

FRINTON & WALTON TOWN COUNCIL

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Mission Statement

Frinton & Walton Town Council is unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding the welfare and rights of all children, young persons under the age of 18, and vulnerable adults engaged with the Council. This commitment is underpinned by the Council's statutory responsibilities and ethical obligation to protect all individuals from harm, abuse, and neglect.

Policy Statement

The safeguarding of children, young persons, and vulnerable adults is a primary responsibility of Frinton & Walton Town Council. This policy outlines the Council's commitment to upholding its legal duties under the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, the Care Act 2014, and associated statutory guidance.

The Council shall ensure that:

- All individuals under its care are protected from harm, abuse, and neglect.
- Safeguarding processes are effectively implemented and monitored.
- Employees and associated personnel are equipped with the necessary training and resources to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

This policy applies to all Council employees, Councillors, contractors, volunteers, and individuals working on behalf of the Council.

Policy Objectives

1. To ensure a robust and transparent safeguarding process is in place.
2. To prevent incidents of abuse through effective training, reporting, and oversight mechanisms.
3. To provide a safe and secure working environment for children, young persons, and vulnerable adults.
4. To comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

Definitions

- **Child:** An individual under the age of 18.
- **Vulnerable Adult:** A person aged 18 or over who may be unable to protect themselves from harm due to age, illness, disability, or other circumstances.
- **Abuse:** Includes, but is not limited to, physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse, as well as neglect and exploitation.

Safeguarding Procedures

1. Recognising Abuse

All employees and associated personnel shall acquaint themselves with the potential indicators of abuse, which may include:

- Unexplained injuries, frequent bruising, or other physical signs of harm.
- Noticeable behavioural changes or emotional distress.
- Signs of neglect, such as poor hygiene, malnutrition, or an unkempt appearance.
- Direct disclosure by a child or vulnerable adult.

2. Responding to Concerns

When a safeguarding concern arises, employees shall:

1. **Listen and Reassure:** Respond calmly, ensure the individual feels heard, and avoid asking leading questions.
2. **Record:** Document the concern promptly and accurately using the Council's safeguarding incident report form.
3. **Report:** Forward the documented concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (the Clerk or their designee the Deputy Clerk in their absence)

3. Reporting Process

- Safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (the Clerk or their designee the Deputy Clerk in their absence) within 24 hours of identification.
- Where there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services shall be contacted, and the Designated Safeguarding Officer (the Clerk or their designee the Deputy Clerk in their absence) informed subsequently.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer (the Clerk or their designee the Deputy Clerk in their absence) will liaise with local authority safeguarding teams and relevant external agencies.

4. Recruitment and Training

- The Council shall adopt rigorous recruitment practices, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all individuals working with children or vulnerable adults.
- All staff shall receive mandatory safeguarding training, with annual refresher sessions to ensure compliance and competence.

5. Code of Conduct

- Employees are required to maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Situations where an employee is alone in private with a child or vulnerable adult should be avoided unless unavoidable and necessary.

- Employees shall act with respect and integrity, safeguarding the dignity of all individuals.

6. Review and Oversight

- This policy and its accompanying procedures shall be reviewed three yearly or following any significant safeguarding incident to ensure continued effectiveness and compliance with statutory requirements.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer is: Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk

They can be contacted at: 01255 676666 / clerk@fwtc.co.uk

Policy agreed by: Full Council

Policy Agreed Date: 10th April 2025

Review Frequency: Three yearly unless legislation dictates

Next Review Date: April 2028