

Northstowe Town Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

1. Introduction

Northstowe Town Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults within our community. We recognise our responsibility to protect those who may be at risk of harm while engaging with our services, activities, or volunteers. This policy outlines our approach to ensuring a safe environment, including our safer recruitment practices and DBS checking procedures.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a framework for protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect.
- Ensure safer recruitment processes to minimise risks to those we serve.
- Define responsibilities for staff, volunteers, and Northstowe Town Councillors in safeguarding.
- Establish clear procedures for DBS checks and responding to safeguarding concerns.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Northstowe Town Council employees, Northstowe Town Councillors, volunteers, and contractors who may come into contact with children or vulnerable adults during Northstowe Town Council activities, events or service provision.

4. Definitions

- **Child:** Anyone under the age of 18 ([Children Act 1989](#)).
- **Vulnerable Adult:** An adult aged 18 or over who may be in need of community care services due to age, disability, illness, or other factors and who is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation ([Care Act 2014](#)).
- **DBS Check:** A criminal record check provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service to assess suitability for roles involving children or vulnerable adults.

5. Our Commitment

Northstowe Town Council is dedicated to:

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults as a priority.
- Preventing harm by adopting robust recruitment and vetting processes.
- Responding promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding concerns.
- Promoting an inclusive environment free from discrimination, harassment, or abuse in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

6. Legal Framework

This policy complies with:

- Children Act [1989](#) and [2004](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [Disclosure and Barring Service regulations](#)

7. Safer Recruitment Policy

Northstowe Town Council adopts safer recruitment practices to ensure individuals working with children or vulnerable adults are suitable for their roles.

These practices include:

7.1 Recruitment Process

- Job descriptions and volunteer role specifications will clearly state if the role involves contact with children or vulnerable adults and requires a DBS check.
- Applicants will be assessed objectively based on their skills and experience, with safeguarding as a key consideration.
- Recruitment will be open and transparent, adhering to our Equality and Diversity Policy.

7.2 Pre-Employment Checks

- All candidates for roles involving regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults must undergo an Enhanced DBS check (with barred list check where applicable) prior to appointment.
- References will be sought to verify suitability, including specific questions about safeguarding history.
- Gaps in employment history will be explored during the interview process.
- Identity verification and right-to-work checks will be conducted.

7.3 Decision-Making

- In the interest of safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults, Northstowe Town Council reserves the right to decline an appointment or volunteer application if vetting reveals a risk.

- Any concerns arising from DBS checks or references will be reviewed by Northstowe Town Council's designated safeguarding lead in a fair and proportionate manner.

8. DBS Checking Process

8.1 Eligibility

- Enhanced DBS checks will be required for staff, volunteers, or Northstowe Town Councillors whose roles involve regulated activity (e.g., unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults) as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Other roles may require a Basic or Standard DBS check based on risk assessment.

8.2 Procedure

- Applicants will be informed of the DBS requirement during recruitment and must consent to the check.
- Northstowe Town Council will facilitate DBS applications through an approved umbrella body or directly with the DBS.
- DBS certificates will be reviewed by the designated safeguarding lead, and records of checks (but not certificate details) will be securely stored in line with data protection legislation.
- Existing staff or volunteers moving into regulated activity roles will undergo a new DBS check.

8.3 Renewals

- DBS checks will be renewed every three years or sooner if concerns arise.
- Individuals are required to report any new convictions or cautions to Northstowe Town Council immediately.

8.4 Portability

- Northstowe Town Council does not accept DBS certificates from previous employers unless registered with the DBS Update Service, in which case an online status check will be conducted.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 Northstowe Town Council

- Appoint a designated safeguarding lead to oversee policy implementation and handle concerns.
- Ensure resources are allocated for training and DBS processes.
- Maintain a safe environment in line with our Health and Safety Policy.

9.2 Employees and Volunteers

- Adhere to this policy and report any safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Participate in safeguarding training as required.
- Act as role models in promoting safety and respect, per our Volunteer Policy.

9.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Coordinate DBS checks and safer recruitment processes.
- Act as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns and liaise with external agencies (e.g., Local Authority Designated Officer - LADO) as needed.

10. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

- Any suspicion or allegation of abuse or neglect must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead or, in their absence a Northstowe Town Councilor.
- Northstowe Town Council will follow local safeguarding procedures, including referral to Cambridgeshire County Council's Children's Services or Adult Social Care if necessary.
- All concerns will be recorded confidentially and investigated promptly, ensuring the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- Employees or volunteers implicated in allegations will be suspended from relevant duties pending investigation, in line with disciplinary procedures.

11. Training

- All staff and volunteers will receive basic safeguarding awareness training upon induction.
- Those in regulated activity roles will receive enhanced training annually.
- The designated safeguarding lead will undertake specialised training to manage safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

12. Confidentiality

- Information related to safeguarding concerns or DBS checks will be handled in accordance with Northstowe Town Council's data protection policy and GDPR.
- Volunteers and staff must maintain confidentiality, disclosing information only to authorized personnel or agencies as required by law.

13. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or following legislative changes, with input from staff, volunteers, and safeguarding partners.
- Northstowe Town Council will monitor safeguarding incidents and recruitment processes to ensure effectiveness and compliance.

Document History

Status	Date	Version
Drafted by Assets & Estates Manager	19 March 2025	
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