

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Epping Forest District Council Policy and Procedures



CONTENTS

SECTION	Page Nos.
1. Definitions and further reading materials	2 & 3
2. Scope of the Policy and EFDC Mission Statement	4
3. Safeguarding roles in Essex	5
4. The role of Epping Forest District Council	6
5. Introduction to EFDC Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy	7
6. Service roles in safeguarding	8
7. The roles of EFDC staff and Elected Members	9
8. Designated roles in EFDC and corporate safeguarding structure	10 & 11
9. Individual staff functions	12
10. Coordination and sharing of safeguarding information and records	15
11. Safeguarding allegations against a member of staff	16
12. Safeguarding allegations against an Elected Member	17
13. Safe Working Practice with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	17 & 18
14. Safeguarding reporting procedures	19 to 21
15. Draft Safeguarding Concern, Incident and Allegation Form.	22 & 23

1. Definitions

- 1.1 'Safeguarding':** This term includes all forms of activity that aims to protect or promote the welfare of individuals and/or groups of people. This includes activity which ensures prevention of harm, safe recruitment, staff training, awareness raising, provision of activities designed to promote inclusion, personalised risk management and risk assessments, confidential data storage, information sharing and referral. At a county level, safeguarding includes specialist services.
- 1.2 'Child Abuse':** This is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm of a child or young person. There are four main types of child abuse: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect (NSPCC 2011).
- 1.3 'Children and Young People:** Anyone under the age of 18 years, including pre-birth.
- 1.4 'Vulnerable Adults':** A person over the age of 18 years who for reasons of mental or physical ability, health/ illness are unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation. They may require community care services to support their wellbeing. Vulnerable adults are at risk of abuse in the same way as children and young people, but also in respect of having property/money stolen or misused, being defrauded, or, being put under pressure in relation to their money or property.
- 1.5 'Adult abuse':** is defined as the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It may involve a single or repeated act or omission, occurring within a personal or other relationship where there is an expectation of trust. Adult abuse is any form of physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, institutional, financial or discriminatory abuse or neglect.
- 1.6 'Significant Harm':** This is any physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, accident or injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect health, development and quality of life.
- 1.7 'Initial Response Team':** The front door of referrals to Essex Social Care.
- 1.8 'Domestic Violence':** The Home Office defines domestic violence as "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (eg. psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality". *The Council's Domestic Abuse strategy and can be found on the Intranet linked directly to this policy.*
- 1.9 'Child Sexual Exploitation':** Child sexual exploitation is illegal activity by people who have power over young people and use it to sexually abuse them. This can involve a broad range of exploitative activity, from seemingly 'consensual' relationships and informal exchanges of sex for attention, accommodation, gifts or cigarettes, through to very serious organised crime. *The Council's Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy can be found on the Intranet linked directly to this policy.*
- 1.8 'Honour Based Abuse':** This can be a collection of practises used to control behaviour within families in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and /or honour. Violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Women are predominantly (but not exclusively) the victims, which can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. In addition, 'Honour' Based Abuse can be found in gang culture, when it is used to punish a gang member who is seen to have been disloyal to the gang. *The Council works to Essex County Council's HBA Policy and this can be found on the Intranet linked directly to this policy.*

1.9 'Forced Marriage': Forced marriage should not be confused with arranged marriages as these often work out well. A forced marriage is when an unwilling bride or groom are made to marry because of their parents wishes, without the valid consent of both people, where physical pressure or emotional abuse is used. Victims are sometimes persuaded to return to their country of origin under false pretences. *The Council works to Essex County Council's Strategy for Forced Marriage and this can be found on the Intranet linked directly to this policy.*

1.10 'Female Genital Mutilation': This includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non- medical reasons. *The Council works to Essex County Council's Strategy for FGM and this can be found on the Intranet directly linked to this policy.*

1.11 'Prevent': In addition to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, the Council has a responsibility to work with Essex Police on the 'Prevent' agenda. This work aims to help prevent often vulnerable young individuals who may be susceptible to being exploited by radical extremists who promote violence. These people often use persuasive rationale and charismatic individuals to attract people to their cause and reasoning. They inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their unlawful behaviour.

There are a number of personal circumstances and factors that can make a person more susceptible to radicalisation, including issues with identity or personal crisis, particular personal circumstances, unemployment or underemployment and criminality. All of these may contribute to alienation from UK values and could lead to a decision to cause harm to symbols of the community or the state.

The Home Office leads on the anti-terrorism strategy, '**CONTEST**, and **PREVENT**' and this is part of the overall **CONTEST** strategy, aiming to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism. *The Council's Prevent Strategy can be found on the Intranet directly linked to this policy.*

1.12 Further reading materials

Other guidance available from the internet:

- i) The role of District Councils in safeguarding children and young people – *Local Government Improvement and Development*
- ii) The role of District Councils in Safeguarding Adults – *Local Government Improvement and Development*
- iii) Changes to Disclosure and Barring: What you need to know – *HM Government*
- iv) Working Together to Safeguard Children – *Department of Education*
- v) Equality Analysis - Safeguarding Statutory Guidance - *Department for Education*
- vi) Safeguarding in the Workplace – *Independent Safeguarding Authority*

2. Scope of the Policy

This safeguarding policy is designed to cover all aspects of safeguarding for service users, their families, carers and supporters, local residents, core and non core employees, casual workers, voluntary workers, temporary employees, work experience students, agency staff, consultants and other contracted persons within the duration of that contract.

The 'definitions' section of this policy lists the main safeguarding concerns that have been identified within Essex, Epping Forest District and most other districts within the county. Although in some areas of Essex the number of incidents relating to Child Sexual Exploitation, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage is fairly low, these are becoming more and more evident and are a focus within the agendas of the local Stay Safe Groups in Essex.

This policy is to be used alongside the Council's Strategic Plan for Safeguarding which reflects the business plans of Essex Safeguarding Children's Board and Essex Safeguarding Adults Board and is linked to the Council's Corporate Plan, the Community Strategy and Directorate Business Plans. It sets out Epping Forest District Council's Policies and Procedures in respect of the wider safeguarding agenda and will be reviewed on an annual basis and in line with new legislation.

Further safeguarding guidance and reading materials can be found within the Southend, Essex, and Thurrock (SET) Child and Safeguarding Adults Guidelines and by accessing the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board and Essex Safeguarding Adults Board websites.

3. EFDC Mission Statement

"Epping Forest District Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, as service users, residents and visitors to the area. The Council acknowledges the importance of working with partner agencies to ensure that children have safe, healthy and happy childhoods and that young people and vulnerable adults are given the support they need to enjoy quality of life and well-being".

This Mission Statement is underpinned by the following:

- valuing, listening to and respecting children, young people and vulnerable adults as well as promoting their welfare and protection;
- safe and robust recruitment, supervision and safeguarding training for all staff working with the public;
- provision of a current and comprehensive Safeguarding Policy and related procedures which is accessible and promoted to all staff;
- efficient and effective reporting of concerns, incidents and allegations; and
- strategic planning and decision-making which considers the impact on children, young people and vulnerable adults.

It is important to note that abuse and exploitation can happen in any setting and this includes a person's home (including a care or nursing home), at work, at nursery, school or college, in a hospital, at a day care centre, **or, anywhere else that people spend their time.** Due to the wide range of settings where this can take place, perpetrators are a diverse group and often known to the victim, however this is not always the case.

4. Safeguarding Roles in Essex

4.1 The role of Essex County Council

Essex County Council has responsibilities as the Children's Services Authority and as provider of Adult Social Care for Essex. It has a duty to conduct Section 47 (s.47) enquiries where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child who lives in, or is found in a local authority area, is suffering from or likely to suffer significant harm in the form of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

All other statutory organisations in Essex including Epping Forest District Council have a duty to assist and provide information in support of s.47 child protection enquiries. The Council's procedures additionally require all staff within the organisation to refer or report safeguarding concerns, incidents and allegations to Essex Social Services or directly to the county-wide Initial Response Team in respect of children and young people. The relevant officers at Essex County Council are then responsible for coordinating any safeguarding investigation under s.47 of the Children Act 2004.

4.2. The role of the Essex Safeguarding Boards

Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB) is a **statutory** multi-agency organisation, which brings together agencies who work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The objective of this Board is to coordinate and oversee the work of local partners and agencies in regard to safeguarding and to advise and direct improved safeguarding practice.

The Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) is an inter-agency forum for agreeing how the different services and professional groups should cooperate to safeguard vulnerable adults across Essex. It also makes sure that arrangements work effectively to identify abuse or inadequate care, help vulnerable people and plan and implement joint preventative strategies. The Board aims to raise awareness and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults by the development of an effective cooperative, involving people from a wide range of public and voluntary services and other organisations.

4.3. The role of West Essex (Local) Stay Safe Group

West Essex Stay Safe Group consists of representatives from a range of agencies including NHS, Essex Social Care, Police, Probation, Education, Voluntary Sector and District Councils. This group is responsible for developing an Action Plan to improve safeguarding practice across the West Area and for considering actions to address emerging issues.

5. The role of Epping Forest District Council

The District Council is committed to maintaining a whole organisation approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity.

The Leadership Team and Elected Members recognise the important role they play in ensuring the safeguarding agenda is driven across the whole organisation and the Council's responsibility to work in partnership and share information with other agencies such as Essex Social Services and Essex Police.

The Council therefore aims to ensure that every member of staff whether full-time, part-time, agency or voluntary are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to identify and deal effectively with any safeguarding situation or concern that arises.

What is expected of Staff?

All Council staff are required to undertake safeguarding training to a level appropriate to their role within the organisation and will work to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. Those staff who work directly with these groups, will undertake a minimum of Level 2 Multi-Agency Training to enable them to be equipped with the knowledge and confidence to identify and refer any incidents of abuse.

All managers will undertake safeguarding training to ensure that they have a sound working knowledge of relevant legislation, fully understand their duty of care and responsibilities, and can be advocates of best practice in safeguarding.

Corporate Commitment

As part of the Council's commitment to robust safeguarding, it has a corporate safeguarding group consisting of representatives from each Directorate, who have responsibility for ensuring that all colleagues across the council are aware of the Council's safeguarding policy and procedures. In addition, the Council has a nominated Safeguarding Lead Professional, Lead Officer, Deputies and Elected Member Champion who are defined on pages 10 and 11.

The Council's Lead Safeguarding Officer additionally represents the Council and district on the West Stay Safe Group and the Essex Local Authorities Safeguarding Group.

6. Epping Forest District Council Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Under Sections 11 and 47 of the Children Act 2004, Epping Forest District Council has a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people and to cooperate with Essex County Council in discharging its safeguarding duties as a Children's Services Authority.

As provider of Sheltered Housing Schemes, Homelessness Accommodation, Community Safety and a range of other services, the District Council also has a responsibility for the safeguarding and well-being of Vulnerable Adults and works with Essex Police and Essex County Council Social Care team in its role as the lead agency for their protection.

As part of its commitment to safeguarding, the Council treats Domestic Violence as a key work priority and on a monthly basis hosts the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). This focused inter agency approach administered by Essex Police seeks agreed actions from each respective agency in dealing with high risk victims of Domestic Violence and perpetrators.

In order to meet its safeguarding duties and responsibilities, Epping Forest District Council will:

- Ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults through robust use of the Council's 'Safe Recruitment' and induction procedures and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking.
- Provide training to staff appropriate to their level of involvement with children, young people and vulnerable adults to ensure that employees understand the different forms of abuse as well as their roles and responsibilities under the Council's Codes of Conduct and the Combined Safeguarding Policy;
- Conduct regular reviews of safeguarding practice throughout the organisation;
- Ensure that the welfare and needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults are considered by all Members, employees, volunteers and contracted services when taking decisions in relation to service provision;
- Take seriously and respond appropriately and expediently to all concerns, incidents and allegations;
- Prevent abuse by promoting good practice amongst staff; create a safe and healthy environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults and encourage a whistle blowing environment where staff feel confident and safe in reporting any concerns;
- Work in partnership with other agencies in order to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and share information where required and appropriate;
- Undertake a complete review of safeguarding policies and procedures annually and in line with any changes in legislation;

This policy/procedures apply to all services within the scope of Epping Forest District Council. In addition, to employees and Members, it also applies to volunteers, outside hirers, outside organisations delivering services on behalf of the Council, contractors and grant funded organisations.

7. Service Roles and Responsibilities

There are a range of functions carried out by the District Council which have a positive outcome on the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the following list is to be illustrative rather than provide a full set of duties which relate to this:

- **Housing Services** - By achieving the decent homes standard, Epping Forest District Council directly improves the health and life chances of children, young people and vulnerable adults by improving the standard of housing; preventing and responding to homelessness and by working closely with other local services and agencies. The Housing Directorate is also responsible for the allocation of suitable housing to those in most need, including children, young people and those with disabilities in providing necessary adaptations to enable them to participate fully in everyday life. During their everyday work housing staff are in a position to identify safeguarding issues including Domestic Violence which is becoming significantly more common and has a direct impact on children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- **Community Safety** – In addition to generic work to reduce crime and fear of crime, the Council's Community Safety Team plays a key role in ensuring the safety of local children, young people and vulnerable adults. This includes identifying a wide range of safeguarding concerns including issues of Domestic Violence and sexual exploitation and reporting these directly to Essex Police and Essex Social Care. The team also provides a signposting service to victims to enable them to access local support mechanisms.
- **Community Services** – These services which include Community Development, Arts, Museum and Sports and Health Development enable children, young people and vulnerable adults to benefit from a wide range of activities such as play schemes, health improvement initiatives and community events. This work contributes to the improved health of these individuals and helps to build self esteem and confidence to improve resilience to potential harm or exploitation. Throughout their work, front line staff are in a position to identify safeguarding issues and witness disclosures and concerns.
- **Planning Services** – This service can impact upon children's, young people's and vulnerable adults' health and safety in the design of new developments, by ensuring plans are appropriate to their needs such as provision of play facilities and 'green space' and by ensuring that there is appropriate access to health and social care services. Indeed, planning officers may also identify issues of abuse when visiting people's homes or businesses.
- **Environmental Health Services** – In addition to responsibilities in respect of food hygiene and nutrition, Environmental Health Officers inspecting conditions in council owned, private rented accommodation and local businesses may become aware of situations that could adversely impact on children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Council also plays a key role as a licensing authority, with one of the four of the Licensing objectives of the Act, being 'Protection of children from harm'.
- **Financial Services** – With responsibility for administration of Benefit payments and Council Tax, the Council's Financial Services help to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from the effects of poverty and that family income is maximised. Fraud Investigation Officers and others visiting people's homes or speaking to people on the phone as part of their daily work, can also identify a range of safeguarding including situations of domestic abuse.
- **Human Resources** - Ensures the effective implementation of the Council's Safe Recruitment Policy and Induction and that all staff employed to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, or who come into contact with families, are subject to the appropriate external checks including Disclosure and Barring, prior to appointment. HR also retains a

database of all posts within the authority, the level and type of safeguarding training required for each of these and when this requires updating.

8. The role of Epping Forest District Council staff and Elected Members

The Council's Leadership Team and Elected Members:

Elected Members, Chief Executive, Directors and Assistant Directors are responsible for driving the safeguarding agenda throughout the organisation. This work includes Member representation on the Corporate Safeguarding Group, Leadership Team regard to safeguarding in meetings, dissemination of information through service teams and inclusion of safeguarding within service strategies and business plans.

Staff

All employees of the Council are responsible for conducting themselves in a way that prevents safeguarding issues arising in relation to the services provided, by following the 'Safe Working Practice' guidelines found on Page 17.

In addition, all external organisations and contractors working with or providing services for the Council are required to comply with the Council's Combined Safeguarding Policy and where relevant, have their own policy and procedures in place.

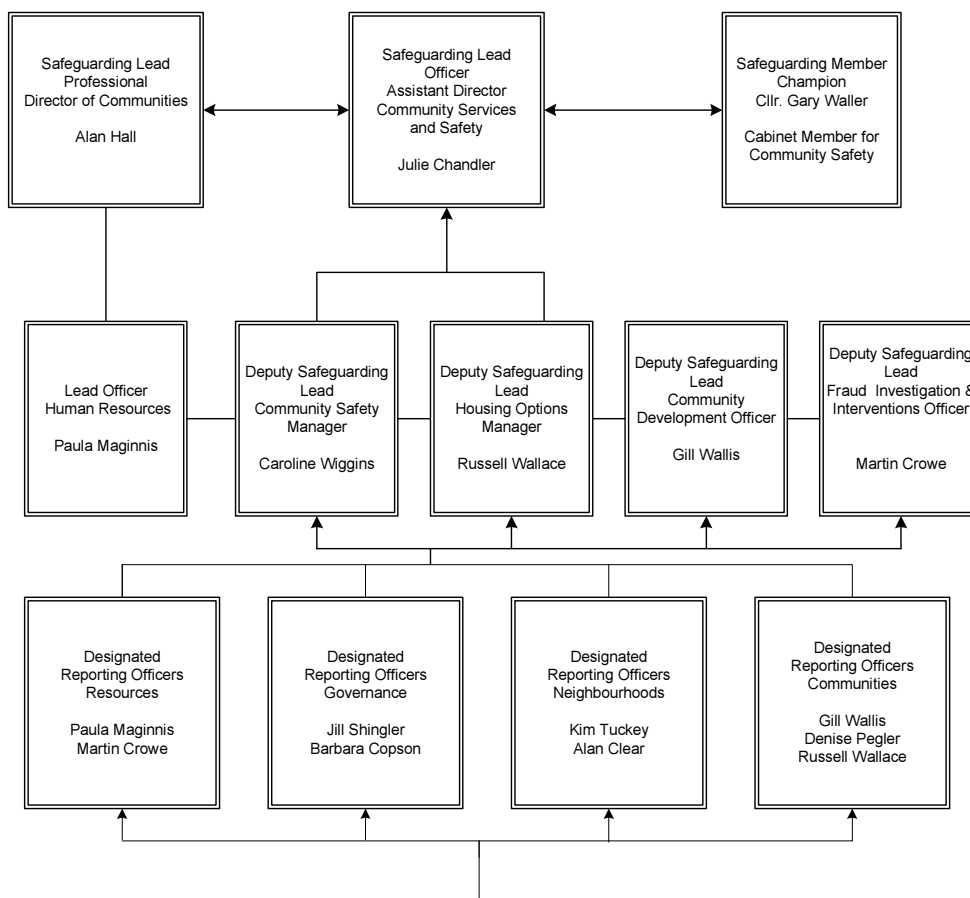
It is the responsibility of all EFDC staff, volunteers and agency workers, to adhere to best practice, participate in training appropriate to their levels of contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to report any concerns, incidents or allegations in accordance with the relevant procedures set out on pages 19 to 21.

9. Designated Roles in Epping Forest District Council (see structure chart p.11)

Safeguarding Lead Professional	This position is held by the Director of Communities. The Lead Professional has overall accountability for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.
Safeguarding Lead Officer	The Safeguarding Lead Officer is the Assistant Director Community Services and Safety, who is responsible for advising the Lead Professional in regard to concerns, referrals and safeguarding allegations against staff.
Safeguarding Lead Deputies	The Safeguarding Lead Deputies are the Community Safety Manager, Housing Options Manager, Community Development Officer and Fraud Investigation and Intervention Officer. These officers deputise for the Safeguarding Lead Officer as and when required.
Elected Member Champion	This position is held by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety who champions safeguarding issues to all members.
Designated Safeguarding Reporting Officers	Representatives on the Corporate Safeguarding Group are the Designated Reporting Officers. They are responsible for disseminating safeguarding information, identifying training requirements of staff and providing best practice examples within their service areas. They are responsible for reporting any incidents, allegations and concerns.
HR Safeguarding Lead	The Assistant Director Human Resources is the first point of call for staff reporting safeguarding allegations against employees and refers to the Lead Professional and Lead officer on this.
HR Operational Team:	The Human Resources Team are responsible for ensuring that safe recruitment procedures are in place and that appropriate checks are made, including DBS (*Disclosure and Barring Service) prior to any employee who will have direct contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults starting work with the Council.
Managers:	All EFDC Managers are responsible for carrying out the correct safeguarding induction process for all new members of staff, including ensuring that all new staff undertake safeguarding training to a level appropriate to their role within 3 x months of their appointment.

Please see structure overleaf

SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE



Employees and Member – Contact Numbers		
Name	Ext Number	Email Address
Alan Hall	4004	ahall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Julie Chandler	4214	jchandler@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Councillor Gary Waller	07974 412523	Gary.waller@which.net
Caroline Wiggins	4122	cwiggins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Russell Wallace	4024	rwallace@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Paula Maginnis	4536	pmaginnis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Martin Crowe	4170	mcrowe@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Barbara Copson	4042	bcopson@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Jill Shingler	4106	jshingler1@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Kim Tuckey	4034	ktuckey@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Alan Clear	4301	aclear@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Gill Wallis	4557	gwallis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Denise Pegler	0208 508 8596	dpegler@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

10. Individual Staff functions

10.1 Lead Professional

The Lead Professional has a range of responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, including:

- 1) To ensure that the arrangements set out in this policy are in place and followed to by all Council staff and Elected Members.
- 2) To ensure that the Council effectively discharges its duties under Section 11 of The Children Act 2004 and s47 and promotes inter-agency co-operation between agencies and information sharing.
- 3) To oversee procedures in relation to allegations made against a member of staff.
- 4) To maintain a high level of senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

10.2 Safeguarding Lead Officer and Deputies

The Safeguarding Lead Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that staff are aware of the Council's commitment to safeguarding, are appropriately trained and understand fully their responsibilities. This work includes:

- 1) Chairing and managing the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Working Group.
- 2) Advising the Council on new legislation, procedures and policy and updating the relevant documentation.
- 3) Responding to Ofsted Safeguarding Audit Inspections on behalf of the Council.
- 4) To be responsible for ensuring that there are clear lines of accountability for safeguarding including services that are provided by the Council through external contractors, for example, the management and provision of leisure centres.
- 5) To ensure that all information regarding safeguarding is held confidentially, in a central database, and in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- 6) To inform the District Local Strategic Partnership and supporting community strategies which assist in the co-ordination and planning of services for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 7) Acting as safeguarding advisor and expert to the Council.
- 8) Acting as the Council's main link with Essex Safeguarding Children and Adult's Boards.
- 9) Acting as Vice Chair of West Stay Safe Multi-Agency Group.

10.3 Safeguarding Lead Officer Deputies

- 1) The Safeguarding Lead Officer Deputies cover safeguard in the absence of the lead officer and have particular responsibility as the main contact for safeguarding incidents and concerns.

10.4 Service Directors

Service Directors are responsible for ensuring that Assistant Directors, managers and staff within their Directorate are aware of the contents of this policy, that the Council's duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults are met and that this policy and the Council's Safeguarding Procedures are effectively discharged. They are additionally responsible for;

- 1) Development of local arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, as this relates to the duties and functions of their service area.
- 2) Inclusion of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults within annual business plans and service action plans
- 3) Ensuring that the Council's Safe Recruitment Policy is implemented and that an appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring check is undertaken for new staff, and renewed for existing staff on a three yearly basis.
- 4) Ensuring that staff refer any safeguarding concerns to Essex Police (where a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger), or Social Care using an ECC999 form, and that the Council's Safeguarding Lead Officer or deputies are advised accordingly.
- 5) Ensuring that the appropriate level of safeguarding training is undertaken by all staff as related to service requirements. This will include existing staff and those new to the service/authority as part of their induction.

In carrying out these responsibilities, they will have regard to the following matters (amongst others):

- (a) The appropriateness or otherwise of interviewing customers/service users with children, young people and vulnerable adults present, in light of matters under discussion.
- (b) The appropriateness or otherwise of photographing children, young people and vulnerable adults by members of the general public at Council events, and the need to obtain permission of parents/guardians to use photographs in promotional material.
- (c) The appropriateness of staff having physical contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults except in certain circumstances e.g. assisting a child or young person participating in sports activity such as gymnastics/trampolining.
- (d) The provision of first aid by Council staff to children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

10.5 Assistant Directors, Managers and Supervisors

Assistant Directors, managers and supervisors are responsible for complying with the requirements of this policy and service level procedures. Furthermore, they are responsible for the promotion of a culture amongst staff which recognises the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the Council's responsibility for their safety when receiving its services.

- 1) They will ensure that this policy and procedures are clearly published and understood by all staff working within their area of responsibility. They must ensure that any matters of concern, with respect to an individual child, young person or vulnerable adult are reported to the Lead Safeguarding Officer or Deputies, and that appropriate follow-up action is taken.

- 2) It is the responsibility of all line managers and supervisors to ensure that all procedures and working practices are up-to-date, including risk assessments **and that these are always reviewed when an incident occurs or modifications to working practices take place.** Any risks identified must be notified to the relevant Service Director and a local action plan devised to manage, reduce or remove the risk.
- 3) Service managers that provide direct services for children, young people and vulnerable adults should additionally where practicable, ensure that these groups are involved in the planning and development of services provided and seek feedback on service delivery to enable effective review.

10.6 Employee Responsibilities

All employees, volunteers and agency staff are responsible for complying with the requirements of this policy and any service level procedures or actions put in place by the service. Furthermore, they should take all reasonable steps to ensure (within the context of their duties) that risks are minimised and that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and their welfare promoted when using Council services.

To ensure effective implementation of this policy, all employees have a responsibility to:

- be aware of, and abide by this policy and any service level procedures or actions;
- undertake safeguarding training at the level identified in respect of their work;
- ensure that they work in such a way that they do not place children, young people or vulnerable adults in a position of risk;
- report any incidents of concern with respect to safeguarding to their line manager immediately;
- co-operate with any risk assessment process undertaken by their manager;
- ensure that they behave appropriately towards any children, young person or vulnerable adult who they come into contact with whilst carrying out their duties, by following service area guidelines on appropriate conduct, where provided, or in accordance with recommendations on Page 17;
- seek the advice of the Safeguarding Lead Officer or Deputies in respect to any issues that they have concerning safeguarding or the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

10.6 Employees Working away from the Office Base

Employees who come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults whilst working away from their office base, for example as a lone worker, must act in an appropriate manner and not put themselves at risk or allegations (see Safe Working Practices page 17).

They have a responsibility under this policy to report any matters of concern which they become aware of when dealing with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or, the children of service users with whom they come into contact, by using the Council's stated procedures. (Pages 19-21).

10.7 Elected Members

The Council is committed to ensuring that its Elected Members are appropriately trained and aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and those of the authority. This includes awareness of the Council's safeguarding duties under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004; Domestic Abuse and Violence, emerging issues including Child Sexual Exploitation, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage and safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety holds the position of Member Champion for safeguarding and is responsible for attending the Corporate Safeguarding Working Group and promoting the importance of safeguarding amongst all Members.

11. Safeguarding and Information Sharing

All staff and Elected Members are responsible for keeping safeguarding concerns and information confidential, outside of sharing this with designated officers within the Council.

Where a member of staff becomes aware of any issues relating to the protection or welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult with whom it has contact, these concerns must be reported immediately to Line Management or a Designated Lead / Reporting Officer.

Elected Members should report their concerns directly to the Council's Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer or a Deputy.

This information should not be shared with any other third party and should always be shared lawfully and ethically.

Information relevant to protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults will be about:

- their health and development and exposure to possible harm;
- a parent or carer who is unable to provide adequate care for them, or
- other individuals who may present a risk of harm

Often, it is only when information from a number of sources has been shared, collated and analysed, that it becomes clear that a child/children, young person or vulnerable adult is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Once a report has been made, the Designated Safeguarding Reporting Officer will decide who to share the information with and this will depend on the following:

- The urgency of the concern;
- If the concern relates to a disclosure by a child and young person, or, vulnerable adult;
- If other services are likely to come into contact with that child, young person or his / her parents, or vulnerable adult, or,
- If advice is needed on a case which may require assessment for intervention

Where required, the Safeguarding Lead Officer or Deputy is then responsible for agreeing an action plan with the Service Director or Assistant Director, in respect of the Council's actions towards that child, young person and his/her family or vulnerable adult.

It should be noted that government expects organisations to share information about individuals who may be at risk of abuse as early as possible so that individuals can be protected. Withholding information may lead to abuse not being dealt with in a timely manner. Staff therefore, have a duty to share information related to suspected abuse, and consent is not required to breach confidentiality and make safeguarding referrals where;

- A serious crime has been committed
- The alleged perpetrator may go on to abuse other victims
- The child, young person or adult is deemed to be at serious risk
- There is a statutory requirement under the Children's Act 2004, Mental Health Act 1983 and Care Standards Act 2000.

12. Safeguarding allegations against a member of staff or volunteer

The Council takes seriously any complaints made about the conduct of staff and volunteers in respect of their contact with children, young people, families and vulnerable adults. This includes any person who works with children or adults that has, in any connection with her/his employment, voluntary activity or in a personal capacity:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or;
- Behaved in a way which indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

All complaints received by the Council will be investigated fully, and, where applicable, action will be taken against the member of staff via the disciplinary procedure. If deemed necessary, the member of staff will be re-deployed or suspended whilst the investigation takes place. The decision to suspend lies ultimately with the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive.

In the event of a serious allegation against a member of staff, the Council will follow the procedures set out in the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) procedures document - 'Allegations against adults who work with children and young people', and will involve the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) employed by Essex County Council who can be contacted on 01245 436744 Email: childrens.safeguarding@essex.gov.uk.

Support is routinely offered to all staff who are subject to an allegation.

Whistle Blowing

The Council's Confidentiality Policy covers staff concerns about colleagues in regard to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. Because of fear about repercussions, staff may find it difficult to raise Child Protection or other concerns about colleagues or managers. The policy therefore provides guidance and assurance in the process to be followed in respect of raising concerns relating to the behaviour of colleagues when working or interacting with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It also provides details of alternative ways to report concerns confidentially, outside of the Council.

In the case of malicious or unfounded allegations being made against a member of staff by a colleague in the Council or a member of the public, the Council will take this very seriously and take any necessary action accordingly.

13.1 Safeguarding Allegations against an Elected Member

Safeguarding allegations against Elected Members will be treated the same way as an allegation against a member of public. This will involve a referral to Essex Police, who will conduct a full investigation into any allegation made.

13.2 Safe Working Practice with children, young people and vulnerable adults

This section outlines the expected behaviour of EFDC staff (including agency staff), volunteers and Elected Members. It aims to provide guidance to help protect children, young people and vulnerable adults and help individuals to identify any practices or behaviour, that could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to a false/wrongful allegation of abuse being made.

In representing the District Council all staff and Members are considered to be acting in a position of trust, in that they are in a place of power or influence over individuals whom they come in contact with by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is therefore vital for all those in a position of trust to understand the power and responsibilities this can have.

The following list therefore provides an overview of expected behaviour for all individuals working or dealing directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults;

- All staff, volunteers and Elected Members should act as good role models;
- Children, young people and vulnerable adults should be listened to and respected at all times regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, ability or sexual orientation;
- Relationships with children, young people and adults must be professional and appropriate to their age and/or ability and an appropriate level of language used;
- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult needs comforting, this must be done in a way that is both age appropriate and respectful, and not intrusive or threatening, with the least physical contact possible;
- In the case of staff working in a 'caring' role or in 'loco parentis', they must have confidence in challenging and dealing effectively with issues of unacceptable or dangerous behaviour;
- Awareness that children, young people and vulnerable adults can develop infatuations towards people working/dealing with them. If this happens staff should inform their line manager and should respond in a way that maintains the dignity of all concerned; Members should bring this to the attention of the Council's Safeguarding Lead Officer or Deputies.
- If any kind of physical support is required in working or dealing with children, young people or vulnerable adults it is always advisable to have a colleague or witness available;
- Where possible, avoid unobserved situations of one to one contact, if it is unavoidable always ensure that another adult knows where you are, with whom and why;

Where you have regular contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult ensure that you:

- never allow a work relationship to develop into a 'friendship';
- never make contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult you have met through work outside of that work (unless your job role requires you to);
- never offer to transport a person alone, or invite them into your home without prior consent from a parent/carer;
- never give out your personal contact details including mobile number or email address (unless your job role requires you to);
- never communicate with them through social networking sites such as Facebook, MSN and Twitter (unless your job role requires you to);
- never discriminate or make discriminatory remarks;
- never trivialise abuse or its effects;

- never allow any activity with sexual connotations;
- never engage in or tolerate any inappropriate physical activity or bullying of a child/young person or vulnerable adult by a peer or other adult;
- never make demeaning or insensitive comments, and,
- never engage in any behaviour which might be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

14. Safeguarding Reporting Procedures

The SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) safeguarding guidelines outline the basic safeguarding procedures which should be followed by all local authorities in Essex.

Epping Forest District Council has developed the following simplified procedures in regard to safeguarding issues and concerns, and requires all staff and members to follow these.

Where the safeguarding concern relates to a child, young person or vulnerable adult:

Procedure A (See page 20)

For incidents where a child, young person or vulnerable adult is thought to be in immediate danger of physical or psychological harm.

Procedure B (See page 20)

For concerns that have been referred by a third party, or a disclosure by a child young person or vulnerable adult which are of a serious nature and you believe could lead to harm.

Procedure C (See page 21)

For incidents where there is no immediate danger but concerns are related to a child or young persons' welfare or development.

Procedure D (See page 21)

This is used where a safeguarding allegation is made about a member of staff or an Elected Member.

Confidentiality:

Once a referral/report has been made staff must not discuss any of the safeguarding issues with anyone else within or outside the Council including parents, carers, relatives, of the child, young person or vulnerable adult. The only individuals who information should be shared with, are line managers, the Designated Safeguarding Reporting Officer, Safeguarding Lead or Deputies, or in the case of an allegation against a member of staff, the Human Resources Manager.

Data Protection:

All copies of the Concern, Incident and Allegation (CIA) Form must be retained on the Council's secure database via I@W. This information will be retained in accordance with data protection periods.

PROCEDURE A

Reporting a safeguarding concern about a child or young person
which requires **immediate action / intervention**

CALL 999

If you witness or are given information from a third party that suggests that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger,

1. REPORT what you have seen/heard and then RECORD these details immediately
2. If you witness the incident STAY CALM UNTIL THE POLICE ARRIVE and if anyone else has heard or seen the incident ask them to stay with you and provide support to the victim where able and safe to do so and without compromising the situation.
3. If the perpetrator is not at the scene, talk to the victim and record whatever is said in writing as soon as you are able to do so. Allow the child, young person or vulnerable adult to talk at their own pace and only ask questions for clarification. DO NOT ask leading questions. This information must then be recorded on a concern, Incident and Allegation Form (CIA) (see pages 22-23. Down loadable from the Intranet) and passed to a Designated Lead Officer to be filed in accordance with the Council's procedures.
4. Remember that the information you record may be used in court, so it needs to be as accurate as possible.

PROCEDURE B

Reporting a serious safeguarding concern regarding a child or young person that has been referred to you by a third party, or disclosed by a child or young person

If the victim is not in any immediate danger of harm

1. RECORD what is said to you as accurately as possible.
2. Tell the third party or the child/young person concerned that you will have to refer the information on to someone else. If their understanding is limited, tell them that you cannot keep it a secret and that you will be seeking help for them.
3. REPORT - Once you have enough information, immediately phone Essex Social Care Direct on 0845 603 7634 and make the referral.
4. Then follow this up by using an ECC 999 form (refer to designated Lead Officer) and fax it to Essex Social Care Direct within 24 hours of the call being made.
5. A copy of this referral must be passed to a Designated Lead Officer to be filed in accordance with the Council's procedures.
6. If you have not heard back from Social Care within 3 x days as to the action they will/will not be taking in regard to your referral, phone them on 0845 603 7634 and ask what is happening.

PROCEDURE C
For adult safeguarding concerns not requiring immediate action

1. RECORD what is said or seen as accurately as possible and only ask questions for clarification, do not ask any leading questions. (This info must later be transferred to SET SAF1 Safeguarding Adults form).
2. Tell the person that you will have to refer the information on to someone else. If their understanding is limited, tell them that you cannot keep it a secret and that you will be seeking help.
3. REPORT - Immediately report the concern to a Designated Lead Officer and ensure that they are given the SET SAF1.
4. If you do not have an immediate concern but want advice call AskSAL helpline on **08452 66 66 63**

PROCEDURE D

For safeguarding allegations against a member of staff, volunteer or Elected Member

1. If the allegation is made face to face, try and obtain another witness to your conversation with the person reporting the allegation.
2. Take accurate notes of the allegation made and do not ask leading questions. As soon as possible transfer this information to a CIA form and capture as much detail as possible.
3. Immediately contact the Assistant Director - Human Resources – Paula Maginnis on Extn. 4536 and if she is unavailable contact;
 - Designated Lead Officer - Julie Chandler on Extn. 4214 or
 - Lead Professional – Alan Hall on Extn. 4004.
4. If the allegation is made in writing the same procedure is followed.

Specific Housing Services Safeguarding Procedures: In addition to the above procedures, the Council's Housing Service may need to make a referral to Essex Social Care in relation to Homeless 16-17 year olds and intentionally homeless households with children. This contact is made for an assessment of whether they are a child in need to whom a duty is owed by Essex Social Care under terms of the Children Act 1989.

Intentionally homeless household with children: This would also be referred to Essex Social Care for an assessment of whether they are owed a duty by virtue of the Children Act 1989.

As both of these types of referral have a safeguarding element, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputies must be made aware when they are referred to Essex Social Care. As such, a downloadable CIA form should be used by all Housing staff when making such a referral. This form will log all relevant data relating to the case in the Council's safeguarding database and automatically email the Safeguarding Lead and Deputies.

Safeguarding Concern / Incident / Allegation (CIA) form



CONFIDENTIAL

This form should be completed by the member of staff responding to the concern, incident of allegation. Please complete as much of this form as possible. Electronic copies of this form are available to download from the Intranet front page.

SECTION A: INITIAL DETAILS

Your name	
Your position	
Your Line Manager	
Date	
Time of Report	am/pm

Would you describe this report as a:	Concern	Incident	Allegation	(please circle as appropriate)
--------------------------------------	---------	----------	------------	--------------------------------

SECTION B: PERSONAL DETAILS OF CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT INVOLVED

Full Name	
Person Type (please circle)	Child Vulnerable Adult
Gender (please circle)	M A
Date of Birth	
Activity Attending or Location	
Home Address	
Parent/Guardian/Relative Name/s	
Contact Telephone No. for Parent/Guardian/Carer/Relative	
Child's School (if applicable)	
Is the child disabled? (please circle)	YES NO N/A

SECTION C; DETAILS OF CONCERN, INCIDENT OR ALLEGATION

Please record the accurate details of the concern/incident/allegation below. Only include factual information regarding what you have observed and/or what you have been told. Include as much detail as you can remember. Please include details of anyone else who witnessed the incident (use extra blank paper if necessary and attach to this form).

Details of concern, incident or allegations:

--

Action taken, if any, by the person reporting the incident:

--

Are the parents/guardians aware of this concern/incident/allegation at the time of this report being made? YES NO

Please send a confidential email (or hand delivery) copy of this form on to one of the Designated Safeguarding Officers below, **immediately** if there is risk of significant harm or within 24 hours with other concerns.

Caroline Wiggins	-	Community Safety Manager (Ext. 4122)
Russell Wallace	-	Housing Options Manager (Ext. 4024)
Gill Wallis	-	Community Leisure Officer (Ext. 4557)
Julie Chandler	-	Assistant Director Community Services and Safety (Ext.4214/4397)
Martin Crowe	-	Fraud Investigations & Intervention Manager (Ext. 4170)

Remember that the information you have provided is confidential, do not discuss with anyone other than those directly involved and only then in a professional capacity. Please sign and date below.

Signed	Date
--------	------

Officer Action – To be completed by DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS OR REPORTING OFFICERS ONLY

--	--

Signed	Date
--------	------