



NEWTOWN AND LLANLLWCHAIARN TOWN COUNCIL CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY*

1. Introduction

1.1 The Children Act 1989 states that the child's welfare is paramount and that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

'All organisations need to listen and be responsive to the diverse needs of children, young people and their families, and to recognise that safeguarding children and young people is everyone's business.'

1.2 The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as everyone under 18 unless, "under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". The UK has ratified this convention.

1.3 A vulnerable adult is a person "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

2. Policy

2.1 This policy applies to all staff and councilors that may come into contact with children or vulnerable adults.

2.2 Children and vulnerable adults have a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that might lead to their being physically or psychologically damaged.

3. Policy Aims

3.1 The aim of this Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy is to promote good practice and to allow all staff and councillors to make informed and confident responses to specific protection issues.

4. Staff Involvement & Policy Application

4.1 Staff and councillors do not have regular or extensive involvement with children or vulnerable adults; the majority of contact is indirect through the use of the town council offices and planned events.

5. Managing Incidents

5.1 If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parent/carer is informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something by your words or actions

6. Good Practice Guidelines

6.1 These are

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all young people/vulnerable adults equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each person first. Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering people to share in decision making.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Securing parental consent in writing, in case the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given. (This should be recorded in the electronic accident book).
- Requesting written parental consent if officials are required to transport young people in their cars (though this should be avoided if at all possible).

7. Practices to be avoided

7.1 The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the group or the child's parents.

7.2 Otherwise, avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity, without written parental consent.

8. Practices Never to be sanctioned

8.1 The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

9. Use of photographic/filming equipment

9.1 There is no intention to prevent appropriate taking of photographs or film.

9.2 However, children and their parents/carers should be made aware that this may occur during events and activities and if necessary seek written consent.

10. Confidentiality

10.1 Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and only discussed on a need to know basis only (with need being defined as need to '*have access in the course of their duties*').

10.2 This includes the following people:

- Town Clerk
- The parents/carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services or Police
- Mayor of Council

11. Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

11.1 It is not the responsibility of anyone working the council to decide whether or not child or vulnerable adult abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

11.2 Contact should be made with the Child Protection Officers or Police who will support you in following the reporting procedures.

11.3 The Council will assure all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern about the possible abuse of a child or vulnerable adult.

11.4 Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A Criminal investigation
- A Child Protection investigation
- A Disciplinary or Misconduct investigation.

11.5 The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

12. Medical Emergency

12.1 Staff must call an ambulance if a child requires emergency medical treatment. Staff must not transport children in their own cars without the full consent of a parent/carer.

13. Concerns about Suspected Abuse

13.1 Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or others should be reported to the Town Clerk, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

13.2 The allegation may be referred to the Social Services Department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

13.3 The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services Department.

13.4 The Mayor should also be informed if any member of staff is the subject of the suspicion/allegation.

14. Disclosure of Abuse

14.1 In cases where a child makes a disclosure of abuse or where there is strong suspicion of abuse, the procedure is slightly different:

14.2 STAFF MUST NOT TRY TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER THEMSELVES, or question a child for further information. This is a specialist task and is the responsibility of the Social Services Department who work in conjunction with the Police Child Protection Team. Inappropriate questioning, i.e. asking leading questions, can lead to vital evidence being inadmissible in court. It is also essential that where a child's clothing may be used as evidence, it is not tampered with, and that any evidence, such as a child's drawing, is not discarded.

14.3 The Town Clerk must immediately report the concerns/incident to the Social Services Department who will decide what action to take. In cases where the parents/carers are the alleged abusers, parents/carers should not be informed before reporting it the Duty Social Worker.

This Council adopted this Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection at its meeting on

.....16/3/15.....

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Review Date = Every Two Years

Amended or Reviewed	Date	Version No	Who
Approved	16/3/15	160315a/1	Rina Clark
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