

Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

Dover District Council provides a wide range of facilities and services. As a result, there will be occasions when employees, volunteers, placements, contractors and elected members will be in contact with children and young people to varying degrees.

Dover District Council recognises that the protection of children and young people is a corporate responsibility. It will seek to ensure that all children and young people who come into contact with the Council and its employees are protected and treated with respect.

Dover District Council is committed to working in partnership with Kent County Council and the Kent Safeguarding Children Board under the Kent & Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures (2016).

Dover District Council recognises that all children and young people have the right to grow up in a safe, secure and caring environment, and that they should be respected and valued as unique individuals; it also acknowledges their vulnerability and need for protection. We are committed to the principle contained within the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount. Also, of our duty to discharge our functions to promote the welfare of children contained in legislation. We will take seriously all allegations of abuse and take any action we consider necessary to protect the child or young person from abuse. We will seek to ensure that all employees appointed to work with children and young people, or likely to come into contact with them, are suitable through our recruitment and selection process, training, and working practices and procedures.

Contractors and organisations involved in the direct provision of services to children or whose services bring them into contact with children and who are in receipt of Dover District Council funding (wholly or in part)

will be expected to have a Child Protection Policy that is current and regularly reviewed (at least every 2 years with documentation to support this). Dover District Council reserves the right to inspect this Policy where appropriate.

At the same time, we will work to ensure that our employees are protected from the risk of malicious or unfounded allegations of abuse of children or young people.

All staff involved in working with or providing services to children or young people should be able to recognise the signs of abuse, understand their duty to report any concerns and know the procedures they should follow.

All services will be provided in a manner that respects the rights, dignity, privacy and beliefs of all individuals concerned, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, culture, religion, language, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation.

In preparing this Policy, full account has been taken of the Human Rights Act 1998. The Council is satisfied that the provisions of this Policy and the supporting Guidance and Procedures document, are compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular Article 2 (Right to Life), Article 3 (Freedom from Torture or Inhuman or Degrading Treatment), Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence) and Article 14 (Freedom from Discrimination).

Any personal data processed, e.g. recorded or reported, by the Council in the exercise of this Policy will be processed in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. In particular, personal data will be processed fairly and lawfully and so as to meet one of the conditions in Schedule 2 (and where necessary Schedule 3) of the Act e.g. that processing of the data is necessary in order to protect the vital interests

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of the data subject. Any personal data will be held and used only for the purposes, and disclosed only to the people, as described within this Policy.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, placements, contractors and elected members of Dover District Council whether or not they are in regular contact with children or young people. In this policy, all of the above will be referred to collectively as “employees.”

It is accepted that elected members of Dover District Council are not employees, but they do share a responsibility with employees when representing Dover District Council or carrying out the functions of their elected office. Therefore all aspects of this policy apply equally to elected members.

Purpose

It is not the role of Dover District Council to investigate allegations of child abuse. However, all employees have a legal responsibility to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child or young person may be a victim of harm or abuse.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Inform employees and those outside Dover District Council of our commitment to:
 - Meet our obligations under relevant legislation, including the [Children Act 1989](#), the [Protection of Children Act 1999](#), and the [Children Act 2004](#);

- Inform members of the public, service users and employees about what they can expect from Dover District Council when protecting and safeguarding children and young people;
- Reassure members of the public, service users and employees that they are able to voice any concerns they may have through an established procedure;
- Reassure members of the public, service users and employees that all reports of abuse or potential abuse are dealt with seriously and effectively;
- Reassure members of the public, service users and employees that there is an efficient recording and monitoring system;
- Work in partnership with statutory authorities, agencies and voluntary groups who empower, protect or provide services for children and young people, and who have child protection policies in place; and
- Raise awareness, where appropriate, amongst children and young people of this policy and their right to protection under it.

- Provide guidance to Managers on:
 - How to identify and minimise poor practice;
 - Procedures to follow when working with children and young people;
 - Procedures to follow when receiving reports of child abuse; and
 - Procedures to follow after physical restraint has been used.
- Raise employee awareness and provide guidance for employees on:

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- The definitions of child abuse;
- How to recognise signs of abuse;
- Duties and responsibilities in relation to this policy;
- Action to follow when they suspect child abuse, and the procedures to raise concerns of abuse;
- The use of physical contact, touch or restraint; and
- Procedures to follow after physical restraint has been used.

Supporting this Policy is a Guidance and Procedures booklet providing detailed information to staff on the definitions and signs of abuse, how to report any concerns or suspicions and guidance on contact with children. It is essential this is read by all staff in conjunction with this Policy. A copy of this document is available on the DDC Intranet site.

Responsibilities

The Council has allocated responsibility for ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is implemented as follows:

Chief Executive:

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is implemented throughout Dover District Council and is reviewed annually.

Corporate Management Team (CMT):

Members of CMT are responsible to the Chief Executive for ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is implemented within their service areas and that issues of particular importance to their service area are addressed.

Heads of Service:

Heads of Service are responsible for:

- The implementation and monitoring of the Child Protection Policy within their service areas;
- Bringing the Child Protection Policy to the attention of all employees for whom they are responsible, and ensuring that employees meet their responsibilities as set out in this Policy;
- Inducting new staff with regards to Child Protection and Safe Working Practices;
- Planning the work of employees in such a way that situations of claimed or actual abuse of children or young people are minimised, including ensuring that:
 - Employees do not put themselves in the position of working alone with a child or young person unless they can be observed by others;
 - Employees never meet with or take a child or young person off the premises alone;
 - Employees never travel alone with, or give lifts alone to, children or young people;
 - Employees inform parents/carer, and their relevant Manager, of all meetings with children or young people, including date, time, place and purpose;
 - Employees undertake appropriate risk assessments for activities involving children or young people, and follow guidance on supervision of children and young people, maintaining safe ratios of adult to children/young people;

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- Employees do not take photographs, videos, or other images of children or young people during their employment without following guidance; and
- Employees only work with recognised organisations which also adopt good practice in their approach to child protection, and obtain a copy of their operating procedures;
- In a one-to-one session, give employees the opportunity to discuss any child protection related issue which may be causing them concern;
- In a one-to-one session discuss with the employee any child protection related issue involving the employee that is causing the Manager concern;
- Ensure that employees can demonstrate a good understanding of the Child Protection Policy and their own responsibilities; and
- Identify their own and employee training needs and ensure that these are met.

Employees:

All employees of Dover District Council, at every level, have an individual responsibility for ensuring the protection of children and young people.

It is expected that all employees will:

- Recognise and respect the rights of children and young people;
- Work within the guidelines set out in this Policy and the supporting Guidance & Procedures;

- Challenge poor practice as appropriate;
- Report through the appropriate channels and concerns they may have about an individual or practice within Dover District Council;
- Report any concerns about the conduct of their line manager in child protection issues to the relevant Head of Service or the DDC Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator;
- Ensure they understand and comply with their responsibilities under this Policy;
- Discuss issues of concern with their Manager, or other Supervisor as appropriate; and
- Identify their own training needs.

Human Resources:

The Human Resources Team is responsible for:

- Ensuring that employees appointed to work with children or young people are done so only after a thorough recruitment and selection procedure has been completed, including an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check.
- Ensuring that all employees who work with children or young people undertake child protection training as soon as possible after appointment, unless they have attended such training with a previous employer within the preceding twelve months;

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- Ensuring that training courses relating to child protection are aimed at minimising risk to children, young people, and employees of Dover District Council, and that these are considered a high priority in the training plan;
- Ensuring that the name and contact details of the DDC Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator is circulated throughout the Council and employees are aware that this person can be contacted if child abuse is suspected;
- Ensuring that a review is undertaken of all posts within Dover District Council and that those involving employees working with children or young people, either directly or indirectly, are identified and published internally; and
- All future post holders for such roles should sign a child or young person specific declaration to the effect that they do not know of any factor preventing them from working with children or young people and are ISA registered (see Appendix 5 in the supporting Guidance & Procedures).

DDC Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator:

The nominated DDC Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Reviewing and updating the training to meet any changes to service standards, updates in policies and procedures, and relevant legislation;
- Receiving reports from employees and/or line managers of suspected child abuse;

- Ensuring notified child protection concerns are referred to Social Services within the specified timescale;
- Retaining original copies and associated documentation of referrals and concerns in secure storage;
- Offering advice and assistance to employees of Dover District Council; and
- Liaising with Kent County Council and the Kent Child Protection Committee.

Reviewing and monitoring the policy

This Policy will be reviewed annually. Monitoring will be ongoing and overseen by the DDC Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Whilst the Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the Child Protection Policy, the Director of Environment and Corporate Assets will be responsible for monitoring and ensuring the Policy is reviewed at appropriate times.

The Head of Community Safety, CCTV and Parking has been nominated to act as the lead within Dover District Council for child protection, and will ensure training, support, advice and guidance is available to staff where child protection issues arise. This officer will also be responsible for monitoring the type and number of referrals made, and for receiving papers and documents regarding child protection and making comment on behalf of Dover District Council.

The Human Resources Team and Leadership Support Team will provide any necessary support.

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Multi-agency policy and procedures

Child Protection is an exceptionally complex area. A range of skills and expertise from a variety of professions and public and voluntary organisations are required to protect children from abuse. The Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) and its member agencies are responsible for ensuring these essential elements are co-ordinated, directed, and developed in an effective safeguarding service for the children and young people of Kent.

The Board's purpose of providing a framework for protection when individual children are at risk of abuse, and for preventing abuse, is achieved through its main areas of activity:

- Establishing agreed inter-agency procedures and policies for responding to cases of child abuse and co-ordinating the work of professionals in its member agencies;
- Promoting and reviewing the effective operation of the child protection process through its three Local Child Protection Co-ordinating Committees;
- Improving standards of practice by means of its extensive inter-agency child protection training programme;
- Identifying important trends and problems by analysis of statistical and management information;
- Identifying learning points for improving procedure and practice from the review of individual cases of very serious abuse; and
- Raising awareness to specific child protection matters through a programme of public information campaigns.

There is a strong consultation element built into the KSCB child protection procedures. This aspect cannot be overemphasised, as it gives staff an opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have with professionals prior to making any decision on whether or not to make a referral.

Further details can be found at www.kscb.org.uk or www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/protecting-children

Policy agreed by Council: 26 July 2006

Policy updated: July 2016