

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN CORPORATE POLICY



1. Aim of this Policy

- 1.1 The aim of this corporate policy is that all Plymouth City Council employees are able to recognise any child where there is a safeguarding concern and respond appropriately and that all elected members and employees¹ of the council understand their responsibility where a safeguarding concern has been identified. They will be able to access and follow the agreed safeguarding procedures in order to protect that child and to fully comply with all aspects of their responsibility. A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday and includes unborn children.
- 1.2 Adherence to this Policy will contribute to providing every child and young person in Plymouth with a safe environment to live, grow, achieve and exceed in their hopes for the future, through the promotion of effective and efficient safeguarding services within all directorates of the council, and through promoting effective single agency and multi agency safeguarding.
- 1.3 This policy, combined with the associated procedures, provides guidance to all elected members and employees who may come across safeguarding concerns within the context of their work for the council. Plymouth City Council expects all elected members to participate in the appropriate training offered in relation to safeguarding children as part of their responsibilities as corporate parents.

2. Safeguarding Children

- 2.1 Plymouth City Council has a broad remit and a wide range of over 300 distinct services to our residents and the public. In this activity, as well as responding to immediate concerns, we will ensure that appropriate measures and practice to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are in place and bring matters requiring attention to the relevant directorate, organisations and authorities.
- 2.2 The council believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience harm of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people by a commitment to practices which protect them.
- 2.3 Legislation places an obligation on all Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 irrespective of age, ability, faith, religion, belief, gender, gender reassignment, race or sexual orientation. To meet this obligation Plymouth City Council must ensure adequate policies and procedures are in place to guide elected members and employees.
- 2.4 This policy outlines the council's expectations on each of its directorates to work together and in partnership with other organisations and agencies in order to fulfill their duties to

¹ The term employee does not refer to the paid status of the person concerned but rather actions taken by them on behalf of Plymouth City Council, therefore unpaid workers, volunteers and agents may be included within this context.

safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people², and provided that this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare, to promote their upbringing by their families by providing services appropriate to the child's needs. It is important that all council employees understand fully their responsibilities and duties as set out in primary legislation and associated regulations and guidance.

- 2.5 **What is abuse and neglect?** Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family; in their home by others caring for them; in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger; for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Forms of abuse are³:
- **Physical Abuse:** may involve hitting, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child;
 - **Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities including prostitution whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes exploitation and the grooming of a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet);
 - **Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development; and
 - **Emotional Abuse:** persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This includes a child who witnesses domestic violence, overhears domestic violence or an episode of adult abuse or is bullied (including cyber bullying). Also includes not giving the child an opportunity to express their views, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child's participation in normal social activity.
- 2.6 Any person appointed to a post that requires a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction training and their continuous professional development. Employees are therefore expected to have a good understanding of safeguarding concerns, including potential abuse and neglect of children and young people, which may come to light. At whatever level employees identify risks they must highlight them and seek to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to safeguard the children concerned.
- 2.7 For those appointed to posts not requiring a CRB check the **South West Child Protection Procedures** provide the necessary information for dealing with a concern and in particular how to make a referral because it is important that every employee knows how to seek advice and report any concerns about a child.
- 2.8 The council will ensure that all elected members and employees and those who undertake work on our behalf maintain a proper focus on safeguarding children and young people and that this is reflected both in sound individual practice and our internal policies and guidance. All employees must:

² Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, and Section 157 or 175 of the Education Act 2002.

³ Section 1.32 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010

- Give highest priority to children’s welfare;
- Recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
- Respond appropriately to disclosure by a child, or young person, of abuse;
- Respond appropriately to allegations against staff, other adults, and against themselves;
- Act appropriately during the work place and understand safe practice in carrying out duties in relation to their employment;
- Be alert to the risks which abusers, or potential abusers, may pose;
- Be aware of the importance of the role of the council in promoting the welfare of children; and
- Contribute as necessary to all stages of Children’s Social Care safeguarding and protection processes.

3. Statutory and Policy Framework

The key legislation, policy and guidance for the council to adhere to in relation to discharging its safeguarding children responsibilities is contained within:

[Children Act 1989](#) and [Children Act 2004](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (ratified in UK in 1991)

[The Protection of Children Act 1999](#)

[Care Standards Act 2000](#)

[What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2006](#)

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010](#)

[Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead member for Children’s Services and the Director for Children’s Services \(DCSF\) 2009](#)

[South West Child Protection Procedures](#)

[Plymouth Children and Young People’s Plan 2011 – 2014](#)

[Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board Annual Business Plan](#)

[Common Assessment Framework](#)

4. Local Arrangements

- 4.1 The council is a member of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board and the Children and Young People’s Trust. These partnerships are designed to make sure that agencies work together to ensure the safety and welfare of all children and young people in the city.
- 4.2 **[Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board](#)** (PSCB) The Children Act 2004 required each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board by 1 April 2006. Its functions are set out in primary legislation and regulations⁴. Its core objectives are to:

⁴ Sections 14 and 14A of the Children Act 2004, and Local Safeguarding Children Regulations 2006, SI 2006/90.

- Co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority; and
- Ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for that purpose, through monitoring and evaluation.

4.3 [The Children and Young People's Trust](#) (Trust) is a partnership arrangement with responsibilities to improve outcomes for children and young people. Local agencies in Plymouth have a duty to co-operate in these arrangements. These arrangements have been a success and a local decision for agencies and organisations to continue to cooperate in this way has been made by Plymouth 2020 Partnership. Membership of the Trust includes all statutory, community and voluntary organisations and together a [Children and Young People's Plan](#) for 2011 – 2014 has been produced.

4.4 In consultation with the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Board, the council through the Trust agree:

- Governance arrangements and systems to support commissioning of specialist services between relevant partners;
- A strategic approach to understanding needs, including sophisticated analysis of data and effective engagement with children, young people and families;
- A strategic approach to understanding the effectiveness of current services and identifying priorities for change, including where services need to be improved, reshaped or developed;
- Integrated and effective arrangements for ensuring that priorities for change are delivered through a Children and Young People's Plan;
- Integrated and effective approaches to understanding the impact of specialist services on outcomes for children, young people and families, and using this understanding to constructively challenge progress and drive further improvement.

4.5 In addition the council and its partners form one of 12 Local Authority areas who adhere to the same Child Protection Procedures. These can be found on the [South West Child Protection Procedures](#) Website.

5. Policy Statements

In order to meet its safeguarding children obligations under the Children Act 2004 the council will:

- Ensure lines of **accountability** are clear;
- Adhere to **safer recruitment** and employment procedures and ensure all employees have appropriate and relevant training in relation to safeguarding children and are supported to keep up to date with changes in legislation and statutory requirements;

- Ensure there is **effective multi-agency working** to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;
- Ensure that the **sharing of information** is efficient and effective as the law prescribes in respect of issues that may affect the safety and welfare of children; and
- Appoint a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to **manage allegations** made against adults who work with children in the City of Plymouth.
- Strive to ensure that all **children in need** of additional support receive the support they require in a timely manner.

5.1 Accountability

- 5.1.1 The council recognises that under the Children Act 2004 it has a statutory responsibility for making arrangements to ensure all its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Plymouth. This includes all services directly provided and commissioned by the council.
- 5.1.2 Where relevant all services, policies and procedures within the council are to take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this includes ensuring that services are provided safely and effectively, and are accessible.
- 5.1.3 Within the council there are clear lines of accountability for work in relation to safeguarding children and young people and delegated decision-making. The Director of Services for Children and Young People has the statutory duty and accountability to ensure satisfactory arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Plymouth. The Lead Member for Children’s Services (LM) is a local Councillor with delegated responsibility from the council, through the Leader, for local children, young people and families. Lead Members are politically accountable for ensuring that the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, such as ensuring that the local authority fulfils its responsibilities to the children for which it is the corporate parent and as such Plymouth City Council expects all elected members to undertake corporate parent training. The Director for Services for Children and Young People and the Lead Member are to work together as a team, exchanging information and views and being open to challenge, so that they can fulfill their responsibilities effectively⁵.
- 5.1.4 All employees who are employed by, or act on behalf of the council, and who have contact with children and/or families, are expected to have a clear understanding of the responsibilities for safeguarding children. This will ensure that issues about non-compliance with safeguarding procedures and policies can be raised by children, staff and other relevant people. If the issues are not dealt with effectively, a formal complaint can be made through the council’s [Complaint Procedure](#).
- 5.1.5 The council will ensure that there is appropriate support for its employees by providing regular supervision and professional development.

5.2 Safer Recruitment, Employment and Training

⁵ Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead member for Children’s Services and the Director for Children’s Services (DCSF) 2009

5.2.1 It is essential that the council make sure that the people who enter the recruitment process or who are employed and who come into contact with children, are safe to do so. The council strives to ensure that that our practices and standards are consistent across all services in recruitment and selection.

5.2.2 The council has a [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) in place to help prevent unsuitable people working with children. Safer Recruitment means:

- Individual responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will be encompassed within relevant job descriptions and procedures;
- Scrutinising information provided by applicants and referees;
- Taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies identified in the application process;
- Verifying identity and any academic or vocational qualifications;
- Obtaining independent professional and character references;
- Checking previous employment history and experience;
- Checking that the applicant has the health and physical capacity for the job;
- Carrying out a face to face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post; and
- Checking the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) scheme. This scheme makes requirements for people who want to work with children to be registered, providing confirmation that there is no known reason as to why the applicant should not work with children.

5.2.3 All applicants who are offered employment with the council where the post holder will be working with or have contact with children will be subject to an Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosure, which are to be reviewed and updated as necessary. Until these checks have been completed satisfactorily, the applicant may either:

- Not take up the post; or
- Must not work alone with children but may work under the direct supervision of an existing employee who has undergone these checks.

5.2.4 All UK nationals who apply for a general taxi licence are required to complete a Standard CRB disclosure in order to be considered by the licensing Committee for their licence. Those who also go on to apply for a School Contract Driver Badge are required to complete an Enhanced CRB disclosure as part of the vetting process. Foreign Nationals are, in addition to the above, required to obtain a 'Certificate of Good Conduct' from their home embassy. This is a criminal records check from their country of origin. They must provide a certificate with an official embassy stamp and also an English translation certified in the same way.

- 5.2.5 Managers who recruit employees who have contact with children will receive Safer Recruitment training.
- 5.2.6 Employees who work or have contact with children, young people and their families will have undertaken:
- The council's Induction and Children's Workforce Induction training.
 - Appropriate safeguarding and safe practice training consistent with their role and function;
 - Training that is approved by the Plymouth Local Safeguarding Children Board;

5.3 Effective Multi Agency working

Strategically

- 5.3.1 The responsibilities of the PSCB are complementary to those of the Trust – to promote co-operation to improve the wellbeing of children in Plymouth.
- 5.3.2 The PSCB and the Trust have a protocol in place to ensure that the PSCB is able to challenge and scrutinise effectively the work of the Trust.

Operationally

- 5.3.3 All employees will be expected to carry out the functions of their role in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010.

5.4 Information Sharing

- 5.4.1 The council in collaboration with its partners, through the PSCB, will ensure information is shared efficiently and effectively as the law prescribes in respect of issues that may affect the safety and welfare of children. This includes:
- Ensuring that concerns are shared early in order to prevent serious problems from developing, and that clear protocols are in place and understood by employees;
 - Promoting the welfare of children and young people to contribute towards achieving positive outcomes;
 - Promoting excellent interagency and multi-disciplinary working.
- 5.4.2 In particular, the council will ensure that all employees know what to do and how best to share information in order to ensure a child and their family receives necessary services, especially when they are concerned that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering, harm.
- 5.4.3 The council will also ensure that employees have access to support and appropriate expert advice.

5.5 Managing Allegations

- 5.5.1 The council has appointed a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to manage allegations made against adults who work with children in the City of Plymouth.
- 5.5.2 Allegations or concerns about staff are to be handled effectively and in accordance with agreed guidance, including that provided by Plymouth Local Safeguarding Children Board. This includes that effective procedures are in place for sharing concerns about colleagues and other members of staff, and that there is a culture throughout the council which enables safeguarding issues to be addressed effectively.

5.6 Children in Need

- 5.6.1 The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a core element of the Every Child Matters Agenda. In Plymouth we are striving to ensure that all children in need of additional support receive the support they require in a timely manner. To facilitate this, the Children and Young People's Trust have agreed that all partners, including the council, should use the CAF as the primary method of assessing needs and identifying when a multi-agency response is required. The CAF process enables practitioners from all agencies and the voluntary sector to work together to assess and meet the needs of children, young people and their families who require targeted, multi-agency support.

To support practitioners the Trust offers a comprehensive programme of training. The training is aimed at anyone working with children, young people and their families, who may be involved in carrying out CAF assessments and fulfilling the role of Lead Professional (Key Worker), their managers and those agencies which are likely to receive CAF assessments as part of their referral process.

- 5.6.2 Under section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 children in need are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired without the provision of services.
- 5.6.3 The Plymouth Local Authority Children's Social Care Service is the statutory service which can receive referrals from anyone who has an immediate concern about a child's safety and welfare.

6. Implementation, Monitoring and Review Arrangements

- 6.1 The Safeguarding Manager will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- 6.2 The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Safeguarding Manager, unless there are significant changes to the national legislative or statutory framework or local context, which would require an earlier review.

Appendix I – Useful Contacts

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Location: Windsor House

Contact: 01752 307144

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board (PSCB)

Location: Windsor House

Contact: 01752 307535

pscb@plymouth.gov.uk

Common Assessment Framework (CAF co-ordinator)

Location: Windsor

Contact: 01752 307160

caf@plymouth.gov.uk

Local Authority Advice and Assessment Service

Location: Ballard House

Contact: 01752 308600

Adviceandassessment@plymouth.gov.uk