



**CAMELFORD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**  
**(Including Children and Vulnerable Adults)**  
**Adopted by CTC 15 June 2021**

**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

This Policy is made in accordance with Camelford Town Council's (CTC) vision and mission, for every child to grow up safe, secure and supported and to build a better childhood for all.

CTC works with children and young adults on a range of its projects and events and has a responsibility to promote the wellbeing and safety of all people it comes into contact with. CTC believes that it is always unacceptable for a person to experience abuse or neglect of any kind. CTC is committed to practice that protects children and vulnerable adults from harm and recognises its duty to ensure that appropriate action is taken where a child or vulnerable adult is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm.

**2. PURPOSE**

- 2.1. To safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults with whom CTC works.
- 2.2. To ensure that all employees and others covered by this policy understand the context within which checking with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) takes place.
- 2.3. To provide all employees with guidance on how they should behave if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing or be at risk from abuse or harm.
- 2.4. To guide employees on how to respond to and report concerns.

2.5. To ensure compatibility with other CTC policies.

### 3. **WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY?**

This policy applies to all paid employees, volunteers, students, agency workers, contract and unpaid staff working on behalf of CTC in any capacity and in any setting.

Young members, young people on work experience and any children or young adults involved in the work of CTC should be made aware of CTC's safeguarding policies and procedures. Those with specific communication needs because of language or disability should have access to information in appropriate forms to ensure their understanding.

This policy relates to all children from unborn up to 18 years of age and includes children with whom CTC has direct or indirect contact with, for example, children known to adults with whom CTC works directly.

This policy also relates to vulnerable adults who need to be safeguarded from harm.

### 4. **DEFINITIONS**

As per the definitions set out in the Children Act 1989, a "child" is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It also includes unborn children.

Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations. An adult may be vulnerable if he/she is:

- Has a learning or physical disability
- Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Has a reduction in physical or mental capacity
- Is in the receipt of any form of healthcare
- Is detained in custody
- Is receiving community services because of age, health or disability
- Is living in sheltered or residential care home
- Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation

### 5. **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Everyone has a right to be safeguarded from abuse or neglect. There is a legislative framework in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults through the Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004) and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Further guidance that sets out the requirements and expectations on professionals to work together to effectively safeguard children include Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015), Safeguarding Disabled Children@ Practice Guidance (2009), and What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015) (Department for Education 2015).

CTC does not have a statutory duty to comply with the key arrangements listed in Working Together, however, it should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as well as vulnerable adults.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 sets out the “need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The Prevent strategy is part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, and aims to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Organisations such as CTC do not have a duty to adhere to the Prevent duty but do still have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people it works with.

## 6. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Safeguarding relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to protect them from harm.

All staff should have a basic awareness of safeguarding issues. This includes:

- Being alert to the possibility of abuse and neglect
- Having enough knowledge to recognise an abusive or potentially abusive event or set of circumstances
- Knowing who in the organisation to raise concerns with
- Being competent to take the appropriate immediate or emergency action

If any member of staff has concerns about a child or vulnerable adult they must alert CTC’s Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) (the Clerk) immediately. If the DSO agrees there is grounds for concern, they must take appropriate action to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult. This may include contacting the relevant local authority social care service or the local police.

**If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger the member of staff who first becomes aware of the danger should dial 999 for the police.**

The above may include concerns about a member of staff, a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected, or a suspicion that an activity is taking place that could place a person at risk. If the concern relates to a member of staff, CTC DSO should contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) responsible for providing advice and liaison in such cases. This is a general guide as the role of the LADO is expected to change, additionally some local authorities will have multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In any situation where there is suspicion of abuse, the welfare needs of the child or vulnerable adult must come first even where there may be a conflict of interest (e.g. where the suspected perpetrator may be a member of staff).

## 7. WHAT CONSTITUTES ABUSE?

Abuse is a deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a person’s safety, wellbeing and development. Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional. Abuse may not, however, fall easily into these categories and staff are not expected to be experts in the field.

Neglect also constitutes abuse but can be defined as failing to provide or secure a child or vulnerable adult with the basic needs required for physical safety and wellbeing.

CTC recognises that a person's welfare is paramount and that all children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief and sexual orientation or identify have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.

### **7.1. Categories of Abuse**

- Abuse of trust
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Financial or material abuse
- Grooming
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Modern slavery
- Neglect
- Online abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Radicalisation of children or vulnerable adults
- Self-neglect
- Sexual abuse

These categories can overlap and an abused child or adult often suffers more than one type of abuse.

Disabled children and young people are particularly vulnerable to abuse in any form. Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children. All staff must ensure that the children they work with know how to raise concerns and have access to specialist workers and other aids of communication if required. Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy. The same thresholds for action apply. Where concerns are raised about a child who has communication difficulties, appropriate support must be secured.

## **8. PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

### **8.1. Organisation duties and responsibilities**

- Raise awareness of the need to protect children and vulnerable adults and reduce risks to them.
- Ensure that staff in contact with children and vulnerable adults have the requisite knowledge, skill and qualification to carry out their jobs safely and effectively.
- Ensure safe practice when working in partnership with other organisations, in particular that they have in place adequate safeguarding arrangements, including appropriate policies and mechanisms to provide assurance on compliance.
- Maintain an organisation that is safe for all staff, children and vulnerable adults and an environment where poor practice is challenged.

- Ensure that all staff, volunteers, contractors who will be working with children and vulnerable adults consent to vetting through DBS checks where applicable.
- Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken.
- Ensure that Councillors are accountable for the effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensure that all staff and councillors receive copies of safeguarding policies.

## 8.2. Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

The DSO is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is given a high priority within CTC.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Providing support and advice to councillors and all staff on safeguarding matters related to children and vulnerable adults
- Ensuring that all councillors and staff receive training on child protection and safeguarding as part of their induction and on an ongoing basis where required
- Maintaining an overview of safeguarding issues and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The DSO has responsibility for deciding whether to refer any reported matters onto the police or local authority social care service. Where possible, referrals should be made on the same working day and certainly **within 24 hours**.

## 8.3. Employee responsibilities

All CTC staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults with whom they work. It is the responsibility of staff to promote good practice and minimise and manage potential risks. All staff, including volunteers, contractors, must be aware of the requirements within these procedures,

CTC staff and councillors have no powers to investigate abuse. Nonetheless all CTC staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults and a responsibility to work closely and co-operatively with other agencies in order to achieve this. Staff may have a role as referrers, witnesses or supporters in safeguarding processes.

If a member of staff or councillor suspects that a child or vulnerable adult is being harmed by experiencing, or already has experienced, abuse or neglect and/or is likely to suffer harm in the future, they must talk to the DSO. The DSO will agree next steps.

**It is not the responsibility of CTC staff, councillors, volunteers or contractors to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. It is the responsibility of CTC to act if there is cause for concern, in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any action necessary to protect the young and/or vulnerable adult.**

**If a member of staff is concerned that a child is in immediate danger, or requires immediate medical treatment, they should call the police and/or emergency medical services on 999 straight away.**

#### **8.4. Staff and Councillor Behaviour**

CTC staff working with children and/or vulnerable adults may be required to undergo awareness training. Staff and councillors should not:

- Meet with a child or vulnerable adult on their own
- Ask overly personal questions, including those about age or appearance (unless specifically related to a work project, in which case it must be documented).
- Send or give out material that could be considered offensive, which include material on social media sites
- Suggest or imply a personal relationship could develop
- Take an aggressive or bullying tone
- Have physical contact
- Offer or accept personal gifts
- Travel alone with a young and/or vulnerable person

#### **8.5. Website/online safety**

Any project that provides service users with direct access to the internet must have protocols in place to ensure safe use.

The internet is a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs and some adults use the internet to try and establish contact with young and/or vulnerable people to “groom” them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. CTC would consider staff/councillor involvement in such activities as gross misconduct, which could ultimately lead to dismissal and referral for police investigation.

#### **8.6. Presence on websites and social media**

Staff should take care when communicating with others online, particularly when identifying themselves as CTC staff members or councillors and when in contact with children and vulnerable adults.

### **9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING INFORMATION**

In any work with children and/or vulnerable adults it is important to be clear about confidentiality. Confidentiality and safeguarding should be discussed with children and/or vulnerable adults at the beginning of any activity/event/project and reminders and information given from time to time to ensure that they understand the processes and what responsibilities members of staff/councillors have. It is absolutely essential to be clear about the limits of confidentiality well before any such matter arises.

Information sharing must be done in a way that is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the common law of duty of confidentiality. However, a concern for confidentiality must never be used as a justification for withholding information when it would be in the child or vulnerable adult’s best interests to share information.

It is important that concerns raised are recorded accurately and in detail. All discussions should end with clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action. Where no further action is the outcome, the reason for this should be clearly recorded.

Records must be kept in a securely locked place or file to which access is restricted.

A risk assessment should be carried out at least 48hrs before any activity involving a child and/or vulnerable adult takes place.

## 10. SAFE RECRUITMENT

### 10.1. **Recruiting Staff**

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 sets out that it is an offence for an employer to knowingly employ someone in a regulated position if they are barred from doing so. Where there is regular contact but not “regulated” i.e. supervised, it is still possible to consider an enhanced criminal records check but this will not include a check of the barred list through the DBS.

Some roles within CTC whilst not “regulated positions” may involve working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults. Activities could include (but are not limited to) holding focus groups, conducting interviews with children and/or vulnerable adults. Where this is the case, the relevant member of staff/councillor will be required to have a DBS check carried out prior to commencing any direct work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

### 10.2. **Allegations against staff/councillors**

Any suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a child or vulnerable adult by an employee, councillor, volunteer, contractor or unpaid staff must be reported to the DSO immediately.

Concerns about staff/councillors must be treated with the same rigour as other concerns. If there are concerns that abuse has taken place, the DSO will pass the information to the relevant authorities. The DSO will also need to refer to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures and decide whether the member of staff/councillor should be suspended pending a full investigation.

## 11. COMPLYING WITH THIS POLICY

### 11.1. **Expectations of employees/councillors**

It is important that staff work to a high standard of professional conduct and act with integrity at all times in order to minimise the risk of abuse from within CTC. It is important to create a work environment where the risk of abuse is minimised and children and vulnerable adults feel comfortable and safe. Where incidents of abuse are raised or suspected it is important that all staff have the necessary information and support and follow the procedures appropriately.

Staff and councillors should make sure they have read CTC’s safeguarding procedures in full. They should highlight and discuss any issues requiring clarification and any training issues with their line manager.

All staff should ensure that, when working with children and/or vulnerable adults, all colleagues, volunteers and other staff from other organisations have the appropriate employee checks in place which must include a full carer history, identity checks and references and adherence to DBS where applicable.

## 11.2. **Freelance staff**

It is the responsibility of the Clerk to ensure that these staff are familiar with this document and agree to work within this framework. If there are any concerns with the conduct of freelance staff these concerns must be raised following the steps outlined in this policy.

### **How to make a safeguarding adults alert/referral**

In Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly a safeguarding adults referral is called a safeguarding adults alert. To make a safeguarding adults alert in Cornwall you need to contact Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing on **0300 1234 131**.

Your call will be put through to the Access Team. They will listen to what you have to say and will ask you questions so they fully understand the concerns you are raising. When the offices are closed you can call **01208 251 300** for emergencies only.

### **How to make a safeguarding children and young people alert/referral**

If you wish to report an incidence of abuse or neglect, please contact the central referral unit on: **0300 123 1116**.

Outside normal working hours there is an out of hours service available to ensure that urgent situations are responded to appropriately. The out of hours service runs from Monday to Thursday 5.15pm (4.45pm on Fridays) until 8.45am weekdays and for 24 hours on Saturdays and Sundays.

The service can be contacted by phoning: **0300 1234 100** who, via Bodmin Hospital, put calls through to a Duty Officer. The service is run on a rota basis by qualified and experienced social work staff and there is a manager available to support the Duty Officer.