

## Introduction

Safeguarding is **everybody's responsibility**. It does not matter what your role within Suffolk County Council is or what service you work for, we all share responsibility, both corporately and individually, to make sure that everyone is protected from abuse and neglect.

All Council employees, elected members, partner organisations and contractors who come into contact with children and young people or adults in need of care or support, in the course of their work, have a **duty of care** to safeguard, prevent, and report neglect or abuse.

All Council employees are expected to adhere to Suffolk County Council's Code of Conduct (*this can be found at the bottom of this link*) within their role and demonstrate professionalism with regards to safeguarding. The Councillors' Code of Conduct can be found here.

Where appropriate Suffolk County Council's [disciplinary policy](#) or [capability policy](#) may apply.

Managers must seek HR Advice if disciplinary or capability actions are necessary.

## What is Safeguarding?

*Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is defined as:*

- *protecting children from maltreatment*
- *preventing impairment of children's health or development*
- *ensuring that children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care*
- *taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.*

(Source: Working Together to Safeguard Children - 2018)

*Safeguarding Adults duties apply when an adult (person aged 18 or over):*

- *has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) AND*
- *is experiencing (or at risk of) abuse or neglect AND*
- *as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.*

(Source: Care Act - 2014)

## Our commitments

Suffolk County Council is committed to safeguarding vulnerable children and young people and adults with care and support needs.

- Elected members, senior officers and all staff will be aware of corporate safeguarding responsibilities, and what to do in the event of concerns about a child or adult in need of care or support.
- Elected members and staff participate in mandatory safeguarding training specialist staff that work within services for vulnerable individuals will receive targeted and specialised multi-agency training, and we will have clear plans to support development for these members of staff.
- All contractors and organisations working with us must be aware of this Policy and their safeguarding responsibilities pertaining to it. We will also make sure we operate within their safeguarding procedures.
- We will ensure that we have safe recruitment and employment practices in place to promote safeguarding at all levels in the Council.
- Council departments will work together to address safeguarding issues including those arising from Serious Case Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Government Inquiries, and legislation.
- We will work in partnership with organisations and agencies both within and outside of the county boundary in order to safeguard children and adults in need of care and support.
- We will fully consider the safeguarding implications of any decisions that we make and consult with service experts and, as appropriate, our service users, before making those decisions.
- We will have an up to date and accurate summary of how our services meet their statutory safeguarding responsibilities as defined through Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and Care Act 2014.

## What are your responsibilities?

**All** members of Suffolk County Council's workforce should:

- Be alert to the possibility of abuse and neglect in all its forms including social media and online activity
- Report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or adult
- Participate in relevant safeguarding training and multi-agency partnership working to safeguard children and adults in need of care and support

- Have a clear understanding of local procedures and protocols for safeguarding children and adults in need of care and support in their service area and follow the Council's and any relevant professional codes of conduct associated with their role.
- Pass on any concerns about the conduct of colleagues, other employees and contractors, if they may be putting children or adults with care and support needs at risk (see Whistle-blowing Policy)
- Be familiar with key roles and responsibilities for safeguarding both vulnerable children and adults

## Delivering this policy

Assurance is provided that Suffolk is carrying out its statutory safeguarding responsibilities appropriately through attendance at the Children's Services Accountability Board and, for both adults and children, by attendance at Directorate Management Team meetings, Senior Management Team meetings and representation on the Safeguarding Partnership Board as well as quarterly reports to the Chief Executive Officer. A joint ACS and CYPS report is presented to cabinet annually.

There is a Quality Assurance system in place for children and adult services which brings learning into practice. Action plans are put in place in light of findings from regular audits undertaken across the service.

## External challenge

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 set in legislation that the three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Chief Officer of Police, and Clinical Commissioning Groups) must work together with relevant agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in Suffolk. All three partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.

Although there were no changes to the statutory requirement for local authorities to have a Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) and all the current guidance about the accountabilities of the SAB in the Care Act Guidance remain, the Suffolk Safeguarding Adults Board has been brought under the umbrella of Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership to maximise opportunities for joint working across Children and Adult Services and to 'Think Family'.

The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership is responsible for publishing safeguarding procedures for all agencies to work to.

For further information or details please visit:

Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Website – [www.suffolksp.org.uk](http://www.suffolksp.org.uk)

## Getting Help

There are a number of ways you can pass on a safeguarding concern or report an incident:

### In an emergency

If you believe that a child, young person or adult is at immediate risk and in need of protection then you should call the Police on **999** immediately.

### To make a referral or seek advice when you have concern about a child or young person contact children's social care:

During normal working days between 08:00 am to 5:20 pm Monday to Thursday and 08:00 am and 4:20 pm Friday (excluding bank holidays).

- Customer First (Children's social care) 0808 800 4005
- Or by web chat

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=NYFlzl7NuJU>

### To make a referral or seek advice about adults with care and support needs contact Adult's social care:

During normal working days between 08:00 am and 5:20 pm Monday to Thursday and 08:00 am and 4:20 pm Friday (excluding bank holidays)

- Customer First (Adult Social Care) 0845 607 0304
- Make an online referral at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/protecting-people-at-risk-of-abuse/report-abuse-of-an-adult/>
- Or by web chat

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=NYFlzl7NuJU>

### Outside office hours

At all other times concerns about children, young people and adults with care and support needs can be discussed with **Emergency Duty Team** who can be contacted by telephone on **0808 800 4005**