

ADLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Safeguarding Policy (Children and Adults at Risk)

1. Purpose of this Policy

Adlington Town Council is committed to safeguarding **children** and **adults at risk**. Although the Council does not operate buildings, premises, play areas or provide services involving unsupervised contact, Councillors and the Clerk may still come into contact with children or adults at risk through community engagement, correspondence, or wider involvement in the community.

This policy sets out the Council's responsibilities under:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*
- *Children Act 1989 and 2004*
- *Care Act 2014*
- Relevant Lancashire safeguarding procedures for children and adults

For the purposes of this policy:

- A **child** is anyone under 18.
- An **adult at risk** is defined under the Care Act 2014 as an adult who:
 - has care and support needs,
 - is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and
 - is unable to protect themselves because of those needs.

2. Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare of children and adults at risk is **paramount**.
- Safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility**, including councillors and the Clerk.
- The Council will act promptly, professionally, and in accordance with statutory guidance.
- The Council does not investigate allegations but ensures concerns are reported to the appropriate authority.
- No child or adult at risk should be left in immediate danger.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Town Clerk is the Council's DSL for both children and adults at risk.

Safeguarding Lead Councillor

Provides governance oversight of safeguarding arrangements. The role is strategic and does not involve handling case information.

The Safeguarding Lead Councillor will:

- Support the Clerk (DSL) in maintaining effective safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure policies are reviewed annually and remain compliant.
- Promote safeguarding awareness among councillors.
- Act as a point of contact for procedural queries.
- Receive concerns only when the Clerk is unavailable or when the concern relates to the Clerk.
- Refer any concerns immediately to the Clerk (if appropriate) or to statutory agencies.

All Councillors

Councillors must:

- Recognise possible signs of abuse or neglect (children and adults).
- Report concerns immediately to the Clerk (DSL).
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Act appropriately when interacting with children or adults at community events or meetings.
- Complete the Safeguarding Concern Form when they observe, receive, or are told about a concern.

4. Types of Abuse

Children (Working Together 2023)

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect Additional risks: grooming, exploitation, domestic abuse exposure, bullying/cyberbullying, trafficking, FGM, online harms.

Adults at Risk (Care Act 2014)

Under the Care Act 2014, abuse of adults at risk may include:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse

- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-neglect

5. How Safeguarding Concerns May Arise

Councillors or the Clerk may become aware of concerns through:

- Direct disclosure from a child or adult.
- Third-party reports from residents or organisations.
- Observations at community events.
- Concerns raised about adults in the community.
- Council correspondence or casework.

All disclosures must be taken seriously.

6. Responding to a Concern

Stage 1 – Immediate Actions

If a child or adult at risk discloses, or a concern is raised:

- Listen carefully; do not ask leading questions.
- Reassure the person they have done the right thing.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Record what was said or observed (date, time, facts only).
- Report immediately to the Clerk (DSL).
- If the Clerk is unavailable or the concern relates to the Clerk, report to the Safeguarding Lead Councillor.
- Contact Police (999) if anyone is in immediate danger.

Stage 2 – Referral

The Clerk (DSL) will:

- Assess whether the concern indicates risk of harm.
- Make a referral to:

- **Lancashire Children's Services** (children)
- **Lancashire Adult Social Care Duty Team** (adults at risk)
- Contact Police if urgent.
- Contact the LADO if the concern relates to an adult in a position of trust.

Lancashire Contacts

- Children's Social Care: **0300 123 6720**
- Out of Hours: **0300 123 6722**
- Adult Social Care: via Lancashire County Council Adult Safeguarding
- LADO: via Lancashire Safeguarding Children Partnership website

7. Recording and Confidentiality

Councillors should complete the Safeguarding Concern Form when they:

- observe something concerning
- receive a disclosure
- are told about a concern
- identify a concern through correspondence
- notice something worrying at an event or meeting

Records must be stored securely by the Clerk in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information is shared only with agencies that need it to protect the child or adult.

8. Safer Governance (Not Safer Recruitment)

As the Council has no employees other than the Clerk and does not run activities involving unsupervised contact:

- DBS checks are required only where a councillor or Clerk undertakes a role meeting the legal threshold.
- Contractors or partner organisations delivering services involving children or adults at risk must have appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

9. Use of Images

If the Council organises community events where children or adults may be photographed:

- Obtain appropriate consent.
- Store images securely.
- Use images only for agreed purposes.

- Do not publish identifying information without explicit consent.

10. Policy Review and Approval

- The policy will be reviewed annually.
- The Clerk will present updates to Council for approval.
- The policy will be published on the Council website.

11. Accountability

The Council is collectively responsible for ensuring safeguarding arrangements are in place and effective. The Clerk leads operational safeguarding; the Safeguarding Lead Councillor provides oversight.