



Barrowby Parish Council

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Safeguarding Policy

Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

Document control

- **Owner:** Full Council
- **Responsible officer:** Clerk / Proper Officer
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- **Next review due:** January-March 2027 at Full Council for formal adoption at Parish Council May 2027

1. Purpose

1.1 Barrowby Parish Council is committed to promoting a safe environment and to taking reasonable and proportionate steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk who may come into contact with the Council, its services, premises, members, staff, volunteers, contractors or activities.

1.2 The Council recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The Council will take all concerns seriously and will respond appropriately where abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm is suspected or disclosed.

1.3 This policy provides a framework for recognising concerns, responding appropriately, reporting concerns, and promoting safer working practices.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

- a. councillors;
- b. employees;
- c. the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer;
- d. volunteers and members of Council working groups;
- e. contractors acting on behalf of the Council;
- f. hirers of Council premises where relevant to Council-managed activity; and
- g. anyone representing the Council in any official capacity.

2.2 This policy applies where individuals come into contact with:

- a. children and young people under the age of 18; and
- b. adults at risk.

3. Definitions

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, a **child** is anyone under the age of 18.

3.2 An **adult at risk** is an adult who:

- a. has needs for care and support;
- b. is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- c. as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

3.3 Abuse and neglect may include, but are not limited to:

- a. physical abuse;
- b. domestic abuse;
- c. sexual abuse;
- d. psychological or emotional abuse;
- e. financial or material abuse;
- f. neglect and acts of omission;
- g. discriminatory abuse;
- h. organisational or institutional abuse;
- i. modern slavery;
- j. self-neglect; and
- k. exploitation, including online exploitation. Adult safeguarding guidance under the Care Act recognises these categories, and child safeguarding guidance emphasises the need for prompt information sharing and multi-agency action where concerns arise.

4. Policy statement

4.1 The Council will:

- a. take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm in relation to its services, premises and activities;
- b. listen to and take seriously any concern, allegation, disclosure or observation relating to possible abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- c. respond promptly, proportionately and appropriately;
- d. report safeguarding concerns to the relevant statutory agency where necessary;
- e. respect confidentiality while recognising that safeguarding concerns may need to be shared on a need-to-know basis;
- f. support safer recruitment, induction, training and working practices where relevant; and
- g. keep appropriate records of concerns, actions and referrals.

4.2 The Council is not the lead statutory safeguarding authority and will not investigate abuse allegations itself unless required to do so as part of an internal employment or conduct process. Concerns about a child or adult at risk must be referred to the appropriate statutory safeguarding agency, police or emergency service as necessary. The Care Act places adult safeguarding duties on local authorities, and child safeguarding arrangements are led locally by safeguarding partners.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 **The Council** is responsible for:

- a. adopting and reviewing this policy;
- b. promoting a culture of safeguarding awareness;
- c. ensuring appropriate linked policies and procedures are in place; and
- d. ensuring concerns are taken seriously.

5.2 **The Clerk** is the Council's lead officer for safeguarding administration unless the Council resolves otherwise. The Clerk is responsible for:

- a. receiving safeguarding concerns reported under this policy;
- b. making or coordinating referrals where appropriate;
- c. maintaining confidential safeguarding records;
- d. ensuring relevant officers and members know how to escalate concerns; and
- e. reporting policy or governance issues to the Council while preserving confidentiality.

5.3 **The Chair** shall act where the concern relates to the Clerk, or where the Clerk is unavailable.

5.4 **All councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors** must:

- a. remain alert to possible signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- b. take all concerns, disclosures and allegations seriously;
- c. record and report concerns promptly in accordance with this policy;
- d. avoid promising to keep safeguarding concerns secret; and
- e. maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

6. Safeguarding principles

6.1 In responding to concerns relating to adults at risk, the Council will have regard to the safeguarding principles reflected in Care Act guidance, including empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability.

6.2 In responding to concerns relating to children, the Council will have regard to the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that concerns should be shared promptly with the appropriate agency where a child may be suffering or likely to suffer harm.

7. Recognising concerns

7.1 Concerns may arise from:

- a. a direct disclosure by a child or adult at risk;
- b. a disclosure by a third party;
- c. observed injuries, behaviour, distress or deterioration;
- d. concerns arising during Council work, events, meetings, property management or venue hire;
- e. repeated incidents, patterns or worrying changes; or

f. concerns relating to financial abuse, coercion, neglect, harassment, bullying, exploitation or inappropriate conduct.

7.2 A safeguarding concern may exist even where the person does not use the word “abuse”.

8. What to do if someone discloses abuse or harm

8.1 If a child or adult at risk discloses abuse, neglect or harm, the person receiving the disclosure should:

- a. stay calm;
- b. listen carefully;
- c. take the concern seriously;
- d. avoid leading questions;
- e. not promise confidentiality;
- f. explain that the information may need to be shared to keep people safe;
- g. make a factual written record as soon as possible; and
- h. report the concern promptly under this policy.

8.2 Staff, councillors and volunteers must not investigate the matter themselves or attempt to test the truth of the allegation.

9. Reporting concerns

9.1 Any safeguarding concern must be reported without delay to the Clerk.

9.2 If the concern relates to the Clerk, it must be reported to the Chair.

9.3 If there is an immediate risk of serious harm or a crime may have been committed, the person must contact the police or emergency services immediately.

9.4 The Clerk or Chair, as appropriate, shall decide whether the concern should be referred to:

- a. children’s social care;
- b. adult social care safeguarding;
- c. the police;
- d. the Local Authority Designated Officer or equivalent, where relevant;
- e. another appropriate safeguarding body; or
- f. an internal employment, disciplinary, complaints or conduct process, alongside or following external referral as appropriate.

9.5 Concerns should be referred promptly. A concern should not be delayed because a full set of facts is not yet known if there is a risk of harm. Current child safeguarding guidance stresses timely information sharing where it is necessary to safeguard children, and adult safeguarding guidance emphasises local authority duties to make enquiries or cause them to be made where criteria are met.

10. Safer working practices

10.1 The Council expects councillors, staff and volunteers to:

- a. treat all individuals with dignity and respect;
- b. avoid being alone with a child or adult at risk where this can reasonably be avoided;
- c. avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- d. avoid inappropriate personal relationships or communication;
- e. avoid sharing personal contact details unless authorised and necessary for Council business;
- f. use Council communication channels where possible;
- g. report concerns about conduct, boundaries or behaviour promptly; and
- h. comply with the Council's equality, dignity at work, social media, lone working, health and safety and data protection policies.

10.2 Any one-to-one contact required in the course of Council business should, where possible, take place in an appropriate setting, with visibility, accountability and a record of the purpose of the contact.

11. Staff members who may be adults at risk

11.1 The Council recognises that an employee may themselves be an adult at risk or may become at greater risk because of disability, illness, mental or physical health needs, domestic abuse, coercion, financial abuse, social isolation, or other vulnerability.

11.2 Where the Council becomes aware of a safeguarding concern affecting an employee, it will:

- a. take the concern seriously;
 - b. consider immediate safety and welfare needs;
 - c. respect the employee's dignity, privacy and rights;
 - d. consider whether a safeguarding referral is required;
 - e. consider any employment support measures reasonably available to the Council;
- and
- f. handle the matter sensitively and confidentially.

11.3 This policy does not replace the Council's obligations under employment law, equality law, health and safety law or data protection law. Support for an employee should be coordinated, where appropriate, with the Council's HR and health and safety procedures.

12. Recruitment, training and DBS

12.1 The Council will consider the safeguarding implications of its roles and activities and will use safer recruitment and appropriate checks where a role involves eligible regulated activity or other appropriate contact. The need for DBS checks depends on the role actually undertaken and is not automatic for all parish council roles.

12.2 The Council will ensure that councillors, staff and relevant volunteers receive proportionate safeguarding awareness and know how to report concerns. Sector training support is available through county associations and NALC training routes.

13. Premises, services and hirers

13.1 Where the Council manages premises or events, it will take reasonable steps to promote safeguarding through:

- a. clear reporting arrangements;
- b. risk assessments where appropriate;
- c. suitable supervision arrangements;
- d. expectations for hirers and user groups; and
- e. action where concerns are raised about activities on Council premises.

13.2 Hirers and organisations using Council premises for activities involving children or adults at risk may be required to confirm that they have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

14. Confidentiality, information sharing and records

14.1 Safeguarding information shall be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary, lawful and proportionate.

14.2 Information may be shared without consent where this is necessary to protect a child or adult at risk, to prevent serious harm, or where otherwise required or permitted by law. *Working Together* stresses the importance of timely and lawful information sharing to safeguard children.

14.3 The Council shall keep a written safeguarding record of:

- a. the concern;
- b. the date and time;
- c. the person reporting;
- d. the action taken;
- e. any referral made; and
- f. any follow-up action.

14.4 Safeguarding records shall be kept securely and separately from routine personnel or general administrative files where appropriate, with access limited to those who need to know.

15. Allegations against councillors, staff or volunteers

15.1 Any concern or allegation that a councillor, employee, volunteer or contractor has:

- a. harmed a child or adult at risk;
- b. behaved in a way that may pose a risk of harm; or

c. breached safeguarding boundaries,
shall be taken seriously and referred promptly in accordance with this policy.

15.2 External referral to the police, children's social care, adult social care or another safeguarding body may be necessary before, or alongside, any internal procedure.

15.3 Internal procedures such as the Code of Conduct, disciplinary procedure, grievance procedure or complaints process may also apply, but they do not replace safeguarding referral obligations.

16. Emergency action

16.1 If there is immediate danger or urgent medical need, call 999.

16.2 If a child or adult at risk appears to be at immediate risk of significant harm, emergency services or the relevant local authority safeguarding team should be contacted without delay.

17. Local contacts

17.1 The Clerk shall maintain and keep up to date a list of local safeguarding contacts, including:

- a. Lincolnshire Children's Services / Children's Social Care;
- b. Lincolnshire Adult Care / Adult Safeguarding;
- c. Lincolnshire Police;
- d. emergency services; and
- e. any relevant local safeguarding partnership contact details.

18. Monitoring and review

18.1 This policy shall be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance, staffing arrangements or Council activities.

18.2 The Council may also review this policy following any safeguarding incident, concern or significant near miss.