

Stroud District Council

Safeguarding Guide

(Children, Young People and Adult)

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Introduction

Stroud District Council (SDC) advocates that **SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS** and that all people have the right to live in safety, free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Safeguarding is the umbrella term for protecting peoples' physical health, mental wellbeing and human rights and SDC has a duty of care to protect all children, young people and adults, who come into contact with our services (in-line with the Children Act (2004) and the Care Act (2014) key principles for adults who may be in need of care and support (empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability)). Safeguarding means making sure that people are supported to gain good access to support services, remain well and thrive.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to ensure that SDC retains a consistent approach to safeguarding across the organisation. It is designed to ensure that all employees, Elected Members, volunteers and contractors, delivering services on the Council's behalf are aware of their legal obligations. This guide will sit behind the SDC Policy, SDC Flow Charts and SDC Safeguarding Concern/Incident reporting forms.

The safeguarding of children, young people and adults, who may be in need of care & support, it encompasses the following types of harm and/or abuse: -

Children & Young People

- Emotional, Sexual, Neglect, Physical, Domestic Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Modern Slavery
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation

Adult who may be in need of Care and Support (Vulnerable Adults)

- Physical
- Domestic Abuse (including physical, financial, sexual, psychological, emotional and coercive control)
- Sexual
- Emotional/Psychological
- Neglect & Acts of Omission
- Financial and Material (including Scams)
- Discriminatory
- Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking/Illegal Workers
- Institutional/Organisational
- Self-Neglect
- Honour Based Violence
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Cyber crime
- Stalking

The Council's Role and Responsibilities

SDC has a statutory responsibility and duty of care to cooperate, communicate and report issues relating to safeguarding to the appropriate internal person(s), authorities and partner agencies. This is to be consistent and timely across all service areas. Safeguarding is not a practice that operates in isolation and is to be embedded within the whole organisation and this guide offers detail behind the SDC Safeguarding Policy on a page and reporting system.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Local Authorities have a duty under the Children Act (2004) and the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive (GSCE) regulations, to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard, protect and /or empower children and young people when carrying out their functions. SDC is a member of the GSCE and has a role in identifying children and young people who may be at risk and alerting the appropriate services.

Safeguarding Adults

SDC's role to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place for adults is governed by the Care Act (2014) and Care and Support Statutory Guidance (2014) and Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (2009) regulations. Responsibilities apply to adults who:

- May have care and support needs
- Are experiencing or are at risk of abuse or neglect
- Are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect
- Who lack capacity in order to promote their rights as laid down in the Mental Health Capacity Act (2005) and Deprivation of Liberty Standards (2007).

The compulsory SDC Safeguarding Training (level 1 & 2 ELearning) includes both children/young people and adults and details how each staff member is to perform this role. All staff and associated workers/volunteers are required to regularly familiarise themselves with the SDC safeguarding procedures in place on the SDC Hub.

Definitions and Types of Abuse - Children and Young People

In accordance with guidance provided by ***Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*** and based on the **Children Act (2004)**, the terms children, child, young person or young people shall for the purposes of this guide be deemed to mean:

“Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that they have reached 16 years of age; are living independently or in further education; are a member of the armed forces; in hospital or in custody in the secure estate for children and young people, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Acts and this policy”.

A child and/or young person may be at risk of abuse in many ways, as detailed by the following table: -

TYPE	DEFINITION	SIGNS
Emotional	The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional Development. Can also include cyber bullying	Conveying to children that they are worthless or inadequate; imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, serious bullying, exploitation, isolation, segregation
Sexual	Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware what is happening, including use of images through social media or other IT.	Inappropriate sexual behaviour, use of language, fear of adults, recoiling from physical contact
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development	Inadequate food, clothing or shelter. Inadequate access to appropriate medical care or treatment, isolation, truanting, lateness
Physical	May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Also includes bullying and cyber bullying	Unexplained bruising, burns, fractures, weight gain or loss, repeat illness
Domestic Violence	An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality	Unexplained bruising, cowering or flinching, bruising consistent with being hit, detachment

Definitions and Types of Abuse – Adults in need of care and support

An adult, is any person aged 18 or over. An adult is deemed as vulnerable if they;

- Have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) **and:**
- Is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect **and**
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from wither the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect **Or**
- Lacks capacity in order to promote their rights as laid down in the Mental Health Capacity Act (2005) and Deprivation of Liberty Standards (2007).

A vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse in many ways, as detailed in the following table: -

TYPE	DEFINITION	INDICATORS
Physical	The non-accidental use of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment including: assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication and restraint	Unexplained bruising, cowering or flinching, bruising consistent with being hit, unexplained burns, unexplained fractures
Domestic Abuse	An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality	Unexplained bruising, cowering or flinching, bruising consistent with being hit
Sexual	Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent	Incontinence, difficulty/discomfort in walking, excessive washing, sexually transmitted diseases, bruising/bleeding in genital areas, bruising, urinary infections
Emotional/Psychological	Acts or behaviour which impinge on the emotional health of, or which causes distress or anguish to individuals	Disturbed sleep, anxiety, confusion, extreme submissiveness or dependency, sharp changes in behaviour, loss of confidence or appetite
Neglect & Acts of Omission	Ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs which result in a situation or environment detrimental to the individual	Ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs (incl. dressing), failure to provide access to appropriate health care, withholding medication, adequate nutrition and heating
Financial & Material Abuse	Unauthorised, fraudulent obtaining and improper use of funds, property or any resources of an adult at risk. Scamming and coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs	Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills, unexplained withdrawals of money from accounts, personal possessions going missing, unusual interest by a friend/relative/neighbour in financial matters

Discriminatory	When values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies main stream opportunities to some groups or individuals. This includes discrimination on the grounds of race, faith or religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and political views, along with racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes, or comments and jokes based on a person's disability or any other form of harassment, slur or similar treatment	Inciting others to commit abusive acts, lack of effective communication, bullying
Modern Slavery	Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced and compulsory labour and domestic servitude	Poverty, isolation, drug and alcohol misuse
Institutional/ Organisational	Where the culture of the organisations places the emphasis on the running of the establishment above the needs and care of the person	Lack of care plans, contact with the outside world not encouraged, no flexibility or lack of choice
Self-neglect	Neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding	A deterioration in physical appearance, lack of grooming, rapid weight gain/loss

Additional Legislation for Children and Young People and Adults

There are a number of specific legislative acts that constitute abuse which could affect both children and adults; as follows;

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person will have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Additionally, involvement in exploitative relationships are being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Modern Slavery

There are many different characteristics that distinguish slavery from other human rights violations, however only one needs to be present for slavery to exist. It involves people being forced to work through mental or physical threat, owned or controlled by an 'employer' usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse, dehumanised and being treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'.

Forced Marriage

In a forced marriage you are coerced into marrying someone against your will. You may be physically threatened or emotionally blackmailed to do so. It is an abuse of human rights and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis. It is not the same as an arranged marriage where you have a choice as to whether to accept the arrangement or not. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and countries for a very long time.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a collective term used for illegal procedures, such as female circumcision, which include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs, or injury to the female genital organs for a cultural or non-therapeutic reason.

Honour Based Violence (HBV)

HBV is abuse in the name of honour, covering a variety of behaviours (including crimes), mainly but not exclusively against females, where the person is being punished by their family and/or community for a perceived transgression against the 'honour' of the family or community, or is required to undergo certain activities or procedures in 'honour' of the family.

It is a form of domestic abuse which relates to a victim who does not abide by the 'rules' of an honour code. This will have been set at the discretion of relatives or community; the victims are punished for bringing shame on the family or community.

Cyber Crime

Cybercrime is defined as criminal activity carried out by means of computers or the internet. Criminals are increasingly exploiting the speed, convenience and anonymity of the internet to commit a diverse range of criminal activities without physical or virtual borders. These crimes can cause serious harm and pose significant threats to victims worldwide.

Stalking

The Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) defines "stalking" as an offence. However, there is no legal definition, but examples include: following or spying on a person or forcing contact with the victim through any means including social media. Any of these examples carried out repeatedly or persistently can cause significant alarm or distress.

Prevent

Prevent is a government strategy which aims to raise awareness and resilience to radicalisation. It recognises that children and vulnerable adults can be susceptible to extremist views and coerced into criminal behaviour.

Human Trafficking

Takes place when a victim is moved from one place to another for the purpose of exploitation, this could be through sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, forced criminality or organ harvesting. The trafficker is able to control and exploit through violence, coercion or deception.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Officers

SDC has designated safeguarding lead officers, who are responsible for championing the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults in need of care and support. Their role is also to support staff and provide guidance and advice to aid implementation of the SDC Policy. In the event of allegation concerns arising in relation to a member of SDC staff, or a volunteer, the Head of Human Resources will also be notified/involved.

Strategic Lead:

Mike Hammond

Operational Allegations for Lead Staff, Children/Young People and Adults:

Nikki Humphries, Steve Miles, Rachel Pratt and Human Resources

Additional nominated reporting officers for Concern/Incident:

Dave Jackson, Michelle Elliott, Lynne Mansell, Tara Skidmore, Ian Mallinson, Deborah Drennen, Kevin Ward and Steven Deproost

This group of officers will form the SDC Safeguarding Group and will meet at least twice a year

Whole Organisation Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership Team

Stroud District Council's Strategic Leadership Team will ensure that: -

1. The Council meets its legal obligations.
2. Where applicable, the safeguarding of children, young people and adults in need of care and support is considered in strategies, and service plans.
3. The best safeguarding practices are embedded and maintained across all services to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with national and local policies.
4. All safeguarding matters are expedited in a timely manner and treated seriously.
5. Support staff and members on all aspects of Safeguarding and ensure procedures are adhered to.
6. Ensure that Safeguarding Level 1 and 2 training is compulsory across the authority.

Service Managers

Stroud District Council's Service Managers will ensure that: -

1. The safeguarding policy is adhered to across the organisation
2. Staff complete and implement the appropriate safeguarding training
3. Staff handling safeguarding issues are fully supported
4. They take responsibility for the quality of safeguarding children, young people and adults in need of care and support in their service area
5. All staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults in need of care and support are subject to the DBS checks appropriate to their role and legislative requirements.

Human Resources

Stroud District Council's Human Resource Service will ensure that: -

1. The relevant policies are in place for Safer Recruitment, DBS and Disciplinary Procedures
2. Managers and members are supported in the use of these policies directly and indirectly associated with safeguarding
3. Provide support with the pre-employment checks (including through the Disclosure and Barring Service).
4. Work with SDC Safeguarding Group to ensure all new staff complete safeguarding level 1 ELearning and as part of their induction and ensure all staff complete the relevant course on an annual basis.

Staff

Stroud District Council's Staff will: -

1. Treat all safeguarding matters seriously
2. Report concerns and/or incidents as per the reporting procedure and complete the relevant form from the SDC HUB.
3. Be aware of all policies.
4. Complete safeguarding level 1 and level 2 awareness training

Elected Members

Elected members are uniquely placed to support the safeguarding of children and adults in need of care and support within their community. They can also provide input to ensure that the council is fulfilling its corporate responsibility. Elected members should always: -

1. Report their concerns about a child or adult's welfare or someone else's behaviour in regards to a child or adult by following the flow chart and forms on the SDC HUB.
2. Adopt good practice in terms of safeguarding at all times when carrying out their council duties
3. Seek support or raise concerns with the SDC designated Safeguarding Leads when necessary
4. Complete safeguarding level 1 and level 2 awareness training as required

Who else the Safeguarding Policy affects

In addition to employees and elected Members of SDC, this guide applies to the following people or service areas: -

Procurement

Any contracts awarded with external agencies for the provision of goods and services must make specific reference to safeguarding and the duties imposed on staff. Steps must be taken to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and adults is commensurate with the type of service being provided on behalf of, or in partnership with the Council.

Contractors

SDC will ensure that:

1. All contractors providing services directly related to children, young people and adults have a safeguarding policy and practices which complement the council's requirements related to safeguarding
2. Contractors providing a service to the council (such as maintenance work at a council property) will be made aware of the council's procedures and policies
3. Council staff will ensure that relevant safeguarding practices are adopted by the contractor

Partners

All partners working with SDC must have regard to safeguarding. For joint projects, partner agencies will be required to pass a copy of their safeguarding policy to SDC to ensure that it aligns with the SDC's safeguarding requirements or alternatively. Where no such policy exists, the partner will be required to adopt this policy for the duration of the project. Taxi drivers licensed by the council must attend specific safeguarding training.

Volunteers

Any volunteers operating either in their own right as individuals, or as part of a larger organisation on behalf of SDC working with children, young people and/or adults (and delivering regular recorded sessions) will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check and will be made aware of the council's Safeguarding Policy as part of their overall induction.

Modern Apprentices, Work Experience and Workers under the age of 18

Staff will need to be aware that the above duty will apply to their interaction with work experience and modern apprentice workers (under the age of 18). Such workers would still be deemed as children under this guide, whilst also themselves being responsible under the duty imposed by Section 11 of the Children Act (2004). It will be necessary to consider the impact of this in all risk assessments carried out in relation to this member of staff, in line with the SDC Risk Management Policy & Strategy.

If a work experience placement involves working with a member of staff off site, or working with a member of staff on their own for longer than half a day, the students' parents or guardians should be informed prior to the work experience placement. In addition, when the student goes off-site the employee must advise a Senior Officer where they are going, the reason for the visit and how long the visit will take.

Safeguarding Practices

Safer Recruitment

SDC operates safer recruitment principles that are followed for all staff appointments

Training

Safeguarding ELearning training level 1 & level 2 is compulsory at SDC; Line managers and HR are responsible for identifying and ensuring that all new starters have the appropriate level of training for their role (within six months of taking up their post). All staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults must successfully complete Safeguarding level 1 ELearning on induction – HR to ensure that all staff refresh their ELearning annually.

Safeguarding Allegations against a Member of Staff

SDC takes any allegations or complaints about the conduct of staff and volunteers very seriously in respect of their contact with children, young people and adults in need of care and support. All allegations or complaints received by SDC will be investigated fully, and where applicable, action will be taken internally against the member of staff or volunteer, via the SDC disciplinary procedure. If deemed necessary, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended whilst the investigation takes place. The decision to suspend lies ultimately with Strategic Leadership Team and HR. SDC will involve and take advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) employed by Gloucestershire County Council.

Support for Staff/Volunteers

Support will be provided for any member of staff or volunteer who may be subject to an allegation as indicated in the SDC Employee Handbook section 2.7.2 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

SDC assures all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith (without malicious intent) report his or her concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child, young person or adult may be being abused or bullied.

The person who receives information concerning a suspected case of abuse by another member of staff or volunteer should make a full record of what has been said, as soon as possible and pass the information on to their Line Manager or Head of Service.

Safeguarding Procedure

Listening and Responding to Children and Adults who may be in need of care and support

As adults with trust and influence, SDC employees and Elected Members are in a powerful position to recognise and receive information/disclosure about abuse or need for care and support. However, it is not their responsibility to decide if a child, young person or adult in need of care and support is being abused.

All SDC employees have a role to act on their concerns in-line with the SDC safeguarding policy, guide, flow charts and forms situated on the SDC Hub.

If a child/young person or adult in need of care and support tells a member of staff about potential or alleged abuse, all employees are to please ensure that they say and /or do the following: -

- Remain calm.
- Listen carefully to what the child/young person or adult has to say (without making any judgement).
- Try not to ask interrogative questions, but if you have to, make sure they are open-ended to clarify understanding and not to probe or investigate.
- Do encourage the child/young person or adult to talk.
- Do not give an opinion or offer advice.
- Be honest with them about what you can and cannot do.
- Tell them that you are not able to keep what they have told you secret.
- For children/young people tell them that you will try to find them the help they need.
- For adults in need of care and support, ensure that you ask if they would like you to seek help and subsequently gain their permission (in line with Making Safeguarding Personal, The Care Act, MCA and DoLs principles), please visit <https://www.local.gov.uk/msp-toolkit>
- When the child/young person or adult has finished talking, make a detailed note of what they have said, using only their words. Then follow the relevant checklist and forms completion, as detailed on the SDC Hub.
- **Do not** contact or confront the individual who is alleged to be responsible.
- Re-assure the child / young person / adult in need of care and support that they have done the right thing.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure that you inform only your Line Manager at this stage.

SDC Employee Responsibilities

It is not the responsibility of an SDC employee to make decisions on whether abuse is actually taking place. However, all SDC employees have a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and adults in need of care and support and to inform the appropriate internal SDC safeguarding lead in a timely manner.

The employee will then work with the SDC safeguarding lead to inform the appropriate external agencies via the GSCE or GSAB advice line/helpdesk and relevant report form portals. It is the responsibility of the

Gloucestershire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to then make enquiries, decisions and take any necessary action (and inform SDC of actions taken).

Maintain Confidentiality

It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed (unless absolutely necessary) as any breaches could be damaging to the child or adult with care and support needs and to any investigation which may follow. Any requests for information from members of the public (including parents, guardians or carers) or the media should be directed to the SDC Safeguarding Lead.

Children and Young People's Social Work Team

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub offers a Community Social Work Team to discuss matters of concern relating to children and families prior to making a referral.

- If you have urgent safeguarding concerns for a child or young person, please continue follow the safeguarding procedures
- If you work with children and families and have safeguarding concerns which are not of an urgent nature and you can ask for advice from the Community Social Work Team on 01452 426263. If you are unable to get through to the Community Social Work Team straight away, please leave your name, contact details, and best time and date to call you back.
- Alternatively, if you ring 01452 426565 and select option 2, you will be transferred to the Early Help Service for their response. However, where possible, please contact the Community Social Work team in the first instance.

When you contact Community Social Work Team, they can offer support to reflect on your worries, explore what needs to happen next, and complete a follow-up conversation with you at a later time and date to ensure that you feel confident in completing the agreed actions, as well as any support you may require around this.

[Allegations of previous abuse](#)

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the employee should follow the same safeguarding procedure as detailed in the SDC safeguarding page on the SDC Hub.

[Escalation Policy/Healthy Challenge](#)

If you as an SDC employee, disagree with any safeguarding decisions made/taken by the MASH and related organisations, you are able to challenge and seek resolution. Please discuss with your line manager and then follow the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board Escalation Policy which can be found on their website.



GSCE - Referral
Form V3 (Sept 2020).

[Review of Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#)

The effectiveness and content of this policy will be reviewed by the SDC Safeguarding Group on an annual basis

Useful contact numbers:

GCC Front Door (Children's Helpdesk) (urgent referrals)	01452 426565 (Option 1)
GCC Childrens Practitioner Advice Line	01452 426565 (Option 3)
GCC Adult Helpdesk	01452 426868
GCC Adult Practitioner Advice Line	01452 426868
GCC out of hours Emergency Duty Team (Professionals only)	01452 614758
Community Social Workers (Stroud district Team)	01452 328130
Police Emergency	999
Police Non Emergency	101
NHS	111
Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS)	01452 726570
Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC)	01452 526770
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Victim Support	08082 812446
Modern Slavery National Helpline	08000 121 700
Talk To Frank	0300 1236600
County Lines Drug Networks - Police Non Emergency	101
Family Information Service	0800 542 0202
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Age UK	01452 422660
Alzheimer's Society	0333 150 3456
Silver Line	0800 4708090
Cross Roads Caring For Carers (Stroud & Glos)	01452 302542
Dementia Care Trust	08008 886678
Shared Lives (Family Based Care For Adults)	01452 426237
Gloucestershire Community Patient Liaison Service (PALS)	0300 422 6830
POhWER (Advocacy Service)	03004 562370
Suicide Crisis Support (Gloucestershire) (if in crisis)	07975 974455
Suicide Crisis Support (General and admin enquiries)	07889 420200
Gloucestershire Trading Standards	0808 223 1133
Citizens Advice Bureau	08088 000510
Samaritans	03300 945717
Healthwatch Gloucestershire	01452 504989