

<u>POLICY AND PROCEDURE:</u> SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK

1. General Statement of Policy

The Melbourn Parish Council working from the Melbourn Community Hub must provide a safe and secure venue for a range of services, activities and events. There is regular access by members of the local and neighbouring communities including children and adults at risk. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring and making every effort to secure the safeguarding and welfare of all its customers. This Policy is written by reference to the Care Act 2014.

2. Purpose

2.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of Melbourn Parish Council in respect to Safeguarding. The key objectives of this policy are to:

- 2.1.1. To explain the responsibilities of the Council Safeguarding Officer and workers in respect of the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.
- 2.1.2. To enable workers who receive disclosures of, witness, or suspect abuse to make informed and confident responses.
- 2.1.3. To ensure that information relating to safeguarding is kept securely and only shared on a need-to know basis.

3. Scope, Principles & Definitions

3.1. Safeguarding is about protecting the safety, independence and wellbeing of people at risk of abuse, and is everybody's responsibility.

3.2. This policy relates to all children and adults who become known to the organisation through the course of our work and who may be at risk of abuse.

3.3. Assessing whether children or adults are experiencing abuse is the responsibility of professionals within the local authority. The role of Melbourn Parish Council is therefore not to assess whether abuse has taken place, but to safeguard by informing the local authority if information becomes known to us that could indicate that abuse **may** have taken place, or that a child or adult may be at risk of abuse.

3.4. For the purpose of this policy, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 and an adult is defined as a person aged 18 years or over.

3.5. For the purpose of this policy an adult at risk of abuse is defined as "someone who has care and support needs and is therefore unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect".

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Parish Councillors

All Parish Councillors have the responsibility of dealing with any incidents or concerns that arise. **Claire Littlewood** is nominated as the Safeguarding Officer and if not available for discussion, the Chair of the HR Panel, Council Chair or Vice Chair can be contacted. The Safeguarding Officer will ensure that their training is kept up to date. As appropriate the Safeguarding Officer will consult with and refer matters to the HR Panel.

4.2 Workers (Paid Employees)

All workers have a duty to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. It is everybody's responsibility to report any incidents or concerns relating to safeguarding immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

4.3. Workers (Volunteers, contractors or members of the public co-opted to assist the Melbourn Parish Council)

All those defined in 4.2 and 4.3 have the same duty to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. It is every volunteer's responsibility to report any incidents or concerns relating to safeguarding immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

5. Information

5.1. All workers will be informed on induction and reminded on an annual basis of their responsibility to be vigilant and to report any concerns to the safeguarding officer.

5.2. The Safeguarding Officer should complete training on safeguarding children and adults once every 2 years.

6. Safeguarding within the context of Melbourn Parish Council Activities

6.1. The majority of contact with service-users is done either in the context of public meetings or through visits to the Parish Council office for advice. Warden staff members also come into contact with the general public across the parish estate.

6.2. Melbourn Parish Council also have a responsibility to ensure contractors adhere to this policy and take steps to intervene as appropriate.

6.3. Melbourn Parish Council workers do not fall within the legally defined eligibility criteria for requesting Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (as outlined in the [DBS eligibility guidance](#)). The Council does not, therefore, request Enhanced DBS disclosures for workers.

6.4 In cases where contact is off site and safeguarding principle should be applied, paid workers or volunteers should not enter the home of any person, even when there is no suggestion of risk to that person, unless a second colleague is present.

7. Confidentiality and information sharing

If a disclosure is made to a worker, or a worker has a concern about the welfare of a child or adult at risk, the worker should follow this procedure in the event of a disclosure or safeguarding concern (Appendix 1). This includes ensuring that the person making a disclosure is aware that the worker may need to share the information, and cannot promise to keep it secret.

Information should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis with the HR panel, Council Chair and the Safeguarding Officer.

The Safeguarding Officer can seek support in the case of children via the Cambridgeshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0345 045 5203 (day) 01733 234 724 (out of hours) and accessed via the link <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/parenting-and-family>.

8. Record keeping

In the event of a disclosure or safeguarding concern, an incident/concern form must be raised by the person who receives the information as soon as possible, and always on the same day.

These records must be stored securely, in a locked drawer or password protected file, indefinitely.

Document Approval:

Date of Parish Council meeting:

Review Policy: Every 12 months

Appendix 1. Procedure in the event of a disclosure or safeguarding concern

It is important that children, young people and adults at risk are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously, including those received anonymously. This procedure must be followed whenever a disclosure of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion of abuse.

1. In the event of a disclosure

- Reassure the person concerned.
- Listen to what they are saying.
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- Do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions. Only ask questions to clarify the basic facts of what they are already telling you. Do not promise to keep it a secret.

2. Make sure the individual is safe

If the person is in immediate danger, the police or ambulance must be called straight away on 999. Ensure prompt action is taken to minimise the risk of harm from any further abuse, maltreatment or neglect. This is particularly important if:

- the person remains in or is about to return to the place where the alleged abuse occurred;
- the alleged abuser is likely to have access to the person or others who might be at risk.

3. Record the information

Make a full record of the disclosure, allegation or incident as soon as possible and at the latest within one working day and ensure it is recorded in the speaker's words. Refer to Appendix 2 'Concern Form'.

4. Report to the Safeguarding Officer

Report the disclosure or concern immediately or as soon as possible within one working day. In the first instance this may need to be done verbally but a concern/incident form should also be completed.

5. Dealing with allegations made against a worker or Councillor

Anyone wishing to make an allegation about a Parish Council worker or a Parish Councillor, either in relation to any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse or non-adherence to these procedures should report the concern to the Chair of the HR Panel or the Chair of the Parish Council; or the police if no other options exist.

Appendix 2

MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL INCIDENT / CONCERN FORM

Name of person completing this form:	
Date and time of incident:	
Incident/concern (who, what, where):	
Any other information (witnesses, action taken):	
Signature and role of person filling in form:	
Action taken by Safeguarding Officer:	