



Leicestershire District and Borough Councils' Children and Young Person's Safeguarding Policy



Updated January 2012

Important:

Remember it is not up to you to decide if abuse has taken place, that is the role of Leicestershire's Social Care Services, BUT it is up to you to report ANY concerns to your Designated Safeguarding Officer.

We have a legal responsibility to respond to any issues that may concern us even if they don't involve our staff or services

**Refer to the Safeguarding Guidelines which complement this
Safeguarding Policy**

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Guide for dealing with concerns relating to a Child or Young Person

Staff, Member, volunteer, coach or parent/carer has concerns about a Child or Young Person
or
A Child or Young Person has disclosed information relating to safeguarding to you

- Stay Calm
- If a child or young person is present reassure them
- Don't make promises of confidentiality or outcome
- Keep questions to a minimum

Is the Child, Young Person
in need of the emergency
services?

NO

YES

Call an
ambulance/police
Inform the doctor /
paramedic that the
concern relates to
safeguarding of a
Child or Young Person

Contact any Designated
Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
(See pages 3 & 4 or Section
4.0 for list) for advice
and/or

Complete an Incident
Reporting Form

Confidentially pass on and
discuss completed Incident
Reporting Form to any DSO

Designated Safeguarding Officer to decide:
Is the concern relating to the safeguarding of a child or young person?

NO

YES

Concern referred to Leicestershire
Children's Social Care / Police Services for
action to be taken

If no further action required, store
Incident Report Form in lockable file
within HR.

Where the Child/Young Person may
benefit from additional support
identify an appropriate
organisation/professional and make a
referral with parental/carer consent –
this organisation may then apply the
Common Assessment Framework
referral process

Council's Disciplinary Procedures
may apply

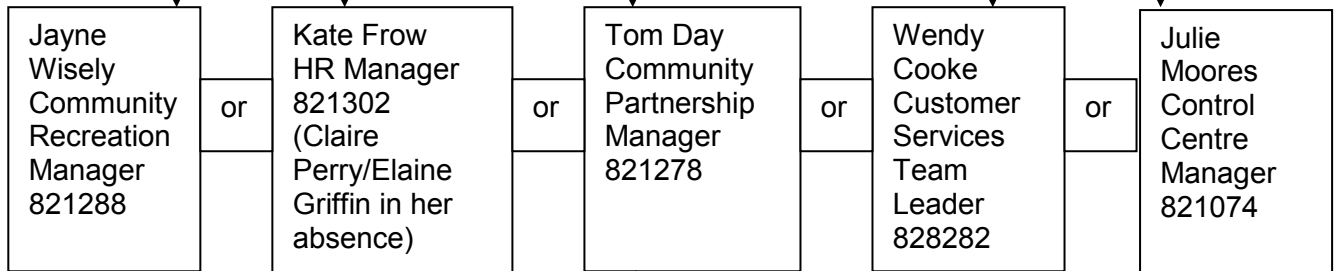
Who are the Designated Safeguarding Officers for concerns relating to Children and Young People?

If appropriate and helpful to you, you may speak to your line manager who will support you through the following process:

In the first instance report to:

Stella Renwick
Children's Services Manager – 821266

If unavailable go to:



If all of above unavailable go to:

Anna Graves
Chief Executive
821179

If all DSO's unavailable ask for advice from

Out of hours:
Emergency Duty Team
0116 255 1606

In office hours:
Children and Young people social care enquiries
Tel: 0116 305 0005

Always follow the reporting procedure back to the Designated Safeguarding Officers

1.0 Introduction

Every Child or Young Person has the right not to be abused.

What does 'safeguarding' mean?

The government guidance on Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 defines safeguarding children and promoting their welfare as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Enabling those children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully

Who is this policy for?

This policy is for you if you are a member of Harborough District Council staff, an elected member, a volunteer or anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for or representing the Council.

It is important to be aware that Harborough District Council has both a moral and legal obligation to fulfil the duty of care for children across all of its services. Council staff may come across cases of suspected abuse either through direct contact with children and young people, for example running a sports event, or as peripatetic staff visiting homes as part of their day to day work. We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised by the Council.

What does this policy cover?

The policy equips you with the information you need regarding what actions to take if you suspect or are told about abuse, and what will happen next. Read it now and then keep it somewhere safe, this may just be the tool that helps you to save a child's or young person's life.

While it is not our job to establish whether or not abuse is taking place, it is our responsibility however to report any concerns we have over the welfare of children or young people. This duty extends to the identification of abuse, poor practice by internal members/staff of the Council, as well as allegations brought to the attention of the Council by a member of the public/community.

This policy outlines that your primary concern is to ensure that you record relevant information and pass it on to the Designated Safeguarding Officers without delay, so that they can discuss any action or referral to the relevant authority.

Safeguarding Children

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation and procedures:

The legal obligation concerning children and young people is underpinned by Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, and features as part of the Every Child Matters Green Paper 2003. Further guidance is available from Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2010.

Harborough District Council is a statutory agency of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board. As such employees, volunteers and elected members should follow Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures found on <http://www.lrlscb.org/index.htm>

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

This Act recognises the needs for a single agency to vet all individuals who want to work or volunteer with vulnerable people, which includes all groups of vulnerable people including those who are young or elderly. This agency is the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Independent Safeguarding Authority Vetting and Barring Scheme

The Vetting and Barring Scheme was developed following the Soham murders to improve the methods of safeguarding children. This was due to be implemented at the end of 2010. However, due to government changes, this scheme is on hold. There is likely to be a replacement however the details of this have not been announced.

The most up to date information regarding ISA requirements can be found at www.isa.gov.org.uk. Guidance on the vetting and barring scheme is subject to change.

1.1 Policy Statement

Harborough District Council accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children and young people safeguard their well being and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by the Council. We aim to do this by:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- Raising the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to children and young people throughout the Council
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and to protect them from harm
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse, and minimise risk to themselves
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children or young people in line with this Policy and Guidelines and implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures
- Requiring staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Council's Children and Young People's Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines, informed by the requirements of the local Safeguarding Children Board
- Reviewing and evaluating this Policy and Guidelines document on a regular basis

1.2 Definitions and principles

This policy and these procedures are based on the following definitions and principles:

- The term child, or young person, is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18yrs
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parent, carers and guardians
- The terms staff, elected members and volunteers is used to refer to employees, district councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for, or representing the Council
- There are 4 broad types of child abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Full definitions of these can be found in Chapter 3 of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures available from <http://www.lrlscb.org/index.htm>
- The welfare of children, and young people is the primary concern
- All children and young people have the right to protection from abuse
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998

1.3 Support for members of staff, elected members or volunteers raising concerns

In the event of having a concern, you may choose to talk to your line manager in the first instance, who will support and help you to report your concerns to an appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer.

When a member of staff, an elected member or a volunteer raises concerns with their Designated Safeguarding Officer, the DSO will ensure that:

- The procedures are followed appropriately in consultation with Social Care Services
- The appropriate agencies, staff members, parents/ carers are informed
- Information is recorded and stored appropriately
- Staff involved are supported as required in line with the Council's employee wellbeing policies. This includes access to a confidential counselling service

The Local Authority recognises that when safeguarding concerns relate to a colleague's conduct, this can involve additional stress to reporters. The local Authority will fully support and protect all staff/members who, in good faith (without malicious intent), report his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a Child or Young Person may be being abused.

1.4 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned in the safeguarding of children and young people. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Your line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Officer will guide you as to who needs to know information about the case.

Where a staff member is approached regarding an allegation, issues of confidentiality should be clarified early in the discussion. The person should be informed that the member of staff will at the very least, have to disclose the conversation to the line manager and depending on the severity of the information may be disclosed to Social Care Services or the Police.

There may be occasions where a child or young person expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued. Decisions about whether to respect the person's wishes must have regard to the level of risk to the individual and/or others and their capacity to understand the decision in question and to make decisions relating to it. In some circumstances the persons' wishes may be overridden in favour of consideration of safety for the person and other children or young people. Where possible, this decision will be the product of discussions between the line manager and Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The responsible **Designated Safeguarding Officer** will:-

- Ensure that the procedures are followed appropriately in consultation with Social Care Services
- The appropriate agencies are informed
- Information is recorded and stored appropriately
- Provide information to staff reporting concerns about support available to them

2.0 Procedure for responding to concerns relating to the safety or welfare of a child or young person

This Policy and its procedures inform all staff, elected members and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse, i.e. response actions.

Council staff may come across cases of suspected abuse either through direct contact with children or young people, for example, running a holiday activity or as peripatetic staff visiting homes as part of their day to day work. It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not a child or young person has been abused. It is however your responsibility to report your concerns.

Your primary concern is to ensure that any relevant information is passed to the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer/s who will then discuss any action or referral to the relevant authority (e.g. Police or Social Care Services) without delay.

2.1 Responding to Suspicions

You are not expected to investigate suspicions or concerns. Other agencies are trained to do this.

Most suspicions arise because a member of staff notes a pattern of occurrences or a significant incident happens.

If you have a concern about the safety or welfare of a child or young person:

- Note the concerns and your reasons using the incident reporting form
- You may choose to see your line manager
- Report to an appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer

- Maintain confidentiality in line with Section 1.4

Do not

Undertake further investigations.

When there are ongoing concerns regarding a parent or carer in relation to the alleged abuse of a child or young person the parent or carer should not be contacted about the allegation of abuse. Social Care Services and/or the Police will do this at an appropriate time.

The process on how to respond to concerns is detailed in the flowchart on page 3.

2.2 Responding to Disclosure

Abused children or young people are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child or young person is saying you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

What to do if a child or young person discloses information to you:

- React calmly
- Take what the person says seriously
- Do clarify your understanding of what the person has said but avoid asking detailed or leading questions
- Reassure the person that they were right to tell **and do not make promises of confidentiality**
- Be open and honest, explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Immediately record all details in writing, using the child or young person's own words.
- As soon as possible fill out the Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 1) again including all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or young person's own words. Attach your original notes to the Incident Reporting Form and give these to an appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The process on how to respond to disclosure is detailed in the flowchart on page 3 (Guide for dealing with concerns relating to a child or young person abuse).

Actions to Avoid

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Dismiss the concern
- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information than is comfortably offered – do not overpressure for a response
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Suggest any action/s or consequences that may be undertaken in response to the disclosure

Remember: Listen – write it down – report it

2.3 Child and Young Person Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

You need to fill in an Incident Report Form for all concerns, suspicions and disclosures relating to the safeguarding of children or young people (see Appendix 1 for Incident Reporting Form). This needs to be done as soon as practicable to ensure all the facts are recorded. Copies of the Incident Report Form are available from:

- The Council's Intranet
- A Designated Safeguarding Officer

If you have to ask someone in order to find this form, do not discuss the situation with him or her. The same form is used for all disclosures and allegations and suspicions. Do not worry if all the sections do not apply to your situation, it is purely to help you to remember as much relevant information as possible. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to take a lead on suspicions and report them to Social Care Services and/or the Police to take the appropriate course of action, if appropriate.

3.0 Additional considerations when concerns relate to an internal employee/member of the Council e.g. staff, contractors, volunteers and Elected Members

It can be very worrying to have concerns about a person's safety or welfare that relate to the conduct of a colleague. The Local Authority recognises that this can involve additional stress for those reporting concerns. Within the incident reporting structures there are support mechanisms in place to ensure that staff are confident that these concerns will be dealt with appropriately. These include confidentiality guidelines and access to counselling services.

Where you have concerns about a colleague, the reporting procedures should be followed in exactly the same manner as outlined above. You may need to have regard to which Designated Safeguarding Officer (and manager if you wish) it is appropriate to report your concerns to:

You **can** report to:

- Your Line Manager
- Human Resources

You **must** report to:

- A Designated Safeguarding Officer

Remember that the safety of the child or young person is paramount.

There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse, but this should always be communicated to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for guidance and appropriate action. Managers wishing to seek further advice can refer to Chapter 13 of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures available from <http://www.lrlscb.org/index.htm>

Where an allegation is made against an elected member this should be referred to Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will then engage the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer who has responsibility to address Member code of conduct related issues.

3.1 Types of Investigation

Where there are allegations of abuse or concerns about poor practice of an employee or member there may be three strands of investigation:

1. Child Safeguarding investigation (externally led by Social Care Services)
2. Criminal Investigation (externally led by the police authority)
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (internally led)

In the first two instances, the Council will not be involved in any form of investigation unless requested to do so by the Social Care Services or the Police authority and feedback on outcomes of any investigation will not usually be fed back to the Designated Safeguarding Officer involved, unless there are outstanding misconduct issues to address.

As a Harborough District Council employee the usual terms and conditions for disciplinary investigations will apply. If this happens consideration will be given to suspension on full pay pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Council will assess each individual allegation on its own, taking into account the findings of any criminal investigation and respond to the outcome of the investigation in line with Council policy and procedures. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the Council will assess the appropriateness of the staff member returning to work in your previous environment. A decision to withdraw permission for the employee to work with vulnerable groups may lead to the Council having a legal duty to report the person to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. This also applies in instances where the Council would have withdrawn permission for the individual to engage in regulated or controlled activity had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated or controlled activity.

4.0 Key Contacts

The DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS for Harborough District Council are:

| Name | Job Title | Contact No. |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Stella Renwick | Children Services Manager | 01858 821266 or 07500 952214 |
| Jayne Wisely | Cultural Services Manager | 01858 821288 or 07825 385578 |
| Tom Day | Community Partnership Manager | 01858 821278 |
| Wendy Cooke | Customer Services Team Leader | 01858 828282 |
| Kate Frow (Claire Perry/Elaine Griffin) | HR Manager | 01858 821302 |
| Julie Moores | Control Centre Manager | 01858 821074 |

Social Care Enquiries

Tel: 0116 305 0005
Fax: 0116 305 0011
Email: childrensduty@leics.gov.uk

Social Care Services Emergency Out of Hours Service
Phone 0116 255 1606 (not office hours)

Local Offices (to be used only when named social worker known)
For Lutterworth and Broughton Astley surrounding areas – Bassett Street
0116 2787111
For other areas of the District – Melton Mowbray – 01664 564698
(Office hours only)

Leicestershire Constabulary
0116 222 2222

Local Authority Designated Officer (County Hall)
0116 305 7575

NSPCC Helpline
0808 800 5000

4.1 What is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Officers?

All suspicions, concerns and disclosures have to be reported immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Officer. (See pages 4 and 12 for the list of Designated Safeguarding Officers)

They have the responsibility to:

- Ensure that arrangements are made to identify staff that require training in child and young person protection issues within their responsive area
- Ensure that Incident Report Forms and copies of the policy and procedures are available in their respective service areas
- Receive information from staff, volunteers and others who have concerns, and record them, using appropriate forms and procedures identified
- Ensure that the procedures for reporting concerns are followed appropriately in consultation with Social Care services
- Ensure that the appropriate agencies are informed
- Ensure that information is recorded and stored appropriately
- Provide information to staff reporting concerns about support available to them
- Represent the Council on formal investigations into allegations of abuse led by Social Care Services

- Receive the appropriate training

Appendix 1

For DSO Use Only

Ref No (on-line multi-agency referral form):

Date Seen by DSO:

Surname of Child:



Children and Young People's Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

This form is used for reporting both suspicions and disclosures of possible abuse; therefore not all sections may be appropriate. Please complete with as much information as possible, using verbatim reports from people involved where possible. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

| About you, the reporter | |
|--|--|
| Your name: | |
| Your job role: | |
| Your telephone number and email address: | |
| Are you reporting the concern on behalf of someone else? | |
| If yes to above, what is their name and their position? | |
| What involvement have you had? (Have you had contact with family/ other professionals etc) | |
| About the child or young person | |
| Name: | |
| Age and date of birth: | |
| Gender: | |
| Address, telephone and email contact details: | |
| Housing tenure (tenant/ Housing Association/ private rented/ owner occupier): | |
| Ethnic and/or religious background: | |
| Disabilities or other special factors: | |
| About the person's family/ support network | |
| Who is the person's next of kin? | |
| Address, telephone and email contact details: | |
| Names of other people living at the address or significantly involved: | |

About the concern

| | |
|---|--|
| What has happened/ what are your concerns? (Please give full details, using verbatim reporting where possible and include physical or behavioral indicators) | |
| Have you or anyone else involved spoken to the person or with their parents/ family/ others involved? If so, what was discussed (record this verbatim where possible)? <i>Remember, you are not expected to undertake investigations so don't worry if you don't know.</i> | |
| Dates and times of significant events: | |
| About the alleged abuser, if known | |
| Name: | |
| Job position/ role: | |
| Address, telephone and email contact details: | |
| About other agencies involved | |
| Are you aware of any other services or professionals who are involved with the person? | |
| Name of agency and professional: | |
| Address, telephone and email contact details: | |
| Details of involvement and any advice you have received with dates: | |
| For Designated Safeguarding Officer use only | |
| <i>DSO name:</i> | |
| <i>Date, time, venue/ method of initial staff report regarding suspicions, concerns or disclosure relating to safeguarding: Who was present:</i> | |
| <i>Date, time and venue of Incident Reporting Form handover: Who was present:</i> | |
| <i>Notes regarding DSO follow up actions(use follow on sheet if necessary):</i> | |

Remember; do not discuss this with friends or colleagues. Arrange to see your Designated Safeguarding Officer urgently, they will initiate appropriate action.