

Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk of abuse or neglect. This policy outlines our legal and ethical responsibilities in ensuring protection from harm, responding to concerns, and maintaining clear reporting procedures.

This policy aligns with key safeguarding legislation, including:

- The Care Act 2014
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (Ill Treatment or Wilful Neglect)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

Scope

This policy applies to all Employees, Councillors, Volunteers, and any individuals working on behalf of the Parish Council.

1. Safeguarding Principles

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and to be protected from abuse or neglect.
- The Parish Council will take all concerns and allegations seriously and act in accordance with safeguarding laws and best practices.
- Confidentiality will be maintained except where disclosure is legally required.

2. Types of Abuse

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse (including offences under the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**)
- Neglect
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Human trafficking and modern-day slavery
- Discrimination (including hate crimes under the **Equality Act 2010**)
- Self-neglect
- Domestic abuse

- **Financial abuse** (including exploitation of vulnerable adults under the **Care Act 2014**)
 - **Ill Treatment or Wilful Neglect** (an offence under the **Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015**)
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3. Reporting a Concern

- Any disclosure or suspicion of abuse must be **reported immediately** and no later than 24 hours.
- Do not investigate, ask leading questions, or promise confidentiality.
- Record the disclosure with the date, time, and details as accurately as possible.
- Report to the Clerk or Chair of the Parish Council.
- If an allegation involves an Employee, Councillor, or Volunteer, it must be escalated to:
 - **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** for concerns involving children (**01454 866000**)
 - **Person in Position of Trust (PiPoT)** for concerns involving adults at risk (**01454 868007**)
- In cases of immediate danger, contact emergency services (999).

4. Role of the Clerk or Chair

- Maintain a **secure case file** with records of all communications and actions.
 - Ensure concerns are reported to relevant authorities, including:
 - **South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Board**
 - **South Gloucestershire Access and Response Team (01454 866000)**
 - **South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults' Team (01454 868007)**
 - **Southwest Child Protection Procedures**
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5. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- Any allegations must be reported to the **LADO** or **PiPoT** on the same day.
- The alleged abuser will be informed of their rights under the **Disciplinary Policy**.
- The identity of the individual reporting the concern will remain confidential.
- If the individual is dismissed due to safeguarding concerns, the Parish Council must **report the case to the DBS** for barring consideration.
- The Parish Council will ensure all employment actions comply with UK employment law.

6. External Bookings & Partnerships

- Any external party hiring Parish Council facilities must have safeguarding policies in place.
- Booking agreements must explicitly state safeguarding expectations.

7. Record-Keeping & Monitoring

- All records must be securely maintained and only shared on a **need-to-know** basis.
- The Clerk or Chair will determine when records should be passed to external agencies unless there is an obligation to share relating to safeguarding and police enquiry.
- **Data retention:** Records should be kept for a minimum of **seven years** in line with safeguarding best practices.
- Secure electronic and physical storage measures must be used to protect confidentiality.

8. Recruitment & Training

- All Employees, Workers, and Volunteers will undergo appropriate screening, including:
 - **Identity verification**
 - **DBS checks** for relevant roles (in compliance with the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006** and **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**)
 - **Professional and character references**
 - **Employment history verification** (gaps must be accounted for)
- Staff and Volunteers will receive **mandatory safeguarding training** appropriate to their role.

9. Whistleblowing & Protection for Reporters

- In accordance with the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, individuals reporting safeguarding concerns in good faith are legally protected from victimisation or dismissal.
- Confidentiality will be upheld where possible, and no retaliation will be tolerated against whistleblowers.
- Reports can be made to:
 - **Clerk:** clerk@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk
 - **Chair:** janet.biggin@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk
 - **External authorities**, such as South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Board.

10. Review & Compliance

- This policy will be reviewed **annually** to ensure legal compliance and best practices.
 - **Adopted by Parish Council:** 20th February 2025
 - **Last reviewed:** _____
 - **Next review due:** 20th February 2026
 - **Signed:** Chairperson: Janet Biggin Parish Clerk: Kevin Spratt
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Contact Information

For any safeguarding concerns, please contact:

- **Clerk:** clerk@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk
- **Chair:** janet.biggin@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk

This policy ensures that safeguarding procedures align with UK law and best practices to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults.