



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding and Protection Policy

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BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

**CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION POLICY**

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BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding and Protection Policy sets out Braunstone Town Council's approach to preventing and reducing harm to children and vulnerable adults when they are in contact with the Town Council's services, staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors.

2. PRINCIPLES

Through this Policy, Braunstone Town Council aims to:

- (a) promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults;
- (b) provide assurance to parents, carers and other parties that the Town Council takes reasonable steps to manage risks and keep children and vulnerable adults safe;
- (c) ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with the necessary information, training and support on safeguarding matters;
- (d) prevent the employment of individuals in work with children and/or vulnerable adults where they have been barred by the DBS or are deemed by the Town Council to pose an unacceptable risk to vulnerable groups; and
- (e) respond to any allegations or suspicions regarding harm to children or vulnerable adults arising from contact with the Town Council's services, staff, councillors, volunteers or contractors, whether the harm has taken place on Council premises or not.

The Policy also seeks to manage effectively the risks associated with activities and events involving children and vulnerable adults through:

- (a) the risk assessment process which involves identifying risks and means of reducing or eliminating these;
- (b) implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process and reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis;
- (c) ensuring that the appropriate DBS or basic disclosure checks are conducted, depending on eligibility, for any individuals starting or moving into work which involves working with children or vulnerable adults; and
- (d) requiring new employees and individuals involved in working with children or vulnerable adults to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

A Child is defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday.

Vulnerable adults are people who are 18 years of age or over and are getting or may need help and services to live in the community. Vulnerable adults may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is a difficult issue and presents challenges to all involved in providing services for young people. It is not always easily recognisable but is generally divided into four categories:

1. Physical Abuse – where adults physically hurt or injure children, hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting are all forms of physical abuse. Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison and attempted suffocation or drowning are also physical abuse.
2. Neglect – an adult may fail to meet a child's basic needs, like food, warm clothing or medical attention. Children might be left alone unsupervised. Abuse in any form can affect a child of any age.
3. Emotional Abuse – persistent lack of love and affection damages children emotionally. Being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted can make the child very nervous and withdrawn.
4. Sexual Abuse – this is where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity. This could occur through unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact or through suggestive comments or innuendo or include showing children pornographic materials.

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults can include:

- physical,
- financial,
- material,
- sexual,
- psychological,
- discriminatory,
- emotional abuse
- neglect.

Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone.

4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of Braunstone Town Council:

1. To ensure councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of the need to protect children and vulnerable adults
2. To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
3. To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability
4. To utilise the Disclosure and Barring Service to check councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors that have access to or work with Children and/or Vulnerable Adults

Responsibilities of Role Holders and Contractors:

1. All councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors working on behalf of Braunstone Town Council have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable adults
2. To be familiar with the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding and Protection Policy
3. To take appropriate action in line with the policy of Braunstone Town Council
4. To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.

5. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

How to recognise abuse

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her;
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour such as becoming very quiet; withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- Difficulty in making friends.

If you notice any social changes in the behaviour of a child, worrying marks or bruises or hear a child/children talking about things which give cause for concern then your first responsibility is to the child.

It is not safe to assume that someone else will take action. As an adult you have a duty to take appropriate action. Recognising and coping with child abuse is very stressful and the person reporting the concern will not have to cope alone.

What to do if you suspect abuse

If a child spontaneously talks of experiences which give cause for concern, you should:

1. Explain to the child that if he/she discloses information which leads you to believe they are being abused, you will be unable to keep it confidential.
2. Listen to the child without questioning him/her. Be aware of your own reactions as showing disapproval may stop the child from continuing with their disclosure.
3. Do not try to stop the child from recalling events. Make a note of what is said, in what context, the setting, the timing and which people were present. (complete a log if you have one)
4. Inform the designated Safeguarding Officer immediately or if they are unavailable an appropriate senior member of staff immediately. If you are unsure of what action to take it would be appropriate to seek advice from either the police or social services department.
5. The Safeguarding Officer will contact the appropriate authorities including the Duty Social Worker in the area where the child lives as soon as possible.

Allegations of abuse will be treated similarly whether the disclosure is relating to an individual from within or externally of the Town Council. The information should be passed onto the designated Safeguarding Officer and handled in the same way. Social Services will also follow the same procedure as they do to investigate allegations of abuse for a family.

The designated Safeguarding Officer in Braunstone Town Council is the Deputy Executive Officer & Community Services Manager, Pauline Snow, who can be contacted on 0116 289 9270 or at Braunstone Civic Centre. Any concerns or reports of abuse must be reported to this individual as soon as possible.

6. CHILD PROTECTION MEASURES

The following measures will be adopted to ensure the safeguarding of children accessing and using Braunstone Town Council's facilities and services:

- (a) the Town Council aims to ensure that recruitment of all staff and volunteers is conducted in a way to safeguard children and where appropriate undergo an enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check, which should be renewed annually, or register with the Barring Service's update service;
- (b) all workers and volunteers will be given a copy of the policy and those who work directly with children will receive training as part of their induction to the organisation.

Protecting Leaders

- (a) Never believe that “it could never happen to you’.
- (b) If you suspect that a young person is developing an inappropriate affection for you, discuss it with other leaders and explore constructive ways of dealing with it.
- (c) If you develop an abnormal affection for a young person withdraw from the situation, notify the Safeguarding Officer and seek professional advice.
- (d) Be aware that young people can fabricate stories that can place you in a bad light. Do not take any chances nor allow yourself to be in a situation where stories can be given credence. Lone Workers should take particular note of the Council’s Lone Working Policy and Risk Assessments.
- (e) Always report and record any allegations made by children. Do not let them go unchallenged.

Behaviour guidelines for those working with young people

The aim of these guidelines is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and to support in providing a safe, caring environment.

DO’s

- (a) Always be publicly open when working with children
- (b) Avoid being alone with children unnecessarily. Where possible avoid taking children alone on car journeys unless there is no other option and the child’s parents have given permission
- (c) Where possible parents should take responsibility for their own children
- (d) Set an example of appropriate behaviour. Young people learn by example
- (e) Offer respect to the young person at all times and strive to be sensitive to their feelings
- (f) Good behaviour should be positively encouraged

DON’TS

- (a) Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay. Nor engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- (b) Avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison
- (c) Never physically punish any young person
- (d) Do not deprive any young person of, or force any child to consume food or drink
- (e) Do not humiliate or frighten any young person

7. VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Vulnerable Adult has the right:

- To be made aware of this policy
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate

- To receive information about the outcome

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. The designated Safeguarding Officer in Braunstone Town Council is the Deputy Executive Officer & Community Services Manager, Pauline Snow, who can be contacted on 0116 289 9270 or at Braunstone Civic Centre. Any concerns or reports of abuse must be reported to this individual as soon as possible.

The Safeguarding Officer shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker (or the Police if the person is in immediate danger).

A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

8. SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO REPORT ABUSE

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are role holders, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- they will be taken seriously
- their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared with the appropriate authorities if they or others are at significant risk.

9. WHISTLEBLOWING

In the event that the abuse cannot be reported to the Town Council's Safeguarding Officer, you can report to either to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, a Town Councillor or a designated whistleblowing helpline such as:

- Whistleblowing Helpline (for NHS and social care staff)
<http://wbhelpline.org.uk/> 08000 724725
- Public Concern at Work 020 7404 6609 <http://www.pcaw.org.uk/>

10. DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A ROLE HOLDER

Braunstone Town Council will assure all councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or vulnerable adult. Where there is a complaint against a councillor, member of staff, volunteer or contractor there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation,
- a child or vulnerable adult protection investigation,
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation (member of staff only).

The results of any investigations may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Concerns about poor practice:

- (a) If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue
- (b) If the allegation is about poor practice by the Safeguarding Officer or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not the organisation should initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Concerns about suspected abuse:

- (a) Any suspicion that a child and/or vulnerable adult has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the designated Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the individual in question and any other child and/or vulnerable adult who may be at risk
- (b) The designated Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours
- (c) The parents or carers of the child or vulnerable adult will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- (d) If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk or Chair of the Council's Employing Committee will refer the allegation to Social Services.

Internal Enquiries and Suspension:

- (a) The Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. In the case of a member of staff, this will be referred to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk.
- (b) Whether or not any Police / Social Services enquiry has been able to prove an allegation beyond all reasonable doubt, the Town Council may undertake an investigation under the Disciplinary Policy based on the information available and potential breach of contract by the individual in question.

11. RECRUITMENT

1. Braunstone Town Council will use the Disclosure and Barring Service checks with councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors where appropriate.
2. The Executive Officer & Town Clerk and/or the Safeguarding Officer will be able to determine that additional checks on the suitability of role holders and contractors to work with children and vulnerable adults will be necessary.
3. All new staff and relevant volunteers will be required to provide two references.
4. The Town Council will ensure that all employees/volunteers have appropriate qualifications and training.
5. All new employees/volunteers will go through a probation and induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all employees/volunteers are adequately supported.

12. TRAINING

Braunstone Town Council recognises the importance of regular learning and development for councillors, staff and volunteers:

- the Safeguarding Officer will attend appropriate training
- all councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors will be fully briefed concerning their safeguarding responsibilities during induction and prior to starting their duties.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

The designated Safeguarding Officer is the Deputy Executive Officer & Community Services Manager, Pauline Snow. Braunstone Town Council, Braunstone Civic Centre, Kingsway, Braunstone Town, Leicester, LE3 2PP.
Tel: 0116 289 9270. Email: pauline.snow@braunstonetowncouncil.org.uk