



**East Herts Council**

**Safeguarding Policy and Procedure  
Children, Young People and Adults at Risk**

**Policy Statement Number 41 (Issue No 4)**

**Policy Owner: Jonathan Geall**

**Date of last review: Nov 2023**

**Date of next review: Nov 2026**

## Overview of the Safeguarding Policy

This policy makes clear the seriousness with which East Herts Council takes its responsibility to prioritise the protection and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals within our community and publicise clear procedures for reporting concerns.

This policy equips readers with:

- information of the types of abuse that, unfortunately, arise in East Herts and **how to spot the signs of abuse** – sections 1 to 4
- clear information about **what to do if you see something** you are concerned about and what the council's safeguarding lead officers should do in response to reported concerns – sections 5 to 8
- **steps to take to prevent opportunities for abuse** to arise in council premises and when providing council services – sections 9 to 12
- **quick reference guides** and contact details – sections 13 to 16.

The policy aims to minimise the threat of harm to vulnerable children, young people and adults at risk by:

- fostering a **shared understanding of the safeguarding risks** which we may all come across in our day-to-day work
- **giving everyone the confidence to report concerns**, large and small
- **providing practical guidelines to the council's safeguarding lead officers** to enable swift, effective and consistent responses to issues raised
- **ensuring the council works closely with colleagues** in partner organisations across and beyond Hertfordshire
- **maintaining professional curiosity** at all times about individual cases, review of cases in other areas and new guidance and best practice to embed a culture of continuous learning.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Please read this policy and ensure you are as well-informed as you possibly can be.

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to all East Herts Council employees, contractors and elected members. Licensees and third party recipients of grants must have due regard for this policy.
- 1.2 The council places the utmost importance on its safeguarding duty. This policy has been drawn up with the principles of 'Making Safeguarding Personal' firmly in mind recognising the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Local Government Association's six principles of good safeguarding practice (ADASS & LGA, 2017).

<b>Empowerment</b>	People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and provide informed consent.
<b>Prevention</b>	It is better to take action before harm occurs.
<b>Proportionality</b>	Making the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
<b>Protection</b>	Giving support and representation for those in greatest need.
<b>Partnership</b>	Local solutions should be made through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
<b>Accountability</b>	There should always be accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

1.3 Thus, the council firmly believes that:

- children, young people and adults at risk have the right to be safe when using our services
- all children, young people and adults at risk have a right to be protected from being hurt, mistreated or suffering abuse – in body or mind
- that when assisting people facing abuse, intervention should, wherever possible, be person-led and outcome-focused. We will always make our best efforts to engage the people we are working with in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

- 1.4 The council recognises that some people may make choices that professionals think unwise. So long as someone has mental capacity, it is for them to make their choices. When someone is deciding on what to do, this can provide opportunities for the council and/or our partners to have frank discussions with the individual to establish what the next best option may be. Indeed, we see such situations as opportunities to explain the situation honestly and to find ways to most closely match the person's wishes.
- 1.5 The council is committed to ensuring that the needs and interests of children, young people and adults at risk are considered by elected members, employees, volunteers and contractors in the provision of services and decision-making.
- 1.6 East Herts Council, as a second-tier local authority, has a statutory responsibility and a duty of care which, in the simplest of terms, means it has a duty to cooperate and report issues relating to safeguarding to the appropriate authorities.
- 1.7 East Herts Council works closely with colleagues from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board to share best practice and learning. Through engaging with both partnership boards, the council ensures it keeps up to date with the latest developments, protocols and policies.
- 1.8 Of particular importance, local authorities have a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions. Furthermore, The Care Act 2014 sets out specific adult safeguarding duties for local authorities and their partner agencies. The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who (a) has needs for care and support, (b) is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and/or (c) due to these care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.
- 1.9 The Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance issued in 2018 reiterates the important role second tier authorities, such as East Herts Council, as providers, for example, of housing, environmental health services and leisure services, have to play in working collaboratively across agencies to maximise the effectiveness of safeguarding in their localities.

## 2. Policy statement

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, by:

- respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children, young people and adults at risk
- ensuring all employees understand the different forms abuse can take, how to identify them and how to act on their concerns
- taking any concern made by an elected member, employee, contractor or child/young person/adult at risk seriously and sensitively
- implementing effective procedures for recording, reporting and responding to any allegations, incidents or suspicions of abuse
- ensuring that larger contracted/commissioned services have safeguarding policies and procedures consistent with the council's commitment to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk
- ensuring grant funded services acknowledge they should have due regard to this policy when carrying out activities funded or partly funded by the council
- encouraging safeguarding best practice at the council
- ensuring that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and adults at risk through a robust recruitment process.

2.2 The policy helps the council ensure there is a clear and effective approach to safeguarding across the organisation and that all employees, elected members, volunteers and contractors delivering services directly by the council or on the council's behalf are aware of their legal obligations to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.

2.3 This policy applies to all services within the scope of the council. In addition to all internal provision of services, it also applies to:

- outside organisations delivering services involving children, young people or adults at risk on behalf of the council
- contractors
- grant-funded organisations.

- 2.4 Safeguarding is not a practice that operates in isolation. The issues covered in this policy cut across every service and function that the council undertakes and so is embedded within the organisation and has direct links to other Human Resources policies and the council's Prevent Action Plan.
- 2.5 This policy is inclusive of all children, young people and adults at risk. In addition, in drawing up with policy we have had regard to Equality Act 2010 and the need to ensure the interests of those with protected characteristics are respected and borne in mind when carrying out our safeguarding duties.
- 2.6 Compliance and guidance will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head of Housing and Health and Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships.

### 3. Definitions and how abuse can be experienced

#### Definitions

3.1 The phrase 'children, young people and adults at risk' refers to:

- a **child** – anyone under the age of 18 years
- a **young person** – a person aged over 16 but under 18 (those aged 16-18 are included in the legal definition of a child)
- an **adult at risk** – any person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation. Vulnerability and risk may arise from:
  - a mental health problem or mental illness, including dementia
  - a physical disability
  - a sensory impairment
  - a learning disability
  - frailty
  - a temporary illness
  - old age.

3.2 The term **parent** is used in the broadest sense to include parents, carers and guardians.

#### ***Experience of abuse***

3.3 East Herts Council recognises that people can experience abuse in individual and unique ways. Moreover, abuse can be experienced in any setting and by adults that are both known and unknown to a person. The table below gives examples of the different dimensions of how abuse can be experienced.



<b>Types of abuse</b>	<b>Examples of how abuse can be experienced</b>
<b>Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)</b>	Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE includes, for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.
<b>Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)</b>	Exploitative situations and relationships where young people (under 18) are groomed and receive 'something', for example affection, gifts, money, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, <sup>1</sup> as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.
<b>County lines</b>	County Lines is the name given to describe drug dealing by criminal gangs from urban areas expanding their activities into smaller towns and rural areas. It often involves the exploitation of children, as gangs use young people and those with mental health or addiction problems to transport drugs and money.
<b>Cuckooing</b>	A practice where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. The prevalent examples of this are when drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing.
<b>Discriminatory abuse</b>	Discriminatory and oppressive attitudes based on race, gender, cultural background, religion, physical and/ or sensory impairment, sexual orientation or age.
<b>Domestic abuse</b>	An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those

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<sup>1</sup> The council notes other national trends that may lead to such exploitation with an increase in cases of children vaping and taking the Class C drug nitrous oxide.

	aged 16 or over who are or have been partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
<b>Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)</b>	A collective term used for illegal procedures, such as female circumcision, which include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs, or injury to the female genital organs for a non-therapeutic reason.
<b>Financial abuse</b>	Theft, fraud, exploitation, and pressure often in connection with savings, wills, property, possessions or benefits.
<b>Forced marriage</b>	Someone is coerced into marrying someone against their will. This may be by means of other types of abuse such as physical and/or emotional abuse.
<b>Hoarding</b>	Where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic manner, usually resulting in unmanageable amounts of clutter. The items can be of little or no monetary value.
<b>Honour Based Abuse</b>	Violence and abuse in the name of honour, covering a variety of behaviours, mainly but not exclusively against females, where the person is being punished by their family and/or community for a perceived transgression against the 'honour' of the family or community, or is required to undergo certain activities or procedures in 'honour' of the family.
<b>Human Trafficking</b>	Someone is moved from one place to another for the purpose of exploitation, this could be through sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, forced criminality or organ harvesting.
<b>Institutional abuse, neglect and/or poor practice</b>	Repeated and pervasive mistreatment and/or isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice.
<b>Modern Slavery</b>	Being forced to work through mental or physical threat, owned or controlled by an 'employer' usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse, dehumanised and being treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'.

<b>Neglect and/or acts of omission</b>	Ignoring someone's medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
<b>Physical abuse</b>	Slapping, pushing, kicking, rough handling, twisting of limbs/extremities, misuse of medication, or inappropriate sanctions or restraint.
<b>Psychological and/or emotional abuse</b>	Verbal assault or intimidation, deprivation of contact, threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation or blaming, overriding of consent, choices or wishes.
<b>Radicalisation</b>	Typically tackled as part of the Government's Prevent programme, radicalisation is essentially a safeguarding issues. It covers incitement, whether face-to-face or through publications or the Internet, to promote or carry out acts of terrorism or extremist behaviour. This can covers all manner of political, religious or ideological positions.
<b>Self-neglect</b>	Lack of self-care, including neglect of personal hygiene, nutrition and hydration, or health. Lack of care of a person's environment, including living in domestic squalor. Refusal of services such as care services, health assessments or interventions.
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	Non-contact abuse such as voyeurism, involvement in pornography. Sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting. Rape and sexual assault.

3.4 It is recognised that from time-to-time different risks to children, young people and vulnerable adults may emerge or different forms of abuse may become more prevalent. Also, different ways of identifying, reporting or tackling abuse may become available.

3.5 The council recognises that the Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a framework to empower and protect people who may lack capacity to make some decisions for themselves, or who have capacity and want to make preparations for a time when they may lack capacity in the future. Someone who lacks capacity due to an illness or disability (such as a mental health

problem, dementia or a learning disability) may have one or more of the following issues:

- cannot understand information given to them to make a particular decision
- cannot retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision
- cannot use or weigh up the information to make the decision
- have difficulty in communicating their decision.

3.6 The Mental Capacity Act 2005 defines who can take decisions, when they can take them and how they should go about this. East Herts safeguarding leads will work with the appropriate partners to take the mental capacity act provisions in to account when responding to reported abuse in their district. Officers have a responsibility to work with the public to make decisions in their best interest about affairs. In doing so, officers are expected to be aware of the key aspects of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Officers are expected to discuss any concerns regarding mental capacity with either the Head of Housing and Health or the Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** so there are key roles and responsibilities for everyone:

- **Executive Member holding responsibility for Safeguarding** – the safeguarding function currently sits with the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods who is responsible for the development of safeguarding policy. The Executive Member is also regularly briefed on safeguarding policy developments and caseload characteristics
- **Chief Executive Officer** – holds the overall strategic responsibility for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- **Head of Housing and Health** – lead operational role for the council for promoting and addressing the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- **Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships** – this post-holder, within the Housing and Health service, holds the deputy operational lead role for the council for promoting and addressing the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- **Human Resources** – supporting the promotion of the council's safeguarding duties and responsibilities, notably with regard to training and safer recruitment
- **All Heads of Service** need to ensure that agency workers, consultants and grant recipients, as well as larger contractors, agree to pay due regard to the council's Safeguarding Policy and, where relevant, have their own policy and procedures in place
- elected members and officers on **the East Herts Safeguarding Policy Group** – this group, chaired by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and serviced by the Head of Housing and Health and Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships, brings together members and officers with particular experience and expertise in safeguarding matters so as to provide an ongoing 'check-and-challenge' function regarding the council's strategic and operational responses to safeguarding issues
- **all elected members** must:

- adhere to this policy at all times
  - follow best practice regarding safeguarding, including participating in relevant training and keeping as up-to-date as possible about safeguarding issues
  - remain vigilant to abuse being experienced by anyone and report this as soon as possible, following this safeguarding policy
  - report any concerns about and/or whistleblow on any employee, elected member, staff, volunteer or contractor.
- **all employees of the council, temporary staff, contractors and volunteers**, must:
    - adhere to this policy at all times
    - follow best practice regarding safeguarding, including participating in relevant training and keeping as up-to-date as possible about safeguarding issues, particularly those relating to their areas of work
    - remain vigilant to abuse being experienced by anyone and report this as soon as possible, following this safeguarding policy
    - report any concerns about and/or whistleblow on any employee, elected member, staff, volunteer or contractor.
- **outside organisations** that deliver services involving children, young people and adults at risk on behalf of the council must:
    - in the case of large contractors, comply with the council's Safeguarding Policy and/or have their own policy and procedures in place
    - in the case of smaller bodies, have due regard to this policy.
- 4.2 The council participates fully in multi-agency groups and statutory Safeguarding Boards.
- 4.3 The council's safeguarding lead officers are also aware of the appropriate action to be taken should they ever need to raise any concerns about the effectiveness of the multi-agency working. This is laid out clearly in the [Escalation Policy](#) provided by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board.
- 4.4 The council recognises that issues regarding safeguarding may also emerge from instances of hate crime. The council takes this very seriously and remains a registered [Third-Party Reporting Centre](#) for its residents.

- 4.5 The council has a Prevent Action Plan which it ensures is updated and kept relevant. This plan brings together the council with its strategic partners with the aim of identifying and, where at all possible, preventing residents being drawn into terrorism. It is recognised that the grooming activities often associated with enrollment of people into terrorist activities can involve abuse of vulnerable people and wider safeguarding issues.
- 4.6 In dealing with any safeguarding case, the council will use all relevant legislation to assist and work with partners to tackle the underlying issues.

### ***Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP)***

- 4.6 The [HSCP](#) is a statutory, multi-agency organisation formed by Hertfordshire County Council in line with Section 13 of The Children Act 2004. The organisation brings together agencies who work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 4.7 The objective of the HSCP is to co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in the area of the authority by which it is established.
- 4.8 East Herts Council is committed to maintaining an effective working relationship with the HSCP to help achieve its mutual aims in respect of child safeguarding.

### ***Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB)***

- 4.9 The [HSAB](#) is an inter-agency forum for co-ordinating how the different services and professional groups should cooperate to safeguard adults at risk across Hertfordshire. It ensures that arrangements work effectively to identify abuse or inadequate care, help vulnerable people and plan and implement joint preventative strategies.
- 4.10 The HSAB aims to raise awareness and promote the welfare of adults at risk by the development of an effective cooperative involving people from a wide range of public and voluntary services and other organisations. This council is committed to maintaining an effective working relationship with the HSAB to help achieve its mutual aims in respect of the safeguarding of adults at risk.

## 5. Recognising and responding to potential abuse

- 5.1 Even though elected members, employees, volunteers and contractors may have limited contact with children, young people and adults at risk as part of their duties and responsibilities for the council, everyone should be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and bullying and be clear about what to do if they have concerns.
- 5.2 It is not the responsibility of any elected member, employee or contractor to determine whether abuse is taking place. Concerns, incidents or allegations must be reported. The role of the elected member or employee is to refer the case to the appropriate person, not to investigate or make a judgement.
- 5.3 Where an employee is concerned about the **immediate** safety of a child, young person or adult at risk they should:
- call the Police on 999
  - call an Ambulance on 999 if the person needs urgent medical assistance.
- 5.4 Where an employee has concerns that a child, young person or adult at risk is being harmed or neglected, or is at risk of this, they should complete an [East Herts online referral form](#) on the staff intranet and contact either the Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships or the Head Housing and Health.



## **6. Guidelines for staff on dealing with disclosures**

### **Do**

- Stay calm
- Listen to what the person is saying. It's important to listen and capture the disclosure rather than suggesting they speak to someone else which could then stop the disclosure being made
- Reassure the person, acknowledging that they have been brave to tell you
- Make sure the person is comfortable and in a secure environment where they cannot be overheard
- Take what they say seriously
- Offer practical help, for example, offer a glass of water or tissues
- Remind the person that you have a duty to follow the council's safeguarding policy in order to safeguard and support them or the person(s) they are telling you about. Explain that you will inform one of the council's safeguarding officers
- Assure the person that you will only share the information with the people who need to know
- Tell the person that they will be contacted by a safeguarding officer to advise them of what the next steps will be after you have spoken to the safeguarding officer
- Refer the matter immediately to either the Head of Housing and Health or Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships
- Avoid any delay in reporting the cause for concern or disclosure to the designated officer(s) as this could increase the risk to the person concerned
- Keep an accurate factual record that is signed and dated as soon as possible after the disclosure.

### **Don't**

- Promise confidentiality or that you will keep what you are being told secret
- Appear to be shocked or upset by what the person is telling you, even if what they are saying is distressing
- Take the person home
- Touch the person to comfort or reassure them
- Question the person about the alleged abuse, beyond the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged
- Give false reassurances in order to comfort the person

- Stop or interrupt the individual when they are freely recalling significant events
- Make the individual tell anyone else. They may have to be formally interviewed later and it is important to minimise the number of times information is repeated
- Make any suggestions to the person about how the incident may have happened
- Discuss the information with anyone other than a council safeguarding.

## **7. Allegation of abuse by an East Herts Council officer or elected member**

- 7.1 It is essential in all cases of suspected abuse by an officer or elected member that action is taken quickly and professionally in the interest of the person's welfare.
- 7.2 In the rare event that any officer or elected member is suspected of abusing an individual or a previous history of abuse is discovered, it is the responsibility of the individual who becomes aware of this information to discuss their concerns with the Head of Housing and Health or the Head of HR and Organisational Development or the Chief Executive. These officers may determine it appropriate to discuss the matter with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (the council's statutory Monitoring Officer) if the allegation involves an elected member.
- 7.3 If there are allegations that an officer or elected member has abused a child or young person then the Head of Housing and Health or the Head of HR & Organisational Development, with agreement from the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive), will contact the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer ([LADO](#)) to report the matter and seek guidance. The Police are also likely to be contacted through the LADO.
- 7.4 If there are allegations that an officer or elected member has abused an adult at risk, the council will follow the HSAB guidance reoutlined in [Managing Allegations Against People in a Position of Trust](#). It may be determined appropriate to discuss the matter with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (the council's statutory Monitoring Officer) if the allegation involves an elected member.
- 7.5 If it is suspected or reported that an officer is implicated in the abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk the council's Disciplinary Policy will be followed except where the employee is in their probationary period. In that circumstance the Probationary Procedure will be used. This process does not apply to elected members for whom the appropriate process will be determined by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (the council's statutory Monitoring Officer).

- 7.6 Nothing in the council's processes for handling allegations against an officer or elected member replaces the need for the council to refer cases to Hertfordshire County Council, the Police and other agencies as appropriate in line with county-wide safeguarding policies and the requirements under the Children Act 2004 and Care Act 2014.

## 8. Confidentiality and data protection

- 8.1 Employees have a duty to share information relating to a safeguarding concern with either the Head of Housing and Health or the Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships (in the case of suspected abuse by an employee it can be shared with the Head of HR and Organisational Development or the Chief Executive).
- 8.2 Employees must not:
- discuss details of any safeguarding concerns with anyone who does not have a legitimate professional need for the information
  - discuss any safeguarding concerns with any other interested party, including parents and relatives of the child, young person or adult at risk without the express permission of the person with overall responsibility for the investigation.
- 8.3 Consent is not required to breach confidentiality and make a safeguarding referral where:
- a serious crime is believed to have been committed
  - where the alleged perpetrator may go on to abuse others
  - other vulnerable persons are at risk
  - the person at risk is deemed to be in serious risk
  - there is a statutory requirement to do so
  - the public interest overrides the interest of the individual
  - when an employee of a statutory service, a private or voluntary service or a volunteer is the person accused of abuse, malpractice or poor professional standards.
- 8.4 All copies of referrals to Hertfordshire County Council relating to children, young people and adults at risk should be retained by the Head of Housing and Health to ensure confidentiality. This information will be retained in accordance with data protection periods. No other copies should be kept.

## 9. Impacts of the Safeguarding Policy of specific elements of East Herts Council's work

### Homelessness

- 9.1 The council has a legal duty to provide temporary accommodation to individuals whose status and circumstances meet certain criteria as defined in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Employees may need to refer families or individuals to Hertfordshire County Council outside of the safeguarding process, as follows:

Persons affected	Reason for contacting Hertfordshire County Council
Homeless 16-17 year olds	A 16 or 17 year old should be referred to Hertfordshire County Council for assessment to determine if they are a child in need with a duty owed to them by Hertfordshire County Council.
Intentionally homeless household with children	If a household with children is found to be intentionally homeless, Hertfordshire County Council should be advised in writing so that they can ascertain whether a duty is owed under the Children Act 1989.

- 9.2 If children, young people and/or adults at risk are placed in temporary accommodation pending a referral to Hertfordshire County Council, Housing Options Officers should complete a homelessness assessment and identified needs and vulnerabilities should be notified to Hertfordshire County Council.

### Use of Contractors

- 9.3 When procuring contractors to provide public facing services on behalf of the council, tenderers approaches to safeguarding will be part of the tender evaluation process. Lack of appropriate safeguarding policies will exclude a tenderer from being selected.
- 9.4 Any contractor or sub-contractor engaged by the council in areas where workers are likely to come into regular contact with children, young people

or adults at risk, should have its own equivalent safeguarding policies and training, or failing this, must comply with the terms of this policy. This requirement should be written into the contract.

- 9.5 Heads of Service, in consultation with the council's legal services, must take reasonable care that contractors doing work on the council's behalf are monitored appropriately.
- 9.6 Where contact with children, young people and adults at risk is a necessary part of the contracted service, it is the responsibility of the manager who is monitoring the services of the contractor to ensure that satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks have been completed where appropriate.

### **Grant Applications**

- 9.7 All organisations in receipt of grants from East Herts Council must have due regard for this policy as a condition of payment of grant.
- 9.8 In addition, satisfactory DBS checks may be required from appropriate individuals working with children, young people and adults at risk which seek funding from the council. Such requirements are subject to relevant legislation including the 'regulated activity' criteria contained within the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This information will be requested at the application stage and applications will not be processed without the relevant documentation.

### **Licensing**

#### ***Premises***

- 9.9 The council is responsible for carrying out certain licensing functions. Protection of children from harm is a licensing objective that the council is legally obliged to consider as part of its licensing function, for example when licensing, though not limited to, premises under the Licensing Act 2003 or the Gambling Act 2005. This Safeguarding Policy should be referred to as appropriate when assessing license applications.

## **Taxis**

- 9.10 The council sees taxi drivers and operators as being vital in maintaining a vigilant approach to safeguarding in the district. We therefore provide training to all new applicants and at point of license renewal every 3 years.
- 9.11 The council considers taxi drivers and operators conduct with regard to safeguarding as being important in our assessment of whether they are fit and proper to hold a license under the Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976.
- 9.12 The council takes a robust approach to any reports of abuse perpetrated by taxi drivers or operators and will act accordingly.

## **Work Experience**

- 9.13 The council supports work experience placements across the organisation for a number of young people each year. This is beneficial to both the young person and the council. When the council offers a work experience placement, the HR team supports the managers when completing the educational provider's paperwork to ensure appropriate supervision is in place and the responsibilities are clear regarding the young person's health, safeguarding, safety and welfare.
- 9.14 Any student undertaking work experience with the council will be under the supervision of a more senior member of staff.
- 9.15 Any student undertaking work experience with the council is expected to comply with this safeguarding policy.

## **Photography**

- 9.16 Elected members, employees and contractors who use cameras or film recorders for, or on behalf of, the council must have either completed media consent forms from the parents of children being photographed or filmed, or have checked with the parent or guardian, before the activity commences. When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to cover the organisation's services, events and activities, the



council will ensure that expectations are made clear in relation to child protection.

9.17 There are some easy steps to take:

- check the credentials of any photographers and organisations used
- ensure identification is worn at all times
- do not allow unsupervised access to children or adults at risk including through one-to-one photographic sessions
- do not allow photographic sessions outside of the activities or services, or at a child's home
- it is recommended that the names of children or adults at risk should not be used in photographs or footage, unless with the express permission of the parent/carer of the child, young person or adult at risk.

9.18 Employees should contact the council's Communications Team for advice and a copy of the Media Consent Form before the activity commences.

## 10. Official visits and VIPs

10.1 All officers and elected members are responsible for implementing this guidance and managing visitors to services operated by East Herts Council. All officers and elected members have a responsibility to ensure that visitors are welcomed and managed safely. The guidance applies to all visitors equally.

- Ensure there is no risk to the safety of adults and children at risk arising from visits by approved or invited visitors such as VIPs, celebrities or media representatives
- Ensure staff and visitors are aware of their responsibilities
- Ensure systems are in place to effectively manage risks and to ensure that any issues arising are learnt from
- Ensure the council or hosting organisation meets its safeguarding responsibilities.

### Types of visitor

10.2 There are a number of different types of legitimate visitors to services operated by East Herts Council.

- Employees of partner organisations such as funders including the lottery, Sport England and the like.
- Visitors in connection with the building, grounds or equipment i.e. builders, contractors, maintenance contractors.
- Staff working for the local media including journalists or photographers.
- VIPs – Very Important People including celebrities.

10.3 The procedures for ALL visitors are as follows.

- Wherever possible, visits should be pre-arranged.
- All visitors must report to reception or a main entrance first or where visits involve an outdoor space, a meeting point should be agreed.
- All visitors should explain the purpose of their visit and who has invited them.
- All visitors should be ready to produce formal identification.
- All visitors will be asked to sign the visitors' record book where available.
- All visitors should be accompanied by a member of staff at all times when accessing or leaving the premises.
- Visitors should never be left alone with children / adults at risk.

## VIPs

- 10.4 A VIP is usually an external visitor of importance or influence, who commands special treatment. While VIP visits will require special preparations to be made, it is appropriate to acknowledge that officers must not be starstruck in the presence of a VIP.
- 10.5 As fellow citizens, VIPs must abide by the same laws and standards as that of any other citizen. If an officer has any concerns that involve the conduct of a VIP, they must raise such.
- 10.6 The type of VIP visits that may be made include:
- Royalty and Royal Representatives
  - Government (Members of Parliament, including government ministers and politicians)
  - Diplomats and Senior Public Servants
  - Chairpersons/ Chief Executive Officers of major companies and organisations
  - Senior Officers from Charitable Trusts
  - Religious leaders
  - Civic and local community leaders, including the council's own members
  - Notable academics, Olympians, authors, high profile prize winners and those with celebrity status in particular fields such as sport, music, the arts, media including celebrities and who are likely to inspire others.
- 10.7 Important considerations for VIP visits are as follows.
- An invitation to a VIP should be made in advance with sufficient time to enable appropriate planning for a safe and successful visit recognising how the visit will be hosted and importantly who will be escorting and supervising the visitor at all times.
  - In general terms VIPs should be treated in a very similar way to any other visitor but a degree of common sense should prevail i.e. it is unlikely that the King or another senior member of the Royal Family would be expected to show or wear ID. Members of their entourage though should be expected to follow normal procedures. All VIPs and any entourage should be accompanied at all times by a member of staff.

- All visits by media, VIPs, celebrities or other high profile partners must involve the Communications team and the Chief Executive because of the high profile they can attract. Any requests for celebrity or VIP visits must be referred to the Communications team. Discussions as to the appropriateness of the visits to certain locations should then take place with the Named Safeguarding Officer, the Chief Executive and approval sought. Visit supervision may be delegated to service teams, if appropriate.

## 11. Safeguarding training

- 11.1 Safeguarding training is a crucial way in which the contents of this policy are communicated to employees, elected members and volunteers and contractors as appropriate.

### Staff

- 11.2 The council's induction programme for all **new employees** will include safeguarding issues and provide signposting information to key contacts and to the council's policy and training programme.
- 11.3 **All employees** will be required to complete a short awareness training session on a yearly basis through Skills Build (the council's online learning platform). Completion of safeguarding training will be monitored through the Performance and Development Review (PDR) process. Failure to complete safeguarding training will result in the PDR not being signed off which could lead to the disciplinary process being invoked.
- 11.4 Specific or specialist training shall be provided for all **employees who come into direct contact with children, young people and adults at risk** as part of carrying out the requirements of their job. The Head of Housing and Health and the Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships will undertake Designated Officer training every two years in line with requirements. HR staff will be trained in safer recruitment so they can support and train/brief recruiting managers as appropriate.

### Members

- 11.5 Training and awareness-raising extends to the elected members of the council and appropriate training is provided at least once within a member's term with mandatory 'refresher' training as part of the council's ongoing elected member development programme.

### Contractors

- 11.6 Heads of Service and /or contract managers will satisfy themselves, on at least an annual basis, that contractors providing public facing services on behalf of the council will have mechanisms in place to train new starters on safeguarding and provide periodic refresher training to all staff.

## **Taxi drivers and operators**

- 11.7 All new applicants receive training on safeguarding as a condition on being given a license. Furthermore, at point of license renewal refresher training is required.
  
- 11.8 The council consults with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board about which categories of employees require specific training.

## 12. Practice supervision and support

12.1 The council recognises that practice supervision and support is crucial when dealing with safeguarding matters. Handling safeguarding cases is not the full time job of any single East Herts Council officer and so officers will be required from time-to-time to investigate and work on a case when they were, perhaps, not expecting to do so. The very nature of safeguarding means that officers may have to work on something they find upsetting, troubling or even triggering of something difficult in their personal life. Thus, practice supervision to support officers' wellbeing as well as provide a means of maintaining high standards of care and ensuring the safety and protection of vulnerable individuals.

12.2 The council recognises the following benefits of supervision and support for those working on safeguarding cases.

- **Support for officers**

- safeguarding matters can be emotionally demanding and challenging. Practice supervision provides a supportive environment where officers can discuss their experiences, seek emotional support and share the burden of difficult cases
- supervision allows professionals to reflect on their practice, explore their feelings, and gain insights into their reactions and responses to safeguarding issues
- reflective practice enhances self-awareness and helps professionals understand the impact of their work on themselves and others.

- **Quality assurance and accountability**

- practice supervision ensures that professionals adhere to ethical and legal standards in safeguarding practices
- it provides a platform for reviewing and evaluating the quality of safeguarding interventions, helping to maintain high standards of care and accountability.

- **Skill development and continuous learning**

- supervision provides opportunities for skill development and continuous learning. Professionals can receive guidance on best

practices, relevant policies, and legal frameworks related to safeguarding

- it helps ensure that everyone is working within a shared framework and adhering to established protocols and procedures.
- through supervision, professionals have opportunities for ongoing professional development. They can receive feedback on their performance, set goals for improvement, and stay updated on new developments in the field of safeguarding.

- **Risk Management:**

- practice supervision assists in identifying and managing potential risks associated with safeguarding cases. It allows supervisors to assess the level of risk involved and provide guidance on risk mitigation strategies.

12.3 The council will provide officers working on safeguarding cases with the following practical means of supervision and support:

- support and advice from senior officers who have experience of working on safeguarding cases, including line managers providing staff with the opportunities to discuss safeguarding concerns at one-to-one meetings or debriefings
- access to help and advice from the wider network of safeguarding lead officers across Hertfordshire
- access to the council's Mental Health First Aiders
- access to the Employee Assistance Programme.



## 13. Safer recruitment

- 13.1 The council understands the importance of safer recruitment and adheres to a strict Recruitment Policy. Officers can access the Recruitment Policy via the staff intranet.
- 13.2 The council's approach to safer recruitment takes into account the following factors:
- all job descriptions include the duty of safeguarding
  - a statement of commitment to safeguarding is made in job advertisements
  - there is a requirement for applicants to demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, safeguarding, equality and diversity at application and interview stage
  - at least one member of the interview panel must have undertaken appropriate interview training.
- 13.3 Recruiting officers should consult the Recruitment Policy to ensure they understand the safer recruitment process and should contact HR, the Head of Housing and Health or the Service Manager – Community Wellbeing and Partnerships if they are uncertain on any aspects.

## **14. Participating in safeguarding reviews**

- 14.1 On occasion, an incident may take place that requires a professional review if it is found that abuse or neglect resulted in the person being seriously harmed or killed.
- 14.2 Such reviews are typically carried out by an independent person. East Herts Council will participate fully in such reviews.
- 14.3 Relevant reviews consist of:
- Safeguarding Adults Review (SARs)
  - Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs)
  - Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs).
- 14.4 SARs and CSPRs will typically be instigated by Hertfordshire County Council. Similarly, a DHR is very unlikely to be instigated by East Herts Council, however, it is the role of the East Herts Community Safety Partnership, chaired by the council's Chief Executive to determine whether a DHR is triggered following a death in a domestic setting. In all cases, the council's lead safeguarding officer, or deputy, will oversee the council's involvement in the review.
- 14.5 If required to participate in any of these reviews, council officers will:
- gather and secure relevant information, including notes of interviews with relevant officers, as soon as possible
  - complete an Individual Management Review at the earliest opportunity possible without waiting for the formal review to begin
  - participate fully, openly and promptly with the review.

### **Learning from reviews**

- 14.6 The council is committed to learning from (a) reviews in which it has participated, (b) other reviews in Hertfordshire and (c) national SARs, CSPRs and DHRs. To this end, the outcome of reviews will be periodically considered by the council's Safeguarding Policy and Leadership Team and the multi-agency Community Safety Partnership. The focus will be on exploring whether any of the council's policies and practices need to be amended in light of what any particular review has found. If changes do need to be made, the emphasis will be on making the changes as quickly as possible.

## 15. Key contact information

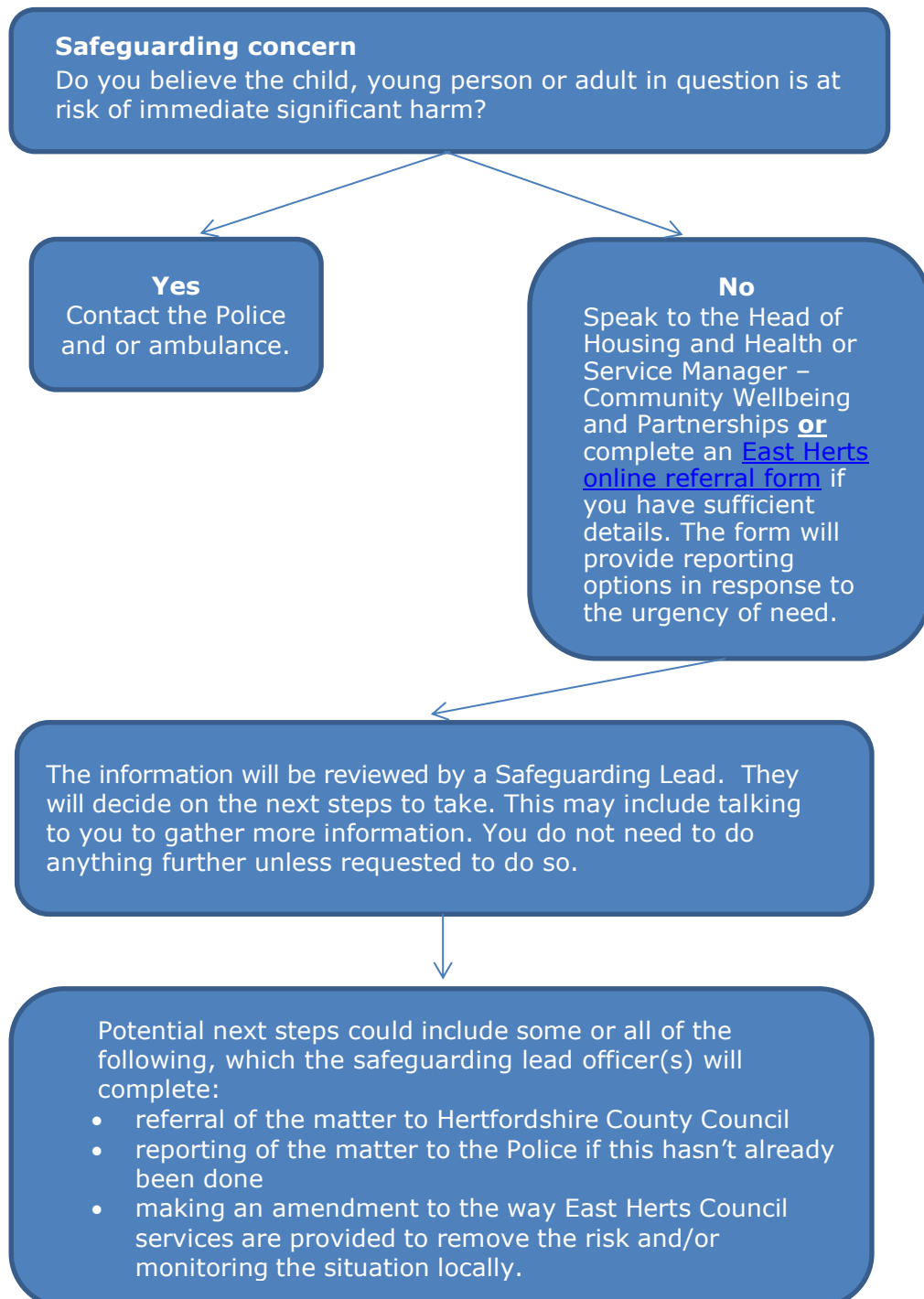
- 15.1 Where an employee, elected member, volunteer or contractor is concerned about the **immediate** safety of a child, young person or adult at risk, they should:
- call the Police on 999
  - call an Ambulance on 999 if the person needs urgent medical assistance.
- 15.2 Where there is not an immediate risk, but there are safeguarding concerns these should be reported via the [East Herts online referral form](#). If you wish to discuss a safeguarding concern either before or after completing the online safeguarding form, you should contact either the Head of Housing and Health or the Service Manager – Community Wellbeing & Partnerships.

## **16. Monitoring and policy review**

- 16.1 Actions required under this policy will be regularly monitored via:
- East Herts Council Safeguarding Policy Group
  - external audits
  - internal audits
  - recording of employee training
  - engagement with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Boards and Partnerships
  - review of the council's Strategic Risk Register.
- 16.2 The council will regularly incorporate any learning taken from national case reviews and embed them into this policy.
- 16.3 The policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there are any changes in legislation or best practice requiring amendments to be made.

## 17. Recording and reporting safeguarding concerns – a quick guide

Here's what to do if you have concerns about the welfare of a child, young person or an adult at risk (sometimes referred to as a vulnerable adult) – **act immediately.**



## Key contact details

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