



2020

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

Guidance and procedures
for councillors in Norwich



NORWICH
City Council

Norwich City Council recognises that it plays a vital role in keeping people safe in our city and the council fully understands its roles and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

We know there is genuine commitment from all councillors to do their best to keep children and vulnerable adults safe from harm. The council is therefore committed to playing its part to make sure children and vulnerable adults are safe.

The council is one partner in the multi-agency approach to safeguarding so it is vital that the council works collaboratively with other agencies to achieve this. Councillors equally have an important role to play when they are carrying out their duties.

We hope you find the pages in this guidance document a useful resource in helping to safeguard all vulnerable people in Norwich. Safeguarding is quite rightly everyone's business and this guidance document aims to help councillors fulfil this role.

This document will be updated as legislation, processes and / or personnel change.

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1. Safeguarding policy statement – Norwich City Council

Norwich City Council considers that all children and adults, whatever their age, culture, gender, origin, sexual orientation, skills, ability and beliefs have the right to protection from abuse. The council has a duty to promote the welfare of all and safeguard from harm as far as reasonably possible.

It is the council's responsibility to do this by raising awareness to all staff and providing training to relevant officers across the organisation and council members on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults so that they are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

The council will ensure that robust procedures are in place for the recruitment of suitable people to be working with children and vulnerable adults; that proper checks and procedures are undertaken; and, where appropriate, contractors and funded organisations have child protection policies and procedures in place.

In line with the Prevent duty – to stop people becoming involved in terrorist activity or supporting violent extremism in all its forms – the council will ensure it does not work with, or allow its premises to be used by organisations engaged in extremist activity or those that express extremist, hate motivated or discriminatory ideology or beliefs. This is the responsibility of all employees and council members.

The council works in partnership with other authorities to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and understands its role in recognising and referring alleged cases of abuse to the relevant authorities to take, or initiate, action where necessary.

The work of the council is guided by the principles of best practice and the guidance provided by the Norfolk safeguarding children board (NSCB) Norfolk safeguarding adults

board (NSAB), County community safety partnership (CCSP) and the Domestic abuse & sexual violence board (DASVB).

On an operational level, Norwich City Council officers work closely with the Norfolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) where appropriate, to ensure that all relevant statutory and support partners are informed and in place to support children and vulnerable adults at risk of serious harm.

2. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is defined as:

- protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children and vulnerable adults' health or development
- ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are living in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Working together to safeguard children 2015

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare of children up to the age of 18. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

The terms child, children, young person and young people are used interchangeably to represent anyone who has not yet reached the age of 18.

A vulnerable adult or adult at risk can be defined as: any person aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support, either on a long term or temporary basis (including for substance misuse, mental ill health or domestic abuse)
- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and as a result of those needs is

unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Care Act 2014

Abuse

‘The violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons’ (Department of Health, 2000).

Abuse can happen anywhere in the home, at school, during leisure activities and so on.

Abuse is not just about physical harm. For example, witnessing domestic abuse at home harms a child or young person emotionally and psychologically and impacts their ability to thrive. Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and represents an abuse of power or a breach of trust.

Abuse includes bullying and domestic abuse. Abuse can happen to anyone, including a child or vulnerable adult, regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, a child or children or a young person/people. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Failing to act to prevent harm to a child or vulnerable adult can imply acceptance of such behaviour, which in turn implies responsibility.

Types of abuse

This list is not exhaustive.

Physical abuse

- Hitting, shaking, pushing, kicking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, punching, biting, deliberate burns, stabbing, strangulation, unnecessary or inappropriate restraint

and other forms of assault.

- Medical mistreatment such as withholding or inappropriately altering or administering medication or other treatments, and fabricating the symptoms of or deliberately inducing illness.

Psychological or emotional abuse

- Deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation.
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning.
- Being made to feel worthless or inadequate.
- Humiliation, blaming, verbal abuse.
- Lack of privacy or choice.
- Use of coercion, using threats or fears to over-ride a person’s wishes.
- Treating an adult as if they were a child.
- Witnessing significant harm to another.
- Serious bullying.

Neglect

- Failure to meet basic physical care needs – to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Deprivation of necessary personal and medical care, which can result in the impairment of health and/or development.
- Failure to protect from physical harm or danger.
- Failure to protect from emotional harm.
- Failure to provide access to appropriate medical care or treatment and/or removal of aids to daily living.
- Being unresponsive to basic emotional needs.
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers).
- During pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.
- For vulnerable adults, it includes failure to give information about sexual and reproductive health.
- For vulnerable adults, it includes self-neglect of basic health and care needs.

Bullying

- Physical – such as hitting, kicking and theft.
- Verbal – including name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or

homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti and gestures.

- Virtual – incorporating the use of social networking websites and platforms and/or texting and ‘sexting’.
- Emotional – such as tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring.
- Sexual – such as unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

Sexual abuse or exploitation

- Involves forcing or coercing a vulnerable individual to take part in sexual activities including prostitution, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.
- This may include non-contact activities such as watching or producing online images and watching sexual activities or encouraging children and vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Financial abuse or exploitation

- Stealing money or property.
- Deceiving or manipulating a person out of money or property.
- Withholding or misusing money or property.
- Stripping a person of their assets.
- Exploitation of dependence for personal gain.
- Misuse of benefits by others.

Discriminatory abuse

- Racist, sexist, or homophobic abuse, abuse relating to age, disability or illness, religion or belief.
- Acts or comments, including incitement to others to commit abuse.

Domestic abuse

- Defined as any incident of threatening or coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (whether physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial or verbal) that occurs between parties where there is or was an intimate relationship.

- Occurs across the whole of society regardless of age, gender, race, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, or whether they have a disability and can occur in any type of relationship, such as marriage/civil partner, former marriage/civil partner, former/current boyfriend/girlfriend, family or former family members, extended family or former extended family members, including siblings and young person to parent and any form of cohabitation.
- Can affect adults and children either and includes direct abuse, threats of being abused or the impact of witnessing abuse.
- Includes crimes committed in the name of so called ‘honour’, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Includes persistent coercion and controlling behaviour, where the perpetrator seeks power over the victim.
- Includes crimes of stalking and harassment.
- Applicable in law to victims from aged 16*.

Manipulating to adopt radical ideologies and harmful behaviours

Targeting children and vulnerable adults to:

- undertake activities and behaviours that are criminal to self and others
- take control of the young person or vulnerable adult’s home for illegal and/or harmful activity
- manipulate thinking to a different ideology than current understanding, including radicalisation to extremist ideologies, to the detriment – or danger – of the person targeted and others
- recruit peers to adopt the same ideologies/harmful behaviours.

Modern slavery/human trafficking

- Involves the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability,

* Intimate personal relationships are recognised in law from aged 16. Prior to that it would be covered under child abuse laws (whether perpetrated by a child or adult).

deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation

- May include debt bondage, where a person is forced to work for free to pay off a debt, child slavery, forced marriage, domestic servitude and forced labour, where victims are made to work through violence and intimidation.

Children in specific circumstances

Listed below is additional information about certain issues that affect some children/young people and might mean they are more vulnerable to harm or abuse. Significant harm is always a very real risk for these children. If councillors come across these situations and are concerned then they should contact Norfolk Childrens Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on [0344 800 8020](tel:03448008020).

Disabled children

Research suggests that children with a disability are more vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect than children who do not have a disability. The increased vulnerability is attributed to risk factors such as: social isolation, dependency on others for practical assistance including intimate personal care, an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse, possible communication barrier, limited access to someone they can trust to disclose that they have been abused.

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures that remove part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-medical reasons. The age at which girls are subjected to female genital mutilation varies greatly from shortly after birth to any time up to adulthood, with the majority of cases happening to those between the ages of four and 13 years. The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) makes it a criminal offence in the UK

and for UK nationals or permanent UK residents, to carry out or be involved with FGM abroad even in countries where the practice is legal.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is one that takes place without the full and free consent of both parties. Force can include physical force, as well as being pressured psychologically or threatened. Forced marriages are not the same as arranged marriages, whereby families take the lead in selecting a marriage partner but the couple have the free will and choice to accept or decline the arrangement.

Forced marriage involving a young person under the age of 18 is a child protection issue, as the child is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Forced marriage may involve the child being taken out of the country (trafficked) for the ceremony, is likely to involve non-consensual and/or underage sex and refusal to go through with a forced marriage has sometimes been linked to honour-based violence.

Gangs and serious youth violence

A child who is affected by gang activity or serious youth violence can be at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, a perpetrator or both – in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult.

Honour-based violence

Honour-based violence is the term used to describe acts of violence – assault, abduction and murder in the name of so-called honour. It is mostly carried out against women who are killed for perceived immoral behaviour, deemed to have breached the honour code of a family or community, causing shame.

A child who is at risk of honour-based violence is at significant risk of physical harm (including being murdered) and/or neglect, and may also suffer significant emotional harm through the threat of violence or witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or other family member.

Missing children

Norfolk Children's Services regard a child as 'missing' when the person responsible for them does not know where they are. Children who are most vulnerable to going missing from care and home include those missing from school, looked after children and asylum-seeking children. When a child goes missing from care or home, they could be at risk of significant harm through physical or sexual abuse.

Private fostering

This is where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and carer for 28 days or more.

In many cases, the child is also looked after away from a familiar environment in terms of region or country. Private foster carers and those with parental responsibility are required to notify the local authority by law of their intention to privately foster or to have a child privately fostered.

Spirit possession/witchcraft

In these situations a parent or carer and sometimes a child believe that an evil force has entered the child and is controlling them. The belief includes the child being able to use the evil force to harm others. A belief in spirit possession is not confined to particular countries, cultures, religions/faiths or communities.

A child may suffer emotional abuse if they are labelled and treated as being possessed with an evil spirit. In addition, significant harm to a child may occur when an attempt is made to 'exorcise' or 'deliver' the evil spirit from the child.

Trafficking

A trafficked child is coerced or deceived by the adult who brings them into the country or is moved within the UK. When the child arrives in the UK or is moved within the country, they are denied their human rights and are forced into exploitation by the trafficker or the adult/s into whose control the child is delivered. It is a form of child abuse and requires a child protection response.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

These are children under the age of 18 years who are seeking asylum, but not living with their parents, relatives or guardians in the UK. Most come from countries which are in a state of chaos, including war and endemic violence.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) require a broad package of support and should be referred to children's social care in order to establish the council's duties to support them.

Young carers

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who look after someone in their family affected by illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse. The young person takes on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult.

Young carers are particularly vulnerable because their caring responsibilities can significantly impact upon a child's health and development.

3. Legal framework

Key legislation includes:

- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [Mental Health Act 2007](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Domestic Violence, Crime & Victims Act 2004 \(updates 2017\)](#)

4. Roles and responsibilities

Councillors

Councillors have a responsibility to:

- report concerns about a child or vulnerable adult to the appropriate organisation or responsible body
- avoid situations that may be misinterpreted and lead to allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

Councillors should inform the relevant officers if they have a concern and need advice on reporting abuse, or if they are concerned about a colleague potentially perpetrating abuse.

Even where concerns do not in isolation confirm abuse or harassment, these should still be reported. When considered in conjunction with other concerns, these may provide compelling indicators of a child or adult being at risk.

Norfolk County Council

In Norwich, [Norfolk County Council](#) provides adult and children's services.

All councils and relevant partner agencies have a statutory duty to make sure they are meeting their responsibilities for the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children. The [local safeguarding children's board](#) is responsible for coordinating these arrangements.

When a referral is received and there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult who lives, or is found, in Norwich is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, Norfolk County Council is required to make such enquiries as it considers necessary to enable it to decide whether it should take any action to safeguard or promote the person's welfare.

Police

The [police](#) are responsible for effective agency working with children's and adults services in the investigation and resolution of child or vulnerable adult protection cases including cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

This may involve inclusion in area safeguarding committees, the issuing of police protection orders, and safeguarding the welfare of victims, witnesses and offenders.

They are the first point of contact for an individual that appears to be in danger of immediate harm.

5. Good practice

It is recognised that not all councillors will have direct contact with children and vulnerable adults as part of their roles. However some will, as part of their ward councillor role or for civic duties, and all have responsibility to vulnerable people.

It is important that councillors operate within a safe working environment for children and vulnerable adults. If councillors adhere to the principles of safe working, this benefits the work and reputation of the council by developing an open and positive climate. Councillors should also maintain the organisation's reputation for integrity and responsibility in dealing with vulnerable people.

Councillors should avoid putting themselves in situations involving contact with children and vulnerable adults which might expose them to the risk of an allegation of inappropriate behaviour when they are acting in their role as councillor.

Norwich City Council has a responsibility to ensure councillors are aware of the procedures, have access to appropriate training and co-operate with statutory agencies during any investigation.

6. Confidentiality

Councillors should be aware of their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in relation to personal information.

Where there are concerns that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk it may be possible to justify sharing information with the appropriate authorities for the purposes of identifying people for whom preventative interventions are appropriate.

Information should be shared with consent, where it is possible to do so and where doing so would not put that child or vulnerable adult at greater risk of harm. Information may also be shared without consent if that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest – for example; where you may suspect that somebody has been radicalised and poses a threat to society.

Judgements should be based on the facts of the situation taking into account considerations of the safety and wellbeing of the person and others who may be affected by their actions. Information shared should be only that necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it and should be accurate, up to date and shared securely and in a timely fashion.

Note: a breach of the duty of confidentiality would also engage the councillors' code of conduct.

Further information on information sharing can be found via the [Home Office information sharing pocket guide](#).

7. Training

Training is available to all councillors in order for them to recognise and understand their individual responsibilities for ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults. The training will develop the councillor's ability to review their own best practice and:

- identify potential incidences of abuse
- identify potential poor practice by others
- understand processes for reporting and discussing concerns
- work towards improving practice so that no vulnerable people are placed at risk.

An e-learning package on safeguarding children and another on safeguarding vulnerable adults are available via the Learning Room for members to access and increase or refresh their understanding.

Councillors requiring safeguarding training should contact democratic services to arrange.

8. Contacts

Immediate danger

If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger then contact the police in the first instance. In an emergency, call: **999**.

Reporting concerns about a child or vulnerable adult

If you suspect that abuse is occurring or have concerns about a child or young person and are seeking clarification or advice, contact the Norfolk Childrens Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8020. If your concerns are about a vulnerable adult or there has been a disclosure of abuse, this matter must be prioritised and responded to by reporting immediately to the Norfolk Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0344 800 8020, who will investigate and take appropriate action.

Early Intervention

If you wish to obtain advice, guidance and signposting information to enable you to suggest appropriate support services to a resident consider contacting Norwich Early Help Hub on [01603 987800](tel:01603987800).

Out-of-hours emergencies

Concerns regarding children and vulnerable adults out of office hours can be reported to the MASH on [0344 800 8020](tel:03448008020).

Allegations against professionals – officers or councillors

Children

Suspicious of poor practice or abuse by an officer or another professional that are observed or reported to an officer should be reported to the local authority designated officer (LADO) on [01603 223473](tel:01603223473) and appropriate action will be taken.

Adults

To report any concerns regarding an officer or another professional who may pose a risk to adults with care support needs, contact the MASH on [0344 800 8020](tel:03448008020) and ask to speak to the adult social care safeguarding team. Ask them to send a safeguarding adults data sharing referral (SADS) form. Email the completed form to sccesecure@norfolk.gcsx.gov.uk

Whistle-blowing

Serious concerns about poor practice in the organisation or the council's approach to safeguarding can be raised with the council's senior safeguarding officer, Louise Rawsthorne by emailing louiserawsthorne@norwich.gov.uk

Reporting to commissioned organisations

Relevant authorities must be informed of concerns or suspicions of abuse that potentially endanger children and vulnerable adults.

Councillors may represent the council on outside bodies. If a councillor has a safeguarding concern that relates to the behaviour of officers or trustees within these organisations, these concerns should be reported to the organisation. They should also make the relevant senior officer for each outside body aware of their concerns.

9. Useful Links

- [Norfolk safeguarding children board](#)
- [Norfolk safeguarding adults board](#)
- [MASH leaflet](#)
- [Norwich Early Help Hub](#)
- [Norfolk County Council domestic abuse information](#)
- [Vulnerable to radicalisation \(VTR\) guidance and referral form](#)
- [Neglect identification toolkit](#)
- [Self-neglect and hoarding strategy](#)
- [Multi-agency guidance: Allegations against persons in a position of trust](#)
- [CADS how to raise a concern](#)



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