

GREAT YARMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



This policy applies to Members, Officers, Contractors and others who provide services or act on behalf of the Council, including volunteers.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Council's Recruitment and Employment Policy.

Version 6 – May 2006

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1. Introduction

Great Yarmouth Borough Council fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Children and young people have the right to have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose to participate in.

The Council believes that all children have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity, and to be treated with dignity and respect. Although hundreds and thousands of children have wonderful experiences, abuse does happen.

Our policy applies to all staff, Members and volunteers working for the Council. It contains the following five elements:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establish a safe environment in which children can fulfil the aims of 'Every Child Matters'.

We recognise that whenever there is contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The Council will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities for staff to help children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

There is a considerable body of legislation, government guidance and standards designed to ensure that children are protected from harm. These include 'The Children Act 1989', 'The Children Act 2004' 'Every Child Matters' and the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' document by the Department of Health.

Lord Laming in the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report stated "The support and protection of children cannot be achieved by a single agency. Every service has to play its part. All staff must have placed upon them the clear expectation that their primary responsibility is to the child and his or her family." Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on key persons and bodies to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As an organisation with responsibility for children and young people across its services, Great Yarmouth Borough Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and provided by the Council. It is our aim to aid the development of self-esteem and social awareness of children and young people and to provide opportunities for enjoyment with personal achievement.

The Council is not an investigative or intervention agency for child protection. However, because some staff are in regular contact with children and young people they are in a position to observe outward signs of abuse and can and should alert others when such signs are observed. Council staff have a responsibility to refer suspected cases of abuse to Norfolk County Council Social Services Department.

This **Child Protection Policy** is designed to safeguard children and young people from potential abuse as well as protect Great Yarmouth Borough Council, its staff, elected members and volunteers from potential false allegations of abuse.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council recognises that:

- The term children or young people is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.
- The term staff, elected members and volunteers is used to refer to employees, borough Councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council.
- All children and young people irrespective of their age, class, religion, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity or sexual preference have the right to protection from abuse.

2. Policy Statement

Children and young people have the right to have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose to participate in.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children and young people, safeguard their well being and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by the Council.

2.1 Aims

The Council aims to do this by:

- Raising the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities relating to children and young people throughout the Authority.
- Actively encouraging good practice amongst all staff, elected members and volunteers throughout the Council and promoting wider awareness wherever possible, i.e. partnership organisations and user groups.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people.

- Listening to children and young people, minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies.
- Recruiting, training, supervising and supporting staff, elected members and volunteers who work with and come into contact with children and young people to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse, and themselves against false allegations. Staff and volunteers who work with children and young people will be subject to the appropriate level Criminal Records Bureau check.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Requiring staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Council's Child Protection Policy.

2.2 Objectives

Objectives to achieve these aims:

- To provide appropriate information, guidance and where appropriate training for staff, elected members and volunteers, to enable them to recognise the potential signs and indicators of abuse and to improve good practice.
- To aid staff, elected members and volunteers to respond sensitively and seriously to a child or young person who discloses information about abuse, and be confident and able to take appropriate action swiftly, regardless of whom the allegation is about, e.g. carer/staff member.
- To maintain a level of good working practice at all times and therefore reducing the risk to children and young people under the care of our staff and volunteers.
- To promote the general welfare and well being of children and young people during and within Council services.
- To develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to incidents and accidents.
- To develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to complaints of alleged or suspected child abuse.

This policy recognises the responsibility the Council has to facilitate affective arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The following arrangements will help the Council create and maintain an organisational culture and ethos that reflects the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- This policy is a clear commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- The policy is a clear statement of the Council's responsibilities towards children and is issued to all staff, members and volunteers.
- The policy is supported with a guidance and procedure manual, which is issued to all staff, members and volunteers.
- The Council has a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Safe recruitment procedure in place.
- The Council is committed to effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.