

STATEMENTS OF GUIDANCE AND POLICY

CRESSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults (Safeguarding) Policy Statement v4 2022

The purpose of this policy is to give guidance to councillors, residents and volunteers or others regarding the welfare of vulnerable children, young people or adults.

This policy and procedures will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate in the interim periods. All Councillors and volunteers need to be aware of this policy.

Principles:

The Parish Council are committed to ensuring the safety of all users of our services and facilities and take our responsibilities seriously. The Council will endeavour to keep the village safe for use by children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Council recognises that a higher standard of safety is required where use is made by small children, those who cannot read safety notices and physically and mentally disabled adults.

The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount and is the responsibility of everyone. All children and vulnerable adults, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse, whether physical, verbal, sexual, bullying, exclusion or neglect. Bullying, shouting, physical violence, sexism and racism towards children and vulnerable adults will not be permitted or tolerated.

Definitions:

Children and young people:

Anyone under the age of 18 years

Vulnerable Adult:

Anyone over 18 who is: • Unable to care for themselves • Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation • Or may be in need of community care service

To whom this policy applies:

This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of the Parish Council whether in a paid, voluntary or commissioned capacity, for example, contracted to do a piece of work.

Policy Statement:

No member of the council, helper or other volunteer or staff will have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults unless they have been through the safe recruitment procedure and introductory Child Protection or Vulnerable Adults Protection training and must undergo appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") checks BEFORE commencement of such duties.

Expectations of behaviour:

All councillors, organisers of parish events and volunteers should:

- Ensure that communications, behaviour and interaction is appropriate and professional.
- Treat each other with respect and show consideration for other groups using the Parish Council facilities.
- Refrain from any behaviour that involves racism, sexism, homophobia, and bullying and in addition, report any instances of such behaviour to the Chair of the Parish Council, Parish Clerk or parents/carers, as appropriate.

Safe Working Practices:

- Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults unattended with adults who have not been subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Plan activities to involve more than one person being present or at least in sight or hearing of others. Alternatively, record, or inform others of their whereabouts and intended action.
- Where possible, have male and female leaders working with a mixed group.
- Ensure registers are complete and attendees are marked in and signed out (under 8's must be collected by a parent/carer).
- Ensure that photos or videos of individuals are not taken without written permission from their parents/carers.
- Ensure they have access to a first aid kit and telephone and know fire procedures.
- When working outside, ensure activities, breaks and clothing are suitable for the weather conditions and that shelter is available where possible.

Reporting Incidents:

The nominated Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult representative, will have responsibility for reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the local authority Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult lead agency. In this instance the lead agency would be Northumberland County Council (Local Authority Designated Office-LADO). The representative may choose to have a confidential discussion with others in order to clear up any misunderstandings or to corroborate and support any suspicions before reporting a concern to the lead agency.

The nominated person should: ● know who to contact at the local authority ● know who to contact in Social Services for advice and referrals ● know about helplines and other sources of help for children and young people and vulnerable adults. ● Ensure that there is an environment in which staff have the opportunity to raise any child protection or vulnerable adult protection concerns.

What should be a cause for concern?

Staff and volunteers should be concerned by any action or inaction, which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child. Abuse falls into four main categories and can include child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation, referred to as FGM. The categories are as follows:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect
5. Financial Abuse/Manipulation

We regularly work with other agencies and Northumberland County Council to ensure compliance with changing laws and guidelines in relation to safeguarding.

Allegations against staff and volunteers:

All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child young person or vulnerable adult will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. There will be a nominated and named Vulnerable Users representative to whom any suspicions or concerns should be reported. This person at CPC is **Councillor Liz Rooney**. All Parish Councillors, staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice will be sought from the LADO or Safeguarding Team as to how to handle such allegations. The Parish Council should follow the procedures for managing allegations against staff/volunteers on the SBC Safeguarding website.