



SPRINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Adopted at the full council meeting of 13th April 2026

Children, young people, and adults at risk have the right to participate and be safe in the services provided for them regardless of age, race, disability, culture or gender. This includes a right to protection from abuse.

Springfield Parish Council can carry out its responsibilities by ensuring that the needs and interests of children, young people and adults at risk are considered by all Councillors, employees, volunteers, and contracted services, and when taking decisions in relation to service provision.

Policy statement

Springfield Parish Council provides a wide range of services and facilities. This policy aims to ensure that an overarching approach to safeguarding covers all services.

Springfield Parish Council will promote the welfare and protection of children, young people, and adults at risk within all services by:

- Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children, young people, and adults at risk.
- Preventing abuse by promoting good practice, creating a safe and healthy environment, and avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse occur.
- Taking seriously and responding appropriately and promptly to all concerns, incidents, and allegations.
- Providing training appropriate to the level of involvement with children, young people, and adults at risk to ensure that employees understand the different forms abuse as well as their roles and responsibilities under the Council's Codes of Conduct and the Combined Safeguarding Policy.
- Requiring organisations that the Council contracts with or that provide the Council with services, to have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Not tolerating harassment of any Councillors, employees, volunteers, contracted service providers or children / adults at risk who raise concerns of abuse.

This policy applies to all services within the scope of Springfield Parish Council. In addition to employees and Councillors, the policy also applies to volunteers, outside hirers, outside organisations delivering services on behalf of contractors and grant funded organisations.

Definitions

• **Abuse** - is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal, or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. (No Secrets DH 2000)

• **Domestic abuse** - any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

• **Controlling behaviour** - a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain,





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depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

- **Coercive behaviour** - an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.” This definition includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.
- **Children and young people** – anyone under the age of 18 years.
- **Parents** – This term is used in its broadest sense to include parents, carers, and guardians.
- **Adult at risk** – An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over:
 - Who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability
 - Who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation e.g.:
 - . is frail due to age
 - . has drug or alcohol problems
 - . has a learning disability
 - . has mental or physical ill health or disability.

Vulnerability is related to how able an adult is to make and exercise their own informed choice, free from duress or undue influence, and to protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation. There is no hard and fast rule: an adult should be assumed to be covered by this policy unless there is information to indicate that they are not.

Safeguarding – includes all forms of activity that aim to protect or promote the welfare of a group of people. This generally includes prevention, raising awareness, activities designed to promote inclusion, providing personalised benefit and risk management, and specialist safeguarding services. Signs of abuse
There are many possible signs of abuse, none being conclusive on their own.

Examples include:

- Unexplained injury / weight loss / cuts and bruises / dirtiness
 - Changes in behaviour
 - Depression / low self-esteem
 - Lack of self-care / dehydration / abnormal eating pattern
 - Harm to self
 - Obsessive behaviour
 - Bills not being paid
 - An overly critical or disrespectful carer who may bully or undermine
 - Isolation from usual network of friends, family or community
- Safeguarding children from abuse and promoting their welfare means:
- protecting children from maltreatment
 - preventing impairment of children's health or development
 - ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting them from maltreatment and preventing injury or significant harm. Abuse violates an adult's human and civil rights. It can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering. A safeguarding concern arises if abuse is suspected or disclosed. Abuse can happen anywhere – at home, in





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a residential or nursing home, a hospital, in the workplace, at a day centre, an educational establishment or in the street.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

We all have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns over the welfare of children, young people or adults at risk. This extends to the identification of signs of abuse; poor practice by staff, councillors and others acting for or on behalf of the council, and allegations brought to our attention by a member of the public. Reporting safeguarding concerns can prevent serious abuse or harm from happening, or from escalating. Staff and councillors must not attempt to investigate abuse themselves; neither must they confront anyone who is allegedly responsible for abuse nor tell them that allegations have been made about them. The officer responsible for receipt of concerns and forwarding them on is the Clerk or their deputy. If the Clerk is absent, do not wait for them to return to work.

Report safeguarding allegations or concerns to Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) on 0333 013 8936 or Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) on 0333 013 1019 at the earliest possible opportunity, and at least within 24 hours.

Dial 999 if a child, young person or adult at risk may be in imminent danger or a criminal offence may have been committed. ESCB / ESAB or the Police should be given as much factual information as possible.

- The child, young person or adult at risk's name and address (and parents'/carers' address if different)
- The reason for concern – a note of significant events or conversations should be made as promptly as possible to assist with any referral and subsequent investigation. Evidence such as texts or Facebook entries should be preserved
- Any other known factors which may be contributing to the problem
- Additional information such as age (or date of birth), ethnicity, religion, language and disabilities / specific needs.

However, the safeguarding concern should still be reported whether or not the information is complete. Confidentiality, record keeping and sharing information.

Information about safeguarding concerns should be regarded as confidential. The information is not secret, however, and IFPC will co-operate with investigations by County services, or the Police as applicable, and follow their advice to ensure that any risk to the safety of children, young people and adults at risk is addressed. Where a disclosure is made it is important that the staff member does not promise the child/young person/ adults at risk to keep the information secret but says that they will only disclose it to someone who can help them.

Allegations against a councillor or member of staff If someone witnesses behaviour by a councillor, member of staff, contractor, partner, or an allegation is made about them that indicates that they have, or may have:

- harmed a child, young person or adults at risk, or put them at risk of harm
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or adults at risk or
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, young people or adults at risk they must report it as a safeguarding concern to the Police and/or County services at the earliest possible opportunity.





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A councillor or member of staff must report any allegation made against them to the Clerk or Chair of the Council. Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to staff will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure (including in instances where the member of staff resigns or leaves).

However, investigations by the responsible authorities will take precedence over internal council procedures relating to conduct. The Clerk or Chair of the Council will liaise with the responsible authorities to agree the appropriate course of action. The Clerk or Chair of the Council will seek advice from the County Services or Police prior to informing a member of staff of an allegation against them. The Clerk or Chair of the Council will offer appropriate welfare support to the member of staff and ensure that they are kept appropriately informed during any investigation process.

In accordance with the law, the council will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) any member of staff:

- who was dismissed because they harmed a child or adult
- who was dismissed or removed from working in a regulated activity because they might have harmed a child or adult otherwise
- who would have been dismissed for either of these reasons, but they resigned first; or
- who works with children or adults at risk in regulated activity and has been cautioned or convicted for a relevant offence.

Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to councillors will be referred to the Monitoring Officer and dealt with in accordance with the IFPC Code of Conduct. Recruitment and Selection Criminal record checks will be made where appropriate. Roles that involve “regulated activities,” such as caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or adults at risk, require an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check.

This may include checking whether someone is included in the two DBS ‘barred lists’ of individuals who are unsuitable for working with children and adults. DBS Checks must be obtained for staff and volunteers undertaking these roles, and they will not be permitted to commence unaccompanied work until they have been received. It is against the law for employers to employ someone, or allow them to volunteer for, this kind of work if they know they are on one of the barred lists.

Information and Training

Appropriate information will be made available to staff and councillors in the form of this policy and any necessary training. External organisations licensed by, or working with, for or on behalf of the council. The council works with several external organisations such as charities, contractors, other public sector bodies etc. Where these external organisations are likely to have significant contact with children, young people or adults at risk as a direct result of their work for, on behalf of, or in partnership with the council, they are required to have safeguarding procedures, such as safe recruitment and selection processes, in place. They must be made aware of this policy and must provide the council with a copy of their safeguarding procedure.

The role of Springfield Parish Council

It is the responsibility of all employees and Councillors to adhere to best practice, participate in relevant training and report any concerns, incidents, or allegations to a designated person in accordance with the relevant procedure set out below. Safeguarding reports cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, they may be required as a prosecution witness. If anyone has any cause for concern, please contact: Clerk of the Council – Karen Kuderovitch, clerk@springfield-pc.gov.uk.

