flexibility of choice e.g. bedtimes, choice of food
- Restricted access to toilet or bathing facilities
- Lack of personal clothing or possessions
- Controlling relationships between care staff and service users