

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

April 2022 to March 2025



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

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1 Introduction

North Warwickshire Borough Council is committed to the protection and safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. This Policy documents the arrangements for safeguarding activity and outlines the Authority's responsibilities and procedures for its employees and elected Members.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the Borough Council will ensure that its employees, elected Members and everyone associated with the provision of its services will take all reasonable steps to protect and safeguard children, young people and adults at risk from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and ensure that their rights, wishes and feelings will be respected.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- The Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act (Including Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) 2005
- Children Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Warwickshire Safeguarding Strategic Plan
- Warwickshire Safeguarding Exploitation Strategy

The Policy will be reviewed annually, and related reports will be presented to the Executive Board.

2 Definitions

2.1 Child Protection

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

(Source: Working Together 2018 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017)

A "child" is defined as any young person under the age of 18 years (including unborn children).

2.2 Adult Safeguarding

This involves people and organisations working together to stop abuse and neglect occurring and intervening effectively in situations where there is risk of abuse or neglect, or where abuse is seen to be taking place. The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other parts of the system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. An “adult at risk” is any adult, aged 18 years or over, who:

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

“Care and support” are the mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent, including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems and carers. Care and support include an assessment of people’s needs, provision of services and the allocation of funds to enable a person to purchase their own care and support. It could include care home, home care, personal assistants, day services, or the provision of aids and adaptations (Care Act 2014).

When supporting an adult at risk it is essential that their wishes are understood and acknowledged. This is critical to ensuring that the approach that an Officer or an organisation takes is the right one. This is called “making safeguarding personal”. Making safeguarding personal is about talking people through the options they have and what they want to do about their situation. Before deciding what needs to be done, the views of the adult at risk need to be explored and understood.

3 Responsible Officers and Partnership Arrangements

Whilst safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, the Authority has named Responsible Officers who undertake specific corporate roles:

| Officer | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Director of Leisure and Community Development | <p>Ensures that the organisation deals with allegations relating to children in accordance with the Warwickshire Safeguarding and the Borough Council's policies</p> <p>Attendance at the Warwickshire Safeguarding meetings and lead on related partnership working</p> <p>Liaison with Warwickshire Safeguarding regarding allegations made against staff</p> |
| Director of Housing | <p>Ensures that the organisation deals with allegations relating to adults in accordance with the Warwickshire Safeguarding and the Borough Council's policies</p> <p>Attendance at the Warwickshire Safeguarding meetings and lead on related partnership working</p> <p>Liaison with Warwickshire Safeguarding regarding allegations made against staff</p> |
| Community Development Manager | <p>Responsible for leading on the internal delivery of Child Protection training for all employees and elected Members</p> <p>Monitor child safeguarding referrals and provide advice and support to staff making a referral</p> |
| Housing Strategy and Development Officer and Housing Services Manager | <p>Provide briefings and, where appropriate, training on safeguarding arrangements for the Council's own staff and elected Members</p> <p>Monitor adult safeguarding referrals and provide advice and support to staff making a referral</p> |

Elected Members

The Council has a Member Safeguarding Champion. It is the role of the Member Champion to assist in ensuring that elected Members are aware of the Council's safeguarding responsibilities and that Councillors evidence leadership in all aspects of the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and adults at risk. This includes ensuring that all elected Members attend the internal safeguarding training once within each four-year political cycle.

3.1 Safeguarding Partnership Boards

The countywide arrangements for safeguarding adults and children are overseen by the Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership. This is an integrated arrangement for children and adults within a single model to allow for a family focussed approach to working across the safeguarding landscape. The Partnership's strategic priorities are effective Safeguarding, Prevention and Early Intervention and Exploitation.

Warwickshire Safeguarding has an Executive Board, four sub-groups (Education, Safeguarding Reviews, Exploitation and Prevention and Early Intervention), as well as two Partnership groups, one for children and one for adults. The Partnership groups are responsible for ensuring quality of provision, learning and improvement work.

3.2 Warwickshire Children and Families Front Door (Front Door)

In Warwickshire, a new integrated "Front Door" has replaced the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns for children and young people.

This brings together Early Help and Children's Social Care to ensure that children and young people receive the right support at the right time. The "Front Door" incorporates the MASH function and is a partnership between the County Council, Warwickshire Police, Health and other key partners.

Referrals can be made by telephone or using the Multi Agency Contact Form (MAC), which should be sent to TriageHub@Warwickshire.gov.uk

Information is available at safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk

Contact details for Front Door referrals:

01926 414144 (Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm)
01926 886922 (out of hours)

3.3 Relevant Legislation

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced new, flexible arrangements for safeguarding children. The County Council, Chief Officer for Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups have an equal and shared duty to work together in partnership with other relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

The Borough Council has a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that it considers the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out its functions and that it will act as part of the Warwickshire Safeguarding arrangements.

The Care Act 2014 requires the establishment of a Safeguarding Adults Board comprising the County Council, Chief Officer for Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups to assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect adults in the locality.

4 Types of Abuse

Within child protection and adult safeguarding, there are various forms of abuse:

| Child Protection | Adult Safeguarding |
|-------------------------|---|
| Physical Abuse | Physical Abuse |
| Emotional Abuse | Emotional Abuse |
| Sexual Abuse | Sexual Abuse |
| Neglect | Neglect (both self-neglect and neglect by others) |
| | Institutional Abuse |
| | Discriminatory Abuse |
| | Financial Abuse |

4.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

4.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects.

It may involve conveying someone as worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving them the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve humiliation, harassment, verbal abuse, serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing someone to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or exploitation or corruption.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment but it may occur alone.

4.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving someone in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging a person to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or vulnerable adult in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

4.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical or emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, basic emotional needs.

4.5 Institutional Abuse

Institutional abuse is the neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting, such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from a one-off incident to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

4.6 Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory abuse is the harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

4.7 Financial Abuse

Financial or material abuse is theft, fraud, internet scamming or coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

4.8 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Missing Persons

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and / or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Sexual exploitation often involves a grooming stage. Grooming describes the variety of methods that are used to manipulate and control victims, including:

- the giving of gifts or presents
- the giving of rewards, such as like mobile phone top-ups or games credits
- false promises of love and / or affection
- the supply of alcohol and / or drugs

It is common for the grooming of children and young people to take place online. Children and young people can make themselves vulnerable through their online activities, which abusers are quick to exploit. Victims may have been persuaded or coerced into posting indecent images or performing sexual acts on a webcam. Online grooming can also progress to meeting face-to-face.

As a result of the grooming process, children and young people will rarely recognise the coercive and abusive nature of the relationship in which they are involved and they will often prioritise their attachment or loyalty to the offender over their own safety.

The perpetrators of sexual exploitation are skilled at driving a wedge between a child and their family and they will also isolate them from their usual friends and support networks.

Sexually exploited children also suffer physical, psychological, behavioural and attitudinal changes, all of which present severe challenges to their parents and carers.

Remember that:

- Boys and girls are equally vulnerable to becoming victims of child sexual exploitation
- Coercers and perpetrators are usually adults, of either gender, in a position of power, but can be other children and young people
- Young people may exchange or sell sex as a result of constrained circumstances, such as poverty, isolation and historic abuse
- Parents / carers may be involved in the sexual exploitation of their children, or fail to prevent / protect their children from abuse
- Groups of children and young people and multiple perpetrators may be involved
- No child under 13 years of age nor a child with a learning disability will be assessed as low risk if their behaviours indicate involvement in CSE
- Children and young people with additional needs, up to and including those aged 24 years, will require special consideration
- Disclosure of information may take time and evident risks may only emerge during an on-going assessment, support and intervention with the young person and / or their family.

If you suspect a child is a victim of CSE, you should contact the Front Door (see 3.2).

4.9 County Lines

County Lines is the name given to drug dealing where organised criminal groups use phone lines to move and supply drugs, usually from cities into smaller towns and rural areas.

The criminal groups exploit vulnerable people, including children and those with mental health or addiction issues, by recruiting them to distribute the drugs, often referred to as "drug running".

There are several signs to look out for that may indicate that someone is involved in County Lines activity:

- Repeatedly going missing from school or home and being found in other areas
- Having money, new clothes or electronic devices and they cannot explain how they paid for them
- Getting high numbers of texts or phone calls, being secretive about to whom they are speaking
- Decline in school or work performance
- Significant changes in emotional or physical wellbeing

Organised criminal groups often use high levels of violence and intimidation to protect the County Line and control those involved. One of these forms of control exploits vulnerable people by using their home as a base for dealing drugs, a process known as "cuckooing". Dealers often convince the vulnerable person to let their home be used for drug dealing by giving them free drugs or offering to pay for food or utilities.

Often the criminal groups target people who are lonely, isolated, or have addiction issues. It is common for them to use a property for a short amount of time, moving address frequently to reduce the chance of being caught.

There are several signs to look out for that may indicate that someone is a victim of cuckooing:

- Frequent visitors at unsociable hours
- Changes in household daily routines
- Unusual smells coming from a property
- Suspicious or unfamiliar vehicles outside an address

If you have any suspicions or information that could help in identifying any form of County Lines activity they should be reported to the Police on 101.

4.10 Harmful Practices

Harmful practices include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriage.

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other damage to the genital organs for supposed cultural, religious or non-medical reasons. FGM, also known as female circumcision (cutting or sunna), can affect females from birth to pregnancy. It inflicts severe physical and psychological damage, which can last a lifetime. While there is intelligence to suggest that FGM is being physically performed in the UK, most victims are usually taken abroad, commonly on flights in the holiday periods of Easter, summer and Christmas.

If it suspected that a child has been a victim of FGM, or there are concerns that a child is at risk of FGM, contact Warwickshire Police on 101. In an emergency call 999.

Honour Based Violence

HBV is a crime or incident that has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and / or community. If this is suspected, no contact should be made with the family. HBV has the potential to be both a domestic abuse and child abuse concern. There are specific behaviours, attitudes and actions that may constitute dishonour and they are wide ranging. Individuals, families and communities may take drastic steps to preserve, protect or avenge their honour, which can lead to substantial human rights abuses.

If it is suspected that a child or adult has been a victim of HBV, it should be reported to Warwickshire Police on 101. In an emergency call 999.

Forced Marriage

Unlike an arranged marriage, where the prospective spouses may choose whether or not they wish to accept the partnership, a forced marriage is an arrangement in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage, or when consent is extracted through duress. From June 2014, forcing someone to marry against their will is crime and anyone found guilty can face up to seven years in prison.

If it is suspected that a child or adult has been a victim of forced marriage, it should be reported to Warwickshire Police on 101. In an emergency call 999.

4.11 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery or human trafficking is the movement of a person(s) from one place to another (this could be country to country, town to town, or even as simple as one room in a building to another) into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, abuse of power or the abuse of the person's vulnerability. It can include slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Even if a victim consents and is willing to be moved, trafficking could still be taking place. It involves either the threat of harm or actual harm to the person themselves or their family.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

There is a national framework, known as the National Referral Mechanism, to assist in the formal identification of modern slavery victims and to help co-ordinate their referral to appropriate services. Certain public bodies, such as local authorities, have a statutory duty to refer potential victims to the NRM.

In England and Wales, a "First Responder" organisation is a body that is authorised to refer a potential victim of modern slavery into the National Referral Mechanism. As a Local Authority, the Borough Council is a First Responder organisation.

First Responder organisations have the following responsibilities:

- To identify potential victims of modern slavery and recognise the indicators of modern slavery
- To gather information in order to understand what has happened to potential victims
- To refer victims into the NRM (in England and Wales, this includes notifying the Home Office if an adult victim does not consent to being referred)
- To provide a point of contact for the Single Competent Authority (SCA) to assist with decisions and to request a reconsideration, where a First Responder believes it is appropriate to do so

The Borough Council has various considerations within its procurement processes that help to prevent spending with, and thus supporting, slavers and human traffickers. The Authority has also signed up to the Charter Against Modern Slavery. The Charter relates specifically to local authorities' approach to preventing modern

slavery and exploitation in their procurement practices, by their suppliers and in the supply chain.

If it is suspected that a child or adult is a victim of Modern Slavery, it should be reported to Warwickshire Police on 101. In an emergency call 999. Alternatively, advice can be sought from the Council's Director of Housing.

All information regarding suspected Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking should be sent through to the adult safeguarding inbox (adultsafeguarding@northwarks.gov.uk).

4.12 Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 states that the behaviour of a person towards another person is domestic abuse if they are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is defined as abusive if it consists of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse or psychological, emotional or other abuse.

Local authorities and the Police have duties to protect and support individuals who experience domestic abuse. They provide these duties both as individual organisations and collaboratively. They include ensuring that safe accommodation is available for households.

Controlling behaviour is defined as:

"A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and / or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour".

Coercive behaviour is defined as:

"An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim".

Threatening behaviour includes threats of violence, threats of suicide or threats to take the children from the abused person.

Domestic abuse affects people of all ages, social backgrounds, gender, religion, sexual preference or ethnicity, and in a range of relationships: married, separated, divorced, living together, dating, heterosexual, gay or lesbian, and includes child on parent abuse and elder abuse. Domestic abuse that causes serious physical injury is mainly committed by men against women. Male victims of domestic abuse may find it harder to seek help. Domestic abuse affects children who witness the abuse and may require safeguarding action to be taken.

If you have any concern that a person may be at risk from domestic abuse, either directly or indirectly (in the case of children and young people), you should ring 101.

4.13 Prevent

Warwickshire is a relatively safe place to live and most crime types are continuing to reduce. We also live in a global community, however, which means that we are affected by trends and events that occur at an international level. At present, there is a need to consider the international threat of terrorism and those people who are pulled into groups that support extremist causes.

In Warwickshire, authorities and communities are working together to deliver the Government's Prevent Strategy. Prevent is one of four objectives that make up the Government's Strategy for Countering Terrorism – CONTEST.

The Prevent Strategy has three key objectives:

- 1) Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it
- 2) Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- 3) Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that need to be addressed

The Strategy challenges all forms of terrorism, including the influence of far right and far left extremists. It defines extremism as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs”.

Prevent operates in a pre-criminal space, providing support and re-direction to vulnerable individuals at risk of being groomed into terrorist activities before any crimes are committed. Radicalisation could be comparable to other forms of harm and abuse. It is, therefore, considered to be a safeguarding issue and is considered alongside the wider safeguarding agenda.

If you require support from the Local Authority Prevent Officer, telephone 01926 412432. If you are unable to make contact with the Prevent Officer, telephone 01926 412338 to contact the Administrator for the Community Safety Team. In an emergency, call 999.

5 Equality

All people, regardless of their background, should be given the same level of support and protection. Regard should always be given to a person's religion or belief. It should be noted that people with disabilities, migrant adults and children, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), victims of trafficking, domestic abuse and bullying may have additional care needs and this should be remembered when considering the behavioral indicators.

Additional guidance is available in the procedures manual for children at <https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/safeguarding-children/i-work-with-children-and-young-people/interagency-safeguarding-procedures> and in the policy and procedures manual for adults at <https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/images/downloads/WM-Adult-Safeguarding-PP-v1.pdf>

6 Good Practice for Staff, Members and Volunteers

6.1 Duty of Care

It is possible to limit the situations where the abuse of children, young people and adults at risk may occur, by promoting safe working practices to all staff, Members, volunteers and contractors.

The following basic guidelines will help safeguard children, young people and adults; our staff, Members, volunteers and contractors; the Borough Council and other concerned organisations. The guidelines aim to promote positive practice and are examples of care, which should be exercised by everyone while working with children, young people and adults at risk.

6.2 Professional Curiosity

Professional curiosity is the capacity and skill for proactive questioning and challenge (rather than making assumptions or professional optimism not based on an assessment of history and current circumstances). Never be frightened to ask the obvious question and share concerns with colleagues or your supervisor. A fresh pair of eyes looking at a case can really help practitioners and organisations maintain good practice standards and develop a critical mindset.

6.3 Safe Working Practices

- When working with children and adults at risk, avoid situations where you and an individual are alone and unobserved
- Do not take children or adults with needs for care and support alone on a car journey, however short
- Children or young people should never be left unattended. For example, it is the parent / carer's responsibility to supervise any children in their care when they are visiting the Council offices, or when any member of staff, elected Member, volunteer or contractor is carrying out a home visit
- Children and adults with need for care and support have the right to privacy, respect and dignity. Respect the individual and provide a safe and positive environment
- If supervision in changing rooms or a similar environment is required, ensure staff work in pairs and never enter opposite sex changing rooms without appropriate warning
- With mixed groups, supervision should be by a male and female member of staff, where possible

Staff, Members and volunteers should **never**:

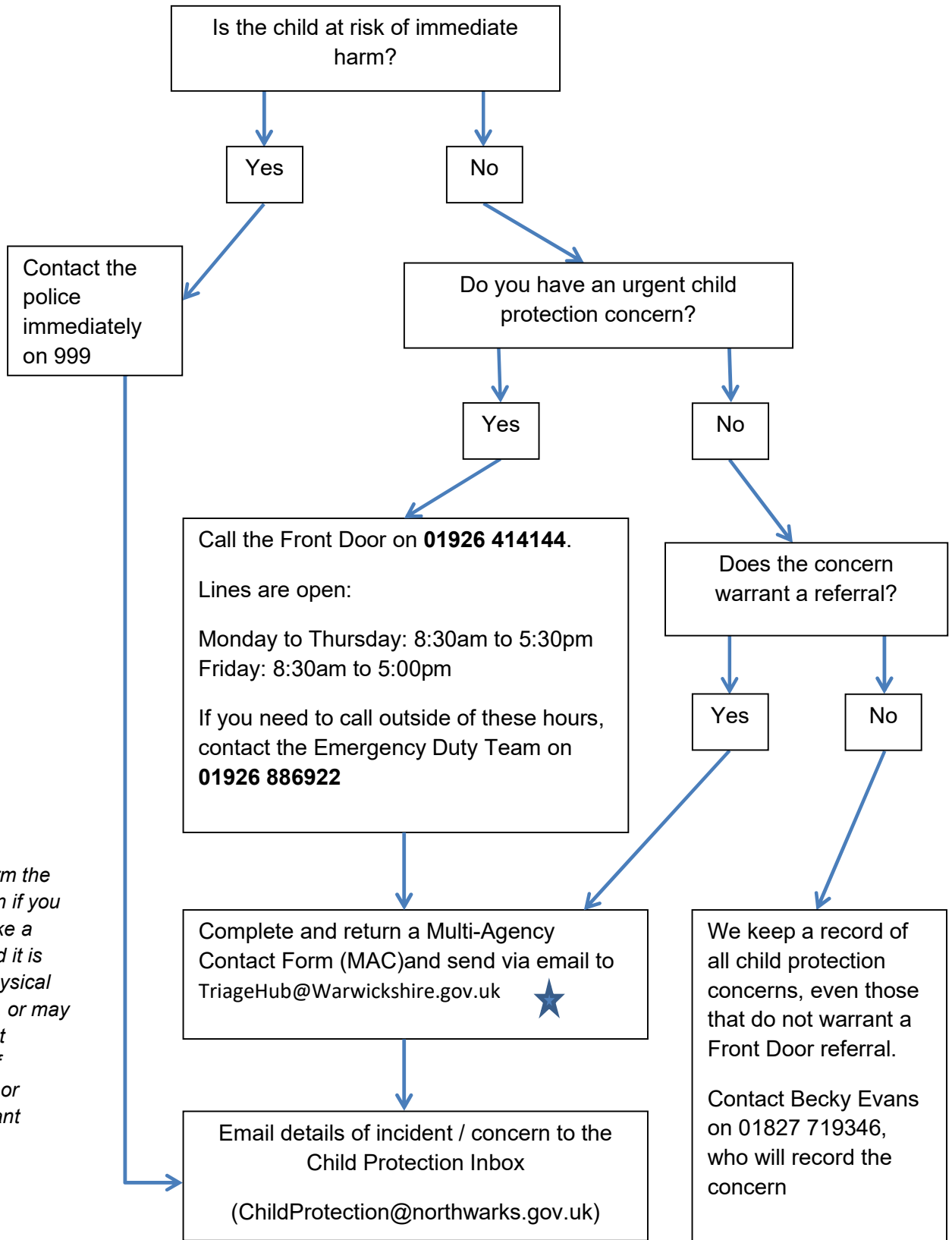
- Engage in rough physical games, including horseplay
- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children or adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use it yourself
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or adult with needs for care and support, even in fun
- Let any allegation a child or adult makes be ignored or go unrecorded
- Do things of a personal nature for children or adults that they can do for themselves, e.g. assist with changing
- Take a child or adult to the toilet, unless this is an emergency and a second, same-sex member of staff is present
- Use a mobile phone, camera or other recording device in any changing area or other single sex location, such as toilets, when the area is occupied

7 Reporting Procedures

7.1 Child Protection

Below is the Borough Council's Child Protection Referral Process.

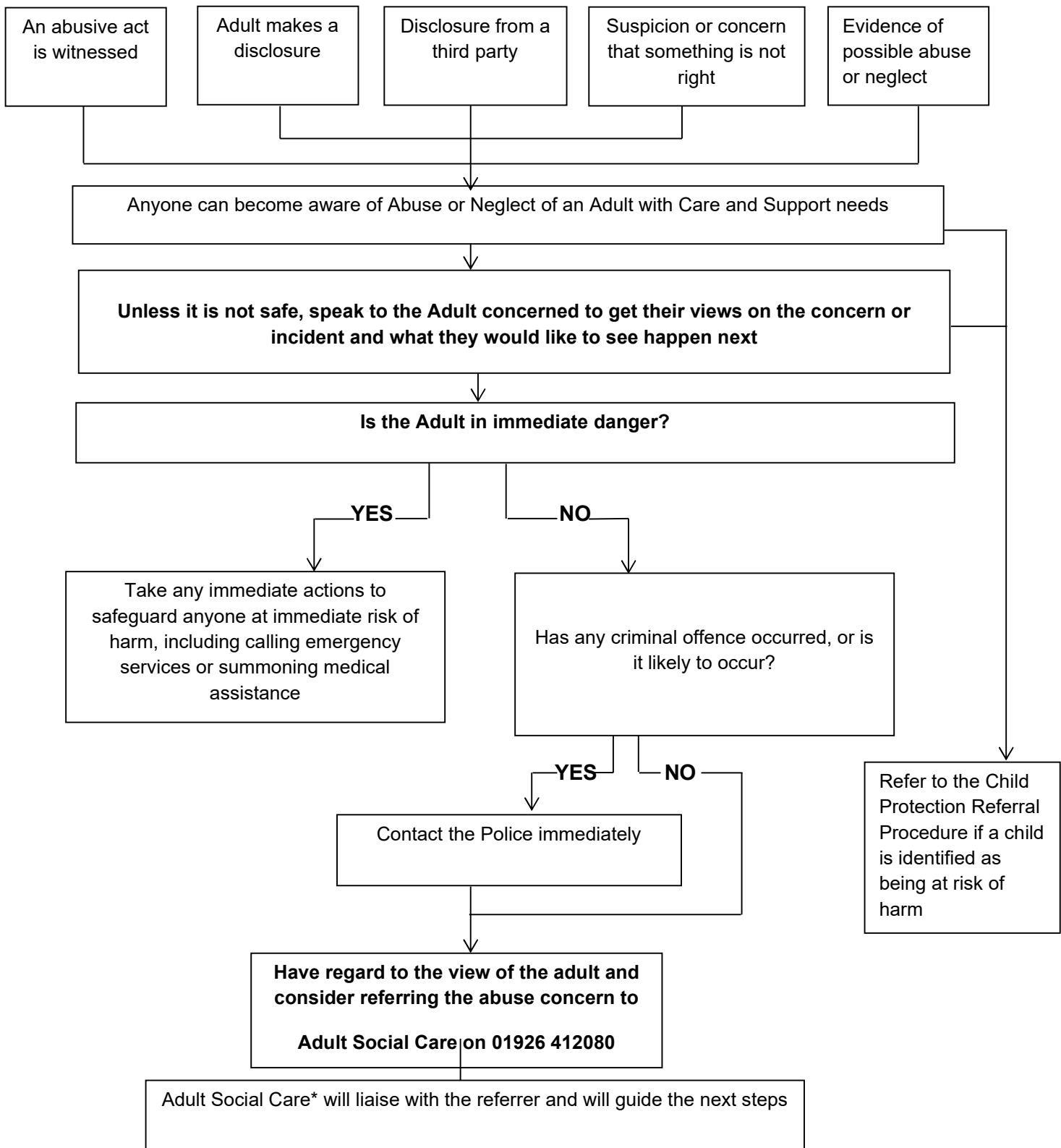
Child Protection Referral Procedure



★ You should inform the parent / guardian if you are going to make a referral, provided it is not related to physical or sexual abuse, or may place the child at increased risk of significant harm or cause a significant delay

If you have any concerns about making a referral, or are unsure if a concern warrants a referral, please contact Becky Evans (01827 719346) or Simon Powell (01827 719352).

7.2 Safeguarding Adults at Risk Referral Procedure



*For certain groups of adults with mental health needs, the Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust integrated Mental Health Service will lead the response to adult safeguarding concerns

Once a referral has been made you should send the details to adultsafeguarding@northwarks.gov.uk

7.3 Escalation Procedure

All organisations should have a policy for internal escalation of disagreements about safeguarding issues. This policy will be made known to staff in their induction and safeguarding training.

If a member of staff has an issue about how a safeguarding concern about a child has been dealt with internally they should contact the Director of Leisure and Community Development. If the issue relates to a decision made by the Director of Leisure and Community Development, they should seek advice from the Front Door referral service directly on 01926 414144. If a member of staff has an issue about how a safeguarding concern has been dealt following a Front Door referral, they should follow the Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership Escalation Process at https://www.proceduresonline.com/covandwarksscb/files/escalation_warks.pdf

If a member of staff has an issue about how an adult safeguarding concern has been dealt with internally they should contact the Director of Housing. If the issue relates to a decision made by the Director of Housing, they should contact the Manager of Warwickshire County Council's Safeguarding Team on 01926 412080. If a member of staff has an issue about how a safeguarding concern has been dealt with externally, by the Safeguarding Team, they should contact the Director of Housing, who will take action to escalate it if appropriate.

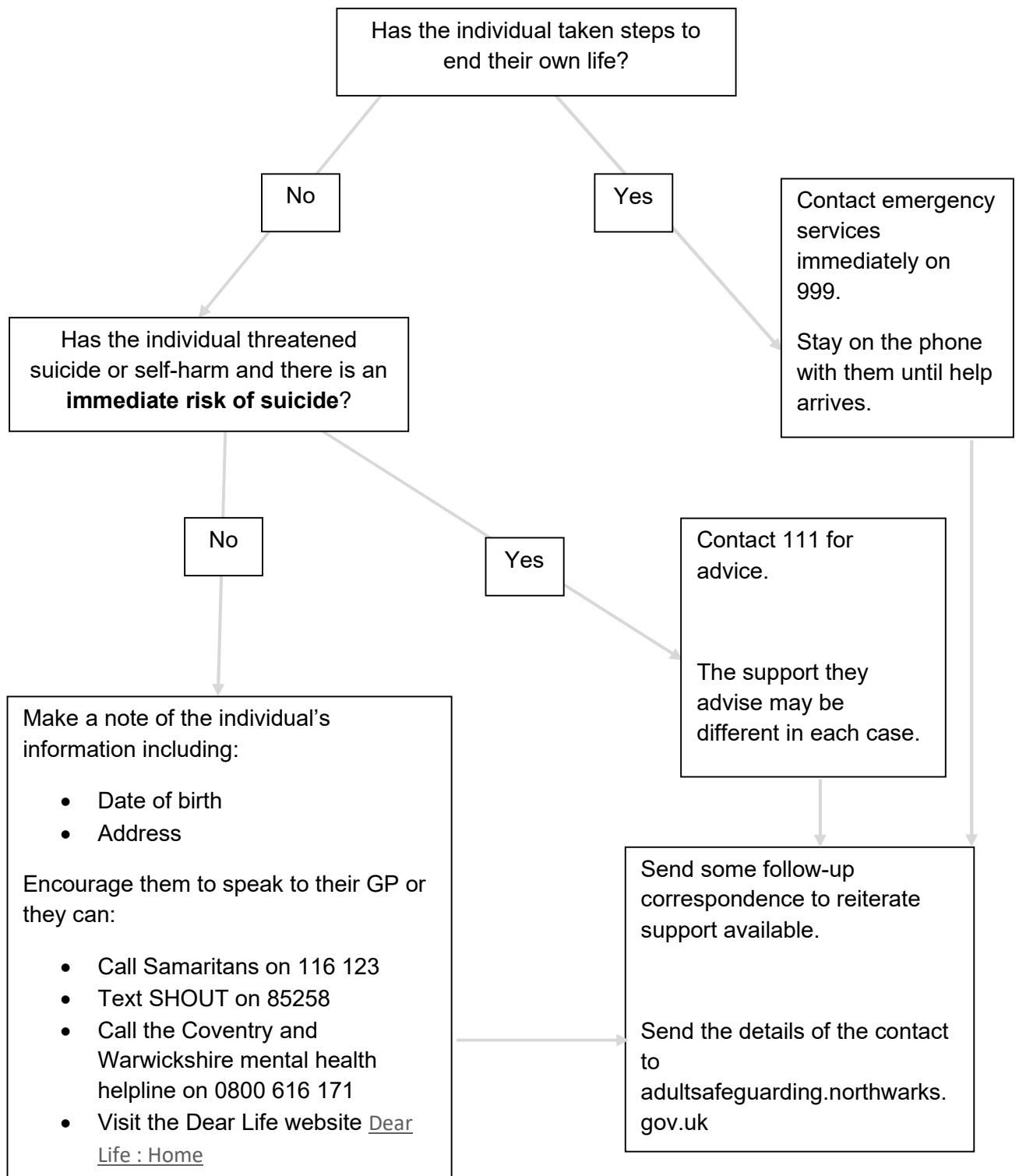
8 Suicides

8.1 Responding to Threats of Suicide and Other Forms of Self-Harm

On occasion, during contact with the Borough Council, a member of the public may claim that they are considering suicide or self-harm. This can be distressing, both for the member of the public and the member of staff in receipt of the contact.

Anyone can be affected in a way that makes them threaten suicide or self-harm. Often, they have experienced something in their life that has increased the likelihood of this behaviour, such as a relationship breakdown, financial difficulties, bereavement, being in a controlling or abusive relationship or homelessness.

Upon receipt of such information, the following flowchart should be used by staff when they are helping to signpost someone to the most appropriate form of support:



Please note that even if you think the individual is not serious about dying by suicide, you must take their threat seriously.

8.2 Saying the Right Thing

Not every member of staff is expected to deal with these conversations. You should only continue to speak to someone who is threatening suicide or self-harm if you feel confident to do so. If you are not confident or comfortable, and you have not completed suicide awareness training, you should pass the call on to your line manager or a safeguarding lead as soon as possible.

Once the individual has been signposted appropriately, following the flowchart above, correspondence should be sent via text, email or post.

Guidance on the conversations, and wording for the correspondence, can be found at Appendix A.

Dealing with these conversations can be very distressing. Following a contact, call or visit, Officers can contact any of the following for support:

- Line Manager
- Human Resources
- Corporate Mental Health First Aiders
- Corporate Safeguarding Leads

All contacts relating to threats of suicide or self-harm should be recorded and the information emailed to adultsafeguarding@northwarks.gov.uk. As with all safeguarding concerns, all contacts are logged internally.

8.3 Death of an Employee

Following notification of a death by suicide of an employee, the Borough Council will take into account the wishes of the deceased employee's family/next of kin regarding how the announcement of the death is made to employees and what is announced. No sensitive information about the employee's death, or information that is contrary to the family/next of kin's wishes or instructions, will be announced.

The Human Resources team will offer advice and support, including a referral to an external counselling service, to any grieving employees/managers who need it following a death by suicide of an employee.

9 Safer Recruitment

9.1 Recruitment and Selection

All of the Borough Council's staff will be appointed in line with the Authority's Recruitment and Selection Policy and procedures to ensure that all of the necessary checks are carried out on individuals expected to work with children and vulnerable adults.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- Completion of an application form, including a self-disclosure about criminal records
- Where appropriate, consent to obtain information from the Disclosure and Barring Service in order to assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and adults at risk in accordance with legislation
- Receipt of two relevant references, one of which, where possible, must be from a previous employer engaged in work with children, young people and / or adults at risk
- Confirmation of qualifications
- Confirmation of identity

9.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

In line with the Borough Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be carried out on all staff involved in 'Regulated Activity' relating to children and adults at risk. Guidance for managers is available from Human Resources.

The following Elected Member roles will be subject to a Basic DBS check:

- Spokesperson and Shadow Spokesperson for Health, Wellbeing and Leisure
- Young Persons Champion and Shadow Champion
- Lead Councillor on CCTV and Shadow Lead
- Mayor and Deputy Mayor

9.3 Supervision and Appraisal

All staff and volunteers work more effectively when they are well informed, trained and supported. Line managers should be sensitive to any concerns about abuse, act on them at an early stage and offer support to those who report it. It is the responsibility of line managers to monitor good practice. This can be done in a number of ways:

- Direct observation of the activity or service
- Staff appraisals, one-to-one meetings, mentoring and providing feedback on performance
- Participant feedback on the activities or services

All staff working, or having regular contact, with children, young people and adults at risk should have safeguarding as a standing item on the agenda for their one-to-one meetings.

9.4 Induction and Training

It is important that the recruitment and selection process is followed up by relevant induction and training in order to further protect children, young people and adults at risk from possible abuse. Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise

their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice and concerns or allegations of abuse.

A Training and Skills Development Record will be kept and monitored by the Human Resources Section to ensure that training is undertaken and refreshed as necessary by staff and Councillors across the Authority.

All members of Borough Council staff, regardless of whether or not they come into contact with children, young people or adults at risk during the normal course of their duties, must attend the Authority's Safeguarding training course(s) within three months of commencing their employment and on a regular (minimum of once every three years) basis thereafter. All Councillors will be trained during each four-year political term.

All members of staff must understand their responsibilities towards protecting children and adults at risk and must be aware of the procedures to follow should they have a related concern.

9.5 External Clubs / Organisations Using Borough Council Facilities

All clubs and organisations working with children and young people that use Borough Council facilities will be expected to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children, young and other vulnerable people. These arrangements may include, for example and where relevant, formal compliance with the safeguarding requirements of the governing body for the sport or activity concerned. If a club or organisation does not have its own policy, (or evidence of formal compliance with the safeguarding requirements of an appropriate governing body), a copy of this Policy will be distributed with the Terms and Conditions of Hire. The club / organisation will then be required to commit to adhere to the provisions of this Policy and the standards of care outlined herein. Given the Borough Council's statutory safeguarding duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that the bodies or persons hiring its facilities have suitable arrangements in place, the Manager of any such facility will then make arrangements to monitor the standards of care implemented by the club / organisation during its activities undertaken on Borough Council premises and will make appropriate reports or referrals under this Policy should it have any concerns about the activity or arrangements of the club / organisation in question.

9.6 Use of Contractors

The Council and its staff, Members and volunteers should exercise reasonable care to ensure that contractors undertaking work on behalf of the Authority are appropriately supervised and monitored.

Any contractor or sub-contractor engaged by the Borough Council in areas where workers are likely to come into contact with children or adults at risk, should have their own equivalent Safeguarding Policy. Failing this, it must demonstrate that they will comply with the terms of this Policy.

Where there is potential for contact with children or adults at risk, it is the responsibility of the manager who is using the services of the contractor to check

that a policy is in place and any necessary Disclosure and Barring Service checks have been satisfactorily completed.

10 Allegations Against a Member of Staff

10.1 Allegations Against People Who Work with Children / Young People

The procedure relates to all Borough Council employees, elected Members and contractors.

Any concerns should be raised immediately with the Director of Leisure and Community Development. In the absence of the Director of Leisure and Community Development, the Chief Executive should be informed. It is the responsibility of the Director of Leisure and Community Development to inform the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) within **one working day**.

Referrals to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) should be made where there are concerns that someone who works with children may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse (physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect). These include concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 years of age if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if it is consensual
- 'Grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 years of age with intent to commit a relevant offence
- Other grooming behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature (e.g. inappropriate text / email messages or images, gifts, socialising, etc.)
- Possession of indecent photographs / pseudo-photographs of children

If concerns arise about a person's behaviour towards her / his own children, the standard Child Protection Referral Process identified within this Policy should be followed.

The accused member of staff should:

- Be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved
- Be offered appropriate sources of support
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process

These referrals should be made on the Position of Trust Multi-Agency Contact Form (POT MAC) and emailed to the LADO at their direct email address, which is lado@warwickshire.gov.uk. Direct contact with the LADO Support Officer should also be made on 01926 743433.

If an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the employer ceases to use the person's service, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his / her services, the LADO should discuss with the employer whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Allegations of historical abuse should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns.

10.2 Allegations Against People Who Work with Adults at Risk

All concerns should be reported to the Director of the service in which the Officer works and to the Human Resources Manager.

If the allegation is against an Officer in the Council's employment:

- Once information of the allegation has been clarified, the Director will consult with Human Resources
- Once Human Resources has been notified, a safeguarding referral must be made to Warwickshire County Council and / or the Police

11 Dealing with a Disclosure

11.1 How to Respond

Listening to a disclosure can be difficult, and although it is not expected that employees will actively seek or probe people for disclosures, if someone does disclose information about abuse you should:

- Listen carefully
- Take the person seriously
- Write down, as soon as you can, what has been said (using their words) and any extra information about their actions whilst giving the information (for example, if someone said "they hurt my arm" but pointed to their leg you would need to record both elements)
- Follow the safeguarding procedures outlined within this Policy
- Tell the person what you are going to do next
- Do not promise to keep anything a secret. Remember, it is a statutory duty to report safeguarding concerns
- Do not ask leading questions

If you do not feel comfortable, confident or the situation is having a negative impact on your emotional wellbeing, seek support from an Officer with a responsibility for safeguarding (Section 3).

11.2 Looking After Yourself

Receiving a disclosure can have a significant impact on your emotional wellbeing. If you are affected by anything you have read or heard with regard to safeguarding, you can:

- Inform your line manager (without disclosing any of the details regarding the disclosure)
- Access counselling through the Authority (which Human Resources will need to authorise)
- Talk through the issue with any of the Officers responsible for safeguarding (see Section 3)
- Access local mental health services (see <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mentalhealth> for details)

12 Uncollected Children

If there are any uncollected children at the end of a structured session at a leisure facility the following action should be taken:

- 15 minutes after the child should be collected call the emergency contact details provided at registration
- If contact is made, establish a collection time
- If no contact is made, try second contact if one has been given
- If no one is answering the emergency contact number(s), continue to try every five minutes
- If contact has not been made within half an hour after the time the child should have been collected, the Operations Officer should be made aware
- Continue to try emergency contact number(s) every five minutes
- If the children have not been collected within one hour and no contact has been established with a parent / guardian, call 101

The uncollected child / children should be supervised by the Duty Officer until they are collected

13 Marketing and Promotion

13.1 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 supersede the Data Protection Act 1998. Practitioners must have due regard to the relevant data protection principles that allow them to share personal information.

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 place greater significance on the need for organisations to be transparent and accountable in relation to their use of data. All organisations handling personal data must ensure that they have in place

comprehensive and proportionate arrangements for collecting, storing and sharing information. This also includes arrangements on informing service users about the information that they will collect and how this may be shared.

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 **does not** prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe.

To effectively share information:

- All practitioners should be confident of the processing conditions that allow them to store and share the information that they need to carry out their safeguarding role. Information that is relevant to safeguarding will often be data which is considered to be “special category personal data”, meaning that it is sensitive and personal
- Where practitioners need to share special category personal data, they should be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as one of conditions that allows practitioners to share information with others without consent
- Information can be shared legally without consent, if a practitioner is unable to, or cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if to gain consent could place a child at risk
- Relevant personal information can also be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental or emotional wellbeing

Practitioners looking to share information without consent should consider which processing condition in the Data Protection Act 2018 is most appropriate in the particular circumstances of the case. This may be the safeguarding processing condition or another relevant provision.

The Borough Council will use personal data for a limited number of purposes and always within the rules set out in the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. The Authority will process data to protect individuals from harm or injury.

13.2 Photographs

With regard to the taking photographs of children or adults at risk:

- Avoid taking pictures if individuals can be identified
- To take pictures of children you need written permission from their parent / guardian
- To take pictures of adults you need to get verbal permission
- A photograph should be retained for no longer than is necessary for the purpose of which it was taken, otherwise for a maximum of twelve months
- Images should be stored on Content Manager and under no circumstances should images of children or adults at risk be stored on an employee's personal or work mobile / other handheld device

At any Authority–led event in a public area, it would be deemed unreasonable to request consent from everyone present. The taking photographs of children / adults at risk at a public event, therefore, is acceptable. These images can only be used in promotional material relating to the event and must not be passed to third parties.

The Borough Council is not responsible for collating consent for external organisations or individuals (e.g. journalists) who are not employed by the Authority when they are taking photographs at Borough Council run events.

13.3 Social Media and Website Articles

Even without the use of photographs, if an article or social media post includes a child’s full name, verbal consent must be sought from the parent / guardian.

Appendix A: Saying the Right Thing

Asking someone if they are considering suicide can be a daunting question, but it is safe to ask. For many people, asking the direct questions makes them feel that they have permission to talk honestly and that they will be listened to. Questions may include:

- Have things got so bad that you are thinking about suicide?
- Sometimes when people talk about the feelings/situations you've been describing, they're thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?
- The things you've been saying make me wonder if you're thinking about suicide. Is that how you're feeling right now?

Listen without judgement.

Seek to gather some more information as you will need to log the concern and you may need to make a referral. Details such as:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Contact telephone number

If they have taken steps to harm themselves, whilst seeking emergency help for them, try to establish:

- Where they are
- What they have done
- Are they alone or is someone with them
- Have they taken any drugs or consumed alcohol

The following text should be used in the follow-up correspondence:

* * * * *

Dear xxx

Following on from our conversation on xxx I would like to reiterate some support you can access to help with your mental health and wellbeing.

In our conversation you expressed that you were struggling with your mental health, and had thoughts about suicide and / or self-harm.

*If you are thinking about suicide or have harmed yourself, you should **call 999 or go straight to A&E***

*If you can keep yourself safe for now, but still need urgent advice you should **call 111.***

If you need to talk to someone about how you are feeling you could:

Call the Samaritans for free on 116 123

Text SHOUT for free on 85258

Call the Coventry and Warwickshire mental health helpline on 0800 616 171

Visit the Dear Life website at: www.dearlife.org.uk

FOLLOW WITH SPECIFIC INFORMATION REGARDING THEIR ORIGINAL REASON FOR CONTACTING YOU I.E. HOUSING / BENEFITS.

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