

Beech Parish Council

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Procedure

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BEECH PARISH COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PROCEDURE

1 Introduction

1.1 Children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to participate, have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose, or their parents/carers choose for them.

1.2 Under the Children Act 2004, Beech Parish Council has a duty to co-operate with the Hampshire County Council in discharging its duties as a Children's Services Authority and to promote the well-being of children and young people. In turn Hampshire County Council is also the lead agency for the protection of vulnerable adults. The council can carry out its duty by ensuring, when taking decisions in relation to service provision, that the needs and interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults are considered by all Councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted services.

1.3 The purpose of this procedure is to protect and promote the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults who use or receive services provided or commissioned by Beech Parish Council, and to protect the councils, officers, elected Councillors and volunteers.

1.4 Beech Parish Council is not Children's Services Authorities and it is therefore not the role of the Council to investigate allegations of abuse. However, all Councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers have a responsibility to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be a victim of harm or abuse.

1.5 This procedure demonstrates how the Council will meet its legal obligations and outlines to members of the public, service users, Councillors, employees and people working on behalf of the Councils what the councils can do to protect and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults

2 Statement of intent

2.1 Beech Parish Council is committed to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by, or on behalf of, the Council.

2.2 We will consult with children, young people and vulnerable adults in policy and service delivery matters which affect them, giving them the opportunity to help shape the Council's services.

2.3 The Council acknowledge it has a duty of care and will take all necessary steps to ensure that every child, young person or vulnerable adult, with whom it works is enabled to be emotionally and physically safe. A Code of Conduct for representatives of Beech Parish Council can be found at Appendix 1.

3 Scope

3.1 The scope of this procedure covers the activities and services provided by the Council, its agents, contractors or partners and includes all Council employees, councillors, volunteers, agency workers, contractors and partners working for and on behalf of the Council.

3.2 To ensure the effective implementation of this procedure, roles and responsibilities have been defined for representatives of the council (Appendix 2).

3.2 Commissioned, contracted or grant funded organisations will be expected to have policies and procedures in place commensurate with the level of involvement and contact they have with children, young people and vulnerable adults. As a minimum, any organisation receiving funding from the Council will be expected to have a safeguarding policy and procedure which is understood by employees and volunteers and available to service users.

4 Definitions

4.1 Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children, young people and vulnerable adults health or development.
- Ensuring children, young people and vulnerable adults are growing up and living in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care
- Enabling children and young people to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully

4.2 The phrase “children, young people and vulnerable adults refers to:

a) Anyone under the age of 18

b) Someone who is over the age of 18 who is, or who may be, in need of community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness and is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. (Lord Chancellor’s Department 1997)

4.3 The word “representative” is used to refer to anyone working on behalf of the Council, whether that work is paid or voluntary, full or part time, the self-employed, and Councillors. More specifically this includes –

- Employees
- Casual and agency workers
- Councillors
- Contract staff when working under contract to the Council
- Volunteers when working by agreement for or on behalf of the Council

4.4 The definition of child abuse, and the categories of child abuse, can be found at Appendix 4 which is taken from ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2006), a joint document from the Department of Health, the Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills

4.5 The definition of abuse of vulnerable adults, also at Appendix 4 is taken from the Department of Health statutory guidance 2000 “No Secrets: the development of multi-agency responses to the abuse of vulnerable adults.”

5 Legislative context

5.1 Beech Parish Council has a statutory duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

5.2 Section 10 of the Act outlines the duty to promote inter-agency cooperation between named agencies, including district and borough councils

5.3 Sections 13 – 16 place a requirement on district and borough councils to be represented on, and participate in Local Safeguarding Children's Boards.

5.4 This procedure has been produced to meet these legal obligations by providing a framework for the safeguarding of children and young people.

5.5 There is no statutory duty for district or borough councils to report suspected abuse of vulnerable adults; however the Council is committed to applying the principles of the Department of Health statutory guidance 2000 "No Secrets: the development of multi-agency responses to the abuse of vulnerable adults."

6 National and local policy context

6.1 The vision for children's services within 'Every Child Matters' (2004) – sets out five key outcomes for Children and Young People. They are to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing

6.2 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 created the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) which aims to prevent unsuitable people working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It includes social care, health, education, housing support and supporting people services.

6.3 Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks will only be sought where Councillors, employees and volunteers have a substantial or regular or unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults as part of their duties or responsibilities for or on behalf of the council.

6.4 The Independent Safeguarding Authority will provide a monitoring and checking process that will include allegations/suspensions (List 99, etc) regarding individuals as well as convictions subsequent to a CRB check. Such a process should only be used where Councillors, employees and volunteers have substantial or regular and unsupervised contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

6.5 Beech Parish Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This procedure is consistent with, and complementary to, the policies and procedures of the LSCB.

7 Commitments

7.1 In order to meet its safeguarding obligations under the Children Act 2004, and in order to meet its commitments to protect vulnerable adults, the Council will adopt the following aims:-

1. Demonstrate senior management commitment to safeguarding
2. Make available to all staff a clear statement of the Council's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding
3. Have a clear line of accountability within the Council for safeguarding work
4. Take into account, when developing services, the need to safeguard and be informed by the views of children, young people and vulnerable adults
5. Provide staff training on safeguarding
6. Undertake safer recruitment
7. Safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults through effective inter agency working
8. Promote inter-agency information sharing

To achieve these aims, the council will endeavour to:

- a) identify a member to champion the importance of safeguarding throughout the organisation
- b) ensure staff and Councillors know what action should be taken if they have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult (Appendix 3)
- c) appoint a Named Councillor who has responsibilities for dealing with allegations against Council representatives
- e) include, where possible, the views and needs of older people and people with disabilities when developing services
- f) ensure that staff have access to a comprehensive training programme that meets the requirements of the statutory guidance
- g) apply policies and procedures which help prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults
- h) work with local partners through membership of the Hampshire Local Safeguarding Children Board, and the Local Children's Partnerships
- i) work with Hampshire County Council's Adult Services department as they develop policies and practices with regard to safeguarding vulnerable adults
- j) ensure that staff understand how to share information in a way that is both legal and ethical.

8 Monitoring and Review

8.1 This procedure will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it reflects current national policy guidelines.

8.2 An annual self-assessment audit will be undertaken to ensure that procedures take account of safeguarding requirements.

Appendix 1

Code of Good practice for Beech Parish Council Representatives

The duty of care of a representative of Beech Parish Council begins when an individual is put into their care and continues until the individual is returned to the care of others (e.g. a parent or guardian).

Recommended good practice for council representatives states that the representative should:

Always

- Avoid situations where an adult and an individual child/young person/vulnerable adult cannot be seen by others, therefore ensuring appropriate relationships with mutual trust and respect
- Provide an example you wish others to follow and remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intended
- Encourage children/young people/vulnerable adults to feel comfortable enough to discuss attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with children/young people/vulnerable adults and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust
- Recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse
- Take any disclosure or evidence of abuse of a child/young person/vulnerable adult seriously
- Ensure that activities are always staffed by more than one person, or at least within sight or hearing of others
- Increased supervision, care and attention must be adopted where residential activities are involved
- Insist upon signed consent from parent/guardians when children are to be transported by car/coach/train/buses/minibuses etc. by employees/volunteers. This form should include emergency contact details, medical information and special instructions, i.e. dietary requirements and any allergies
- Where possible, request consent for administering first aid or medication
- Request consent for photo or video footage

Never

- Permit abusive activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying)
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour
- Use your influence to obtain personal gain or reward
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Believe "it could never happen to me"
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures even in fun
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults away from others

- Take children/young people/vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you
- Leave a venue until you are certain that all the children/young people/vulnerable adults have been collected
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Cause an individual to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining them

Appendix 2

Roles and responsibilities

To make certain the implementation of this policy is effective the Council will ensure that, where appropriate, representatives of the Council:

- have been CRB checked prior to employment and that all relevant references are verified
- are taken through an induction procedure before they come into contact with any children, young people or vulnerable adults

Induction will include all new employees being made familiar with the Council's Safeguarding procedure. For certain representatives working directly with children, young people or vulnerable adults, induction will also include:

- (a) Attendance at a child protection Common Assessment Framework workshop at the earliest opportunity.
- (b) Ensuring they understand their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding
- (c) Raising awareness of the need to work pro-actively with the voluntary sector and other related agencies to ensure consistent policies and practice underpin all work undertaken by the Council, encouraging these organisations to implement effective procedures based on this Safeguarding Policy

The role of Council Representatives

To make the implementation of this procedure as effective as possible all representatives of the Council must work in partnership to ensure the safeguarding of the persons for whom they are responsible by:

- Accepting the responsibility they have to safeguard the children, young people and vulnerable adults they are responsible for and to act accordingly to any sign of abuse
- Being prepared to challenge any negative or unwanted practice
- Maintaining confidentiality of the child/young person/vulnerable adult and the person against whom the concern has been made by only raising the concern through the appropriate channel
- Recording and informing the Council's Child Protection Officer of any reported incident immediately
- Reporting and recording immediately to the Council's Child Protection Officer cases where allegations or suspicions of abuse are made against a Council representative

- Completing both a child, young person or vulnerable adult protection incident report form (form attached on pg 9) and an interagency referral form as soon as possible after a safeguarding issue has been raised.

The role of the Child Protection Officer (contact details on flow chart and Incident Report Form) will be to:

- Monitor and update this procedure in conjunction with the relevant officers and ensure that the procedure is implemented
- Ensure appropriate induction and training is given to all representatives
- Share with other representatives, expertise or information gained from training
- Keep records and any contemporaneous notes with due regard for confidentiality
- Advocate on behalf of children, young people or vulnerable adults and liaise with any other involved services
- Maintain the overview of all child, young person and vulnerable adult protection incidents within the Council

Appendix 3

Procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse Safe Practices in Unforeseen Circumstances

If any of the following should occur, Council representatives must report them to an independent witness and make a written record of the event. Where applicable, the individual's parent/guardian should also be informed of the incident if the individual:

- Is accidentally hurt
- Misinterprets something that has been said or done
- Has been restrained

The following are strategies that can be used when listening to children, young people or vulnerable adults:

- Take them seriously
- Use appropriate body language
- Stay calm and be sympathetic
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep
- Go somewhere more private but be careful not to put yourself at risk
- Be honest
- Observe non-verbal language
- Do not prompt or question
- Use eye contact
- Record events immediately

Unfortunately it is impossible to establish guidelines for every situation and it is recommended that common sense should be used at all times when assuming a duty of care for a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

3rd party incident reporting procedures

If abuse is disclosed, the child, young person or vulnerable adult should be kept safe and allow them to speak openly and without interruption. They should be reassured and told that what they have said is being taken seriously. Promises that cannot be kept should not be made and asking leading questions should be avoided. It is imperative that the information shared by the individual is recorded as soon as possible, ensuring a true reflection of what that person has disclosed.

Allegations against Council Representatives

Reporting concerns, allegations or incidents of abuse against a colleague however distressing must follow the same procedure as reporting incidents against 3rd parties. For allegations regarding a child or young person, the Child Protection Officer will contact the Hampshire County Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Allegations if there has been a report of a potential incident regarding a person in a position of trust. The current LADO is Barbara Piddington (Tel 01962 876265 and email barbara.piddington@hants.gov.uk).

In her absence the Child Protection Officer must contact the County Safeguarding Unit, Children's Services Department, Clarendon House, Monarch Way, Winchester SO22 5PW

For allegations regarding a vulnerable adult, the Child Protection Officer will contact Hampshire County Council's Adult Services department on 0845 603 5630 during office hours, or on 0845 600 4555 outside of office hours.

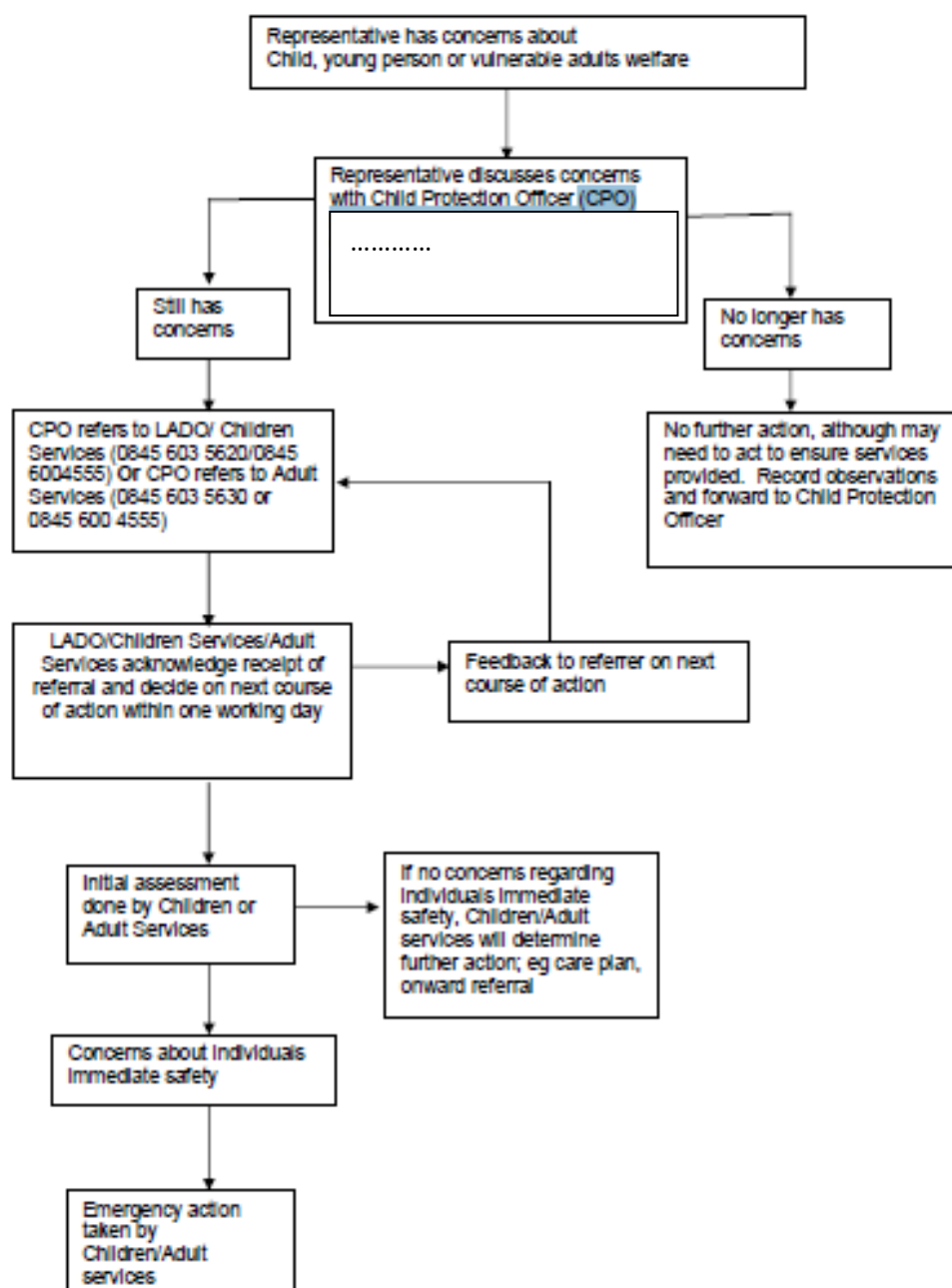
It is not the representative's role to investigate an allegation, their priority is to record and refer to the Child Protection Officer

Action to be taken in a case where abuse is suspected

If a Council represent has any concerns over potential abuse, they are to follow the process outlined in the flow chart below:

Action to be taken in a case where abuse is suspected

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CHILD, YOUNG PERSON AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

YOUR NAME:	POSITION:
INDIVIDUAL'S NAME:	INDIVIDUAL'S ADDRESS:
PARENTS/CARERS NAME & ADDRESS (where applicable):	
DATE & TIME OF INCIDENT:	
YOUR OBSERVATIONS (IF ANY):	
EXACTLY WHAT WAS SAID AND WHAT YOU SAID IN RETURN:	
PLEASE CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY AND ATTACH	
ACTION TAKEN SO FAR:	
EXTERNAL AGENCIES CONTACTED (INCLUDE DATE & TIME)	
AGENCY:	NAME & CONTACT NUMBER:
DETAILS OF ADVICE RECEIVED:	

Signed..... **Print Name**.....

Date.....

Please return all completed forms to: The clerk, Beech Parish Council, c/o Old Stables, Wield Road, Medstead, Alton, Hampshire GU34 5NJ

Appendix 4

Types of/Identifying Abuse

What is abuse?

Abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children/young people/vulnerable adults are harmed. It refers to the damage done to a person's physical or mental health. Persons can be abused within or outside of their family, at school or any other environment they may attend.

Definitions of abuse vary for children and young people, and vulnerable adults, and therefore have been identified separately in the list below.

The following are all forms of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Children & young people: hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Also includes fabricated and induced illness, whereby a parent/carer/guardian feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health in a child/young person.

Vulnerable adult: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual Abuse

Children & young people: forcing or enticing an individual to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. May involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts, also includes involving children in watching pornographic material or watching sexual acts.

Vulnerable adult: rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult did not, or could not, consent – or had to consent under pressure.

Psychological Abuse

Children & young people: persistent emotional ill treatment is likely to cause serious harm to the child's emotional development. May involve conveying to child/young person/vulnerable adult that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate and cause them to feel frightened, in danger be exploited or corrupted.

Vulnerable adult: emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive network.

Neglect

Children & young people: the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and psychological needs which is likely to result in serious impairment to health and development. May involve a failure to provide food, shelter, clothing or a failure to protect from psychical/psychological harm and danger, or allow access to medical care or treatment.

Financial or material abuse

Vulnerable adult: theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Signed...Kim Eakers.....

Chairman Beech Parish Council

Date....12th May 2025.....