



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council

Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Adult Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed: June 2022

Introduction

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (Council) believes that harm caused to adults who are at risk of abuse, exploitation and/or neglect is not acceptable. Everyone has a fundamental right to be safe. As such, the Council is committed to working in partnership with others to safeguard adults who are at risk from all forms of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

Through this policy, the Council aims to ensure that a holistic approach to safeguarding is embedded within all Council services.

This Policy emphasises that safeguarding should be paramount to everyone and that the Council recognises its responsibility (morally and legally) with regards to safeguarding, committing to protect people as far as is reasonably practicable.

Key Definitions

An **adult**, for the purpose of this Policy, is any person(s) **over the age of 18 years**.

The **risk of harm** occurs in all socio-economic, racial and ethnic groups regardless of gender, age and sexual orientation.

An '**adult at risk of harm**' is any person who is aged 18 years or over, whose **exposure to harm** through abuse, exploitation or neglect **may be increased by their:**

Personal characteristics, and/or Life circumstances.

An '**adult in need of protection**' is any person who is aged 18 years and over, whose **exposure to harm** through abuse, exploitation and neglect **may be increased by their:**

Personal characteristics, and/or Life circumstances

and

Who is **unable to protect their own** well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests.

and

Where the **action, or inaction**, of **another** person (or persons) is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

Aim

The aim of the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Adult Safeguarding Policy is to put in place, and improve upon existing, safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation and/or neglect.

This Policy not only demonstrates how the council will meet its legal obligations, but will also act to reassure the public, service users, Elected Members, employees and

individuals/organisations working on behalf of the Council on what they can expect Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to do to Safeguard Adults, who are at risk of harm.

Objectives

By working in accordance with this Policy, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will:

1. Promote 'zero-tolerance' with regards to harm of adults who are at risk from abuse, exploitation and/or neglect.
2. Seek to continually monitor and improve upon existing safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation and/or neglect.
3. Promoting a continuous learning approach and ensuring that appropriate training is available for all Members, employees and volunteers.
4. Implement robust recruitment, selection and management procedures.
5. Respond appropriately to all concerns reported.
6. Develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to incidents, ensuring confidentiality is maintained where appropriate.
7. Develop and implement effective procedures for recording and reporting any allegations or suspicions of harm or abuse.
8. Promote the welfare and wellbeing of individuals during and within Council services, including during the planning of services.
9. Maintain a good level of safe working practice at all times to minimise risk to anyone that encounters Members, employees, volunteers and Agency Workers.
10. Ensure that effective and co-ordinated multi-agency responses are provided.
11. Influence the way the organisation thinks about harm to children and adults at risk by embedding a culture which recognises every person's right to respect and dignity, honesty, humanity and compassion in every aspect of their life

Underpinning Principles

Adult Safeguarding activity will be guided by five underpinning principles:

1. **A Rights-Based Approach:** To promote and respect the rights of adults, who are at risk of harm, to be safe and secure; to freedom from harm and coercion; to equality of treatment; to the protection of the law; to privacy; to confidentiality; and freedom from discrimination.
2. **An Empowering Approach:** To empower adults, who are at risk of harm, to make informed choices about their lives, to maximise their opportunities to participate in wider society, to keep themselves safe and free from harm and enabled to manage their own decisions in respect of exposure to risk.
3. **A Person-Centred Approach:** to promote and facilitate full participation of adults, who are at risk of harm, in all decisions affecting their lives taking full account of their views, wishes and feelings and, where appropriate, the views of others who have an interest in his/her safety and well-being.

4. **A Consent-Driven Approach:** To make a presumption that the adult, who is at risk of harm, has the ability to give or withhold consent; to make informed choices; to help inform choice through the provision of information, and the identification of options and alternatives.
5. **A Collaborative Approach:** To acknowledge that Adult Safeguarding will be most effective when it has the full support of the wider public and the Council's safeguarding partners. Working in partnership and 'a person-centred' approach will work hand-in-hand.

Within this Policy there are a number of forms of abuse mentioned. These include: Abuse, Harm, Neglect, Exploitation, Domestic Violence/Abuse, Human Trafficking and Hate Crime.

Abuse: A single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another individual or violates their human or civil rights.

Abuse is the misuse of power and control that one person has over another and may be perpetrated by a wide range of people, including those who are usually physically and/or emotionally close to the individual and on whom the individual may depend upon and trust.

Harm: The impact on the victim of abuse, exploitation or neglect. It is the result of any action whether by commission or omission, deliberate or as the result of a lack of knowledge or awareness which may result in the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, or mental health or well-being.

Serious Harm: Judgement of what constitutes 'serious harm' is complex, demanding a careful application of professional judgement several criteria. More information on 'serious harm' and the assessments which may be conducted by, or on behalf of, statutory HSC professionals can be found online at:
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/adult-safeguarding-policy.pdf>

Some of the main forms of abuse may include (full definitions can be found within the Council's Guidance Notes, as well as online):

Physical Abuse (physical force or mistreatment of an individual)

Sexual Violence and Abuse (behaviour of a sexual nature which is unwanted or takes place without consent or understanding).

Psychological / Emotional Abuse (behaviour which is psychologically harmful or may inflict mental distress by threat, humiliation or other verbal/non-verbal conduct).

Financial Abuse (actual or attempted act(s) of theft, fraud or burglary).

Institutional Abuse (mistreatment or neglect by either an individual or a regime).

Neglect (Deliberate withholding, or failure to provide appropriate care and/or support which is necessary to carry out daily living activities).

Exploitation (Intentional maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control, or taking selfish/unfair advantage of another individual).

Domestic Violence and Abuse (Threatening behaviour, violence or abuse on an individual, where they and the perpetrator have been intimate partners or family members).

Human Trafficking (The acquisition and movement of people by improper means, including force, threat or deception).

Hate Crime (An incident (criminal offence) which was motivated by prejudice, discrimination or hate towards an individual's actual, or perceived, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion or gender inequality).

Please note the abovementioned forms of abuse do not represent all forms of abuse. More information on the abovementioned forms, as well as others are contained within the Guidance Notes

Implementation

- 6.1. This Policy will be supported by the Adult Safeguarding Guidance Notes.
- 6.2. The Guidance Notes give further information in relation to Awareness of Abuse, Reporting Procedures, Supervision of People, Code of Conduct and Code of Behaviour, Support and Training, Recruitment and Selection Guidelines, Use of Photography/Recording Equipment, amongst others.
- 6.3. Information leaflets are available for:
 - Members of the public
 - Employees / Volunteers, and
 - Contractors / Hirers

Resourcing

- All necessary human, financial and material resources will be made available to implement the Policy, whilst being mindful of budgetary constraints.
- Training will be provided to raise awareness of the Policy and Procedure among employees and to ensure its effective implementation. All training is outlined within the Guidance Notes.

Responsibilities

All Elected Members, employees and volunteers with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council are responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

All Members and employees will be required to attend any relevant training and/or awareness-raising sessions that are relevant to their position.

Other clear roles and responsibilities have been established and are outlined below:

Group or Individual	Role and Responsibilities
All Elected Members / Employees / Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take due care to ensure compliance with and to promote the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. ➤ Act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible. ➤ Bring matters of concern about adult welfare to the attention of a Safeguarding or Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Approve the Safeguarding Policy and consider any subsequent amendments
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Chief Executive has ultimate officer responsibility for embedding all safeguarding principles throughout the Council.
Senior Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Allocate resources to enable the Council to meet its responsibilities. ➤ Promote the integration of safeguarding principles into the culture of the Council. ➤ Consider safeguarding issues at SMT meetings.
Heads of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure employees are aware of this policy. ➤ Notify the Designated Safeguarding Officers in strict confidence of any safeguarding issues that are brought to their attention. ➤ Ensure that relevant employees attend the relevant training sessions.
Head of Corporate and Strategic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chair the internal meetings of the Designated Safeguarding Officers. ➤ Raise the profile of Safeguarding within the Council, and develop initiatives to ensure the protection of adults who are at risk of harm, within the Council area. ➤ Develop the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure with arrangements for periodic review ➤ Provide advice and support as required ➤ Continually improve and update safeguarding procedures based on current best practice and benchmarking results ➤ Co-ordinate audits as required by the Safeguarding Board.

Group or Individual	Role and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure there are effective internal procedures to handle concerns. ➤ Ensure that the Council is represented at Safeguarding Network meetings.
<p>Designated Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Officers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish contacts and liaise with Social Services, PSNI and other agencies in relation to safeguarding issues within the Council ➤ Provide information and advice on safeguarding issues. ➤ Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of the referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover. ➤ Ensure that relevant people within the Council are informed on a timely basis about any issues, concerns, action taken and any further action required, whilst ensuring that all records are maintained in a secure and confidential manner. ➤ Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the Council, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome. ➤ Advise on suitable training content. ➤ Liaise with other Safeguarding Officers to determine the course of action and referral required.

Safeguarding Working Group

The Safeguarding Working Group (SWG) is an internal, cross-directorate, group set up to oversee the practical implementation of this policy and to develop, monitor and review safeguarding procedures.

The SWG consists of 14 Officers and is chaired by the Head of Corporate Services and Governance. The role of this Group includes:

- Identifying safeguarding training needs within services
- Developing supplementary safeguarding procedures as they are required
- Promoting good practice within council services – to include procurement of services
- Discussing incidents and concerns raised in services to facilitate a council-wide response if necessary

Monitoring

The council will monitor the implementation of this Policy at regular intervals and will respond in a positive fashion to both regional and local changes in circumstances or new initiatives.

Linkages

This Policy provides the framework to guide the Council's practice in relation to Adult Safeguarding.

The Policy operates in accordance with the Council's Adult Safeguarding Code of Practice.

Review

- The Adult Safeguarding Policy will, under normal circumstances, be formally reviewed every three years.
- The Policy will also be subject to routine scrutiny and, from time to time, updates and re-issues will be circulated.
- The policy will be reviewed sooner in the event of any one or more of the following:
 - A failure or weakness in the policy is highlighted.
 - Changes in legislative requirements.
 - Changes in Government/Council or other directives and requirements.
 - Or, at the discretion of Council.