



Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

Stonehouse Town Council recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. STC comes into contact with children and vulnerable adults through the following activities:

- Delivery of services
- Activities taking place within our properties
- Activities taking place in our play areas, parks and green spaces
- Voluntary activities eg. Litter picks, Good Will
- General contact

This policy seeks to ensure that STC undertakes its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults and responds to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the Council's expectations. The Town Clerk or other nominated officer is the Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding and Protection Officer (CVASPO).

This policy is governed by relevant legislation including:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 2020
- GDPR/DPA
- Information Sharing 2018

2. Definitions

Safeguarding is the implementation of practices throughout the organisation to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults wherever possible.

A child is a person under the age of 18.

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation. This may include those who:

- Are elderly and frail
- Have mental illness or dementia
- Have a physical or sensory disability

- Have a learning disability
- Have a severe physical illness
- Are substance misusers
- Are homeless
- Are migrants or asylum seekers

Child and adult protection is the response to circumstances that arise.

Abuse is an act of oppression, injustice, exploitation or manipulation by those with authority or power over others. It is not restricted to any group, gender or culture, and can take forms including:

- Physical abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying
- Neglect
- Financial or material abuse

3. Responsibilities

All staff, paid and unpaid, have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures. All staff are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding and the development of safe practices. The Council has responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the policy, allocating sufficient resources to enable its implementation, and ensuring access to suitable training. Any volunteers working with, for or on the Town Council's behalf and having unsupervised access to vulnerable users (eg. providing children's entertainment) will be required to be DBS checked. The lead officer (see 1 above) is the Town Clerk or other nominated officer.

4. Implementation

This policy and procedure is to be read in conjunction with the following policies which contribute to its implementation:

- Code of conduct
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Data Protection policy
- Reporting accidents and incidents
- Complaint Policy

5. Reporting

In the event of a safeguarding concern, staff and Councillors should:

- Seek medical or other emergency attention for the vulnerable person if needed
- Communicate your concerns to the Clerk or other nominated officer (CVASPO)
- If needed, seek advice from the Children and Families Helpdesk (01452 426565) or the Adults Helpdesk (01452 426868)
- Complete any required incident report form

If the nominated officer is implicated, refer to the HR Committee.

6. Allegations

STC recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff (paid or unpaid). Concerns should be reported in the first instance to the Town Clerk or HR Committee, who will complete a written record of the concern. Advice should then be sought from the Local Authority's Helpdesk (see above) and followed.

STC recognises its legal duty to make referrals to the DBS if necessary conditions are met.

7. Managing information

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

There is a duty to share information with other agencies in order to protect children and vulnerable adults which may override confidentiality. Information will be shared on a need to know only basis as judged by the Clerk or other nominated officer. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise to keep secrets.

8. Conflict or complaint resolution

Resolution of disagreements, conflicts or complaints regarding the safety of children or vulnerable adults will be taken forward by the Clerk/other nominated officer/Chair of HR Committee in line with Gloucestershire County Council policy and guidance.

9. Communication and review

This policy will be communicated via the Council's website and its acceptance will be part of any agreement to use Council premises.

This policy will be reviewed every three and when there are changes in legislation.

Policy last adopted: 13th March '23 (Minute No: TC3016)

Next Review: 2026