



Penance Town Council

Safeguarding Policy (Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults)

1. INTRODUCTION

Penance Town Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults that use its services and promotes a safeguarding culture and environment. The purpose of this policy is to make clear what is required in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and to will help to maintain a safe and positive environment for them.

2. POLICY COVERAGE

This policy applies to all employees and councillors of Penance Town Council and all volunteers working on behalf of Penance Town Council.

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Town Council's Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Complaints Policy and Procedure and Grievance Procedure.

In this policy the term 'child' also refers to a young person, i.e. any person under the age of 18.

3. DEFINITION

3.1 A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act, 1989).

3.2 A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over:

- Who is, or may be in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability;
- Who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

4. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm.

4.1 Child Abuse

Neglect –failure to meet a child's basic physical/ psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. For example:

- Not providing adequate food, clothing and shelter;
- Not protecting a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Not ensuring adequate supervision; or
- Not ensuring appropriate medical care or treatment.

Physical Abuse – where physical pain or injury is caused, e.g. hitting, shaking, biting, burning, throwing, poisoning etc.

Sexual Abuse – forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Actual physical contact is not always involved: it can include non-contact activities, such as encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Emotional Abuse – where there is persistent emotional ill-treatment that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional status. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber and text bullying), constant criticism and unrealistic pressure to perform, causing the victim to feel frightened or in danger, exploitation or corruption.

Disabled children may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them. Dependency on others for primary needs, e.g. feeding and clothing, may make a person feel powerless to report abusive treatment.

4.2 Abuse of adults

The Care Act 2014 and supporting statutory guidance states that 'safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

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

Examples of some of the main forms of abuse and neglect quoted in the Act include:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisation abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self neglect

Exploitation is a common theme.

5. PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

5.1 Use of Video and Photography

The use of photographs and images of young people will be controlled to prevent possible misuse. In general, agreement will be sought from parents or guardians that images can be used, if appropriate.

5.2 Reporting safeguarding concerns

Everyone has a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns over the welfare of children or vulnerable adults. This extends to the identification of signs of abuse; poor practice by staff, councillors and others acting for or on behalf of the Town Council, and allegations brought to our attention by a member of the public. Reporting safeguarding concerns can prevent serious abuse or harm from happening or from escalating.

Employees and councillors must not attempt to investigate abuse themselves; neither must they confront anyone who is allegedly responsible for abuse nor tell them that allegations have been made about them.

The officer responsible for receipt of concerns and ensuring appropriate action is taken is the Town Clerk or, in his/her absence, the Senior Administration Officer.

- 5.3 If you're an adult experiencing abuse or neglect, or if you're concerned about an adult possibly experiencing abuse or neglect, contact Cornwall Council Adult Services on Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing on 0300 1234 131 or email accessteam.referral@cornwall.gov.uk.

Your call will be put through to the Access Team who will listen to what you have to say and will ask you questions so they fully understand the concerns you are raising

- 5.4 If you wish to report an incidence of abuse or neglect, contact the Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) on 0300 123 1116

An out of Hours Service is available for:

- Children, young people or families experiencing immediate difficulties; or
- People who have an immediate concern for the safety of a child/young person

The Cornwall Council's Children's Social Work out of Hours Service can be contacted on 01208 251 300. The service is available on weekdays from 5.15pm each evening (4.45pm Fridays) until 8.45am the following morning;

weekends from 4.45pm on Friday until 8.45am the following Monday and all public holidays.

Anyone telephoning the Out of Hours Service will be asked for their telephone number, location and which specialist Out of Hours Service they think they need. The Operator will then contact the appropriate specialist service for the area.

The out of Hours Service does not deal with routine requests. Non-urgent requests should always be referred to the appropriate local Children's Social Work office during normal hours, telephone: 0300 1234 101

allegations or concerns should be reported at the earliest possible opportunity, and at least within 24 hours. As much factual information as possible should be provided.

If a child or vulnerable adult may be in imminent danger the police should be contacted.

5.3 Allegations against a councillor or member of staff

- All concerns and/or allegations about the conduct of a councillor or member of staff should be reported initially to the Town Clerk who is responsible for forwarding the concerns to Cornwall Council's Children or Adult Services. If the concern or allegation relates to the conduct of the Town Clerk, this should be reported to the Town Mayor who will be responsible for contacting Cornwall Council.
- A councillor or member of staff must report any allegations made against them to the Town Clerk.
- Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure (including instances where the member of staff resigns or leaves the employment of the Town Council). However, investigations by the responsible authorities will take precedence over internal council procedures.
- The Town Clerk will seek advice from Cornwall Council Children or Adult Services (or Police) prior to informing a member of staff of an allegation against them and will offer appropriate welfare support to the member of staff and ensure they are kept informed during any investigation process.
- Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to councillors will be referred to the Monitoring Officer and dealt with in accordance with the Code of Conduct of Members of the Town Council.

6. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Where a role involves 'regulated activities' such as caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults, an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring

Service (DBS) check will be required. This requirement extends to councillors, employees, volunteers and external bodies that work with or on behalf of the Town Council such as twinning committees, charities, contractors, other public sector bodies etc.

Where these external organisations are likely to have significant contact with children and/or vulnerable adults as a result of their work for, with, or on behalf of the Town Council, they are required to have their own safeguarding procedures in place.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD-KEEPING

Information about safeguarding concerns must be regarded as confidential. However, the Town Council will co-operate with investigations by Cornwall Council's Children or Adult Services and/or the Police, as applicable, and will follow their advice to ensure that any risk to the safety of children or vulnerable adults is addressed.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The ongoing implementation of the Safeguarding Policy will be monitored by the Town Clerk. Any member of staff with a concern regarding these issues, should ensure that it is discussed with the Town Clerk.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy reviews, unless changing circumstances require an earlier review