

ACKLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Acklington Parish Council is committed to ensuring that children, young people, and adults at risk are protected from harm, abuse, and neglect.

The Council recognises that:

- Safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility**
- All individuals have a **right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect**
- Parish councils play an important role in **community leadership and local safeguarding awareness**

The Council adopts a **zero-tolerance approach to abuse** and will act promptly on any concerns.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All councillors
- Employees and the Parish Clerk
- Volunteers
- Contractors and service providers
- Hirers/users of council facilities

It covers all Council activities, facilities, and services.

3. Legal & Policy Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (statutory guidance)
- Safeguarding guidance published via UK Government

The Council also follows guidance and model policies from:

- National Association of Local Councils

- Society of Local Council Clerks
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4. Definitions

Child / Young Person: Anyone under 18

Adult at Risk: A person aged 18+ who:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect
- Cannot protect themselves due to those needs

Safeguarding: Protecting individuals from abuse, harm, or neglect and promoting their welfare.

5. Types of Abuse

The Council recognises the following categories:

- Physical abuse
 - Emotional/psychological abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Financial abuse
 - Neglect and acts of omission
 - Discriminatory abuse
 - Domestic abuse
 - Modern slavery / exploitation
 - Radicalisation (Prevent duty awareness)
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6. Responsibilities

Council Responsibilities

The Parish Council will:

- Provide a **safe environment** for all users of its services and facilities
- Ensure safeguarding is considered in all relevant decisions
- Promote awareness of safeguarding issues locally
- Maintain and review this policy annually

Councillors, Staff & Volunteers

All must:

- Be alert to signs of abuse
- Report concerns immediately
- Not investigate concerns themselves
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries

(Individuals are expected to report concerns but not investigate them)

7. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Council will appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.

Ann McDougal is the appointed safeguarding lead for Acklington Parish Council and will undertake the necessary training yearly to enable her to upkeep this position and work in the best interests of the council until a point where she stands down or the role is reassigned. Ann_mcdougal@yahoo.co.uk

Role includes:

- Acting as first point of contact
 - Referring concerns to relevant authorities
 - Maintaining confidential records
 - Ensuring policy compliance
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8. Safe Working Practices

The Council will:

- Require appropriate **DBS checks** where applicable
- Ensure activities are risk assessed
- Avoid situations where individuals are left alone with vulnerable persons
- Promote respectful and appropriate behaviour at all times

Where facilities are hired:

- Hirers must have their own safeguarding policy or adopt this one
- Hirers must ensure appropriate supervision and checks

(These expectations reflect standard parish council safeguarding practice)

9. Reporting Concerns

Immediate Danger

- Contact **Police (999)** immediately

Non-Emergency Concerns

- Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- DSL to refer to:
 - Northumberland Children's Services
 - Adult Social Care
 - Police (101 if appropriate)

The Council will:

- Record all concerns
 - Act promptly
 - Maintain confidentiality
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10. Information Sharing & Confidentiality

- Information will be shared even with other councillors on a **need-to-know basis**
 - The Council will comply with **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**
 - Confidentiality will not prevent sharing where a person is at risk
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11. Training & Awareness

The Council will:

- Provide safeguarding awareness to councillors and staff
 - Ensure understanding of reporting procedures
 - Promote safeguarding awareness within the community
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12. Safeguarding in Council Activities

The Council recognises it does not usually provide direct care services, but will:

- Ensure facilities are safe and regularly inspected
 - Require risk assessments for events
 - Ensure safeguarding expectations are clear to all users
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13. Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
 - Updated in line with legislation and guidance
 - Approved by full Council
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14. Key Contacts (to be completed locally)


- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ann McDougal Ann_mcdougal@yahoo.co.uk
 - Northumberland Children's Services (OneCall): 01670 536 400.
childrentriage@northumberland.gov.uk
 - Adult Safeguarding Team (OneCall): 01670 536 400.
onecall@northumberland.gov.uk
 - Police: 999 / 101
 - NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000.
help@NSPCC.org.uk
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Date Adopted: 5th May 2026

Chair/Vice Chair Name: Cllr Alison Bell

Chair/Vice Chair Signature: Cllr Sharin Ingleby

Clerk Name: Siobahn Watson

Clerk Signature: 

Date to be Reviewed: May 2027