

Lanchester Parish Council

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Lanchester Parish Council aims to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we may come into contact with and to protect them from harm as a result of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect.

2. Safe Recruitment of staff

Having a sound recruitment procedure is important to ensure that capable, appropriate and safe staff are recruited to work in an environment where children may be present. A clear appointments procedure should include the following processes:

- Vacancy arises
- Job description and person specification
- Advertising
- Applications received
- Short listing
- Interview with occupational testing as appropriate
- References
- Appointment
- Induction
- Probationary period

3. Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Staff and Members who may have substantial unsupervised access to children, young people and vulnerable adults must undertake Disclosure & Barring Service checks.

Lanchester Parish Council identifies its Lead Officer / Clerk and Handyperson as staff who need to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service check. In addition this check must be renewed every three years, to ensure its validity.

The Council acknowledges that although certain Members may consult or work with groups of children and young people, it is unlikely that this is carried out alone or without parental supervision and as such it does not deem it necessary for its members to undertake Disclosure & Barring Service checks. However, members should understand and comply with the information in this policy regarding good working practices.

The public need to be satisfied that staff employed by the Parish Council who may have access to children are recruited and employed on a safe and sound basis.

4. The Use of Contractors

The Parish Council uses contractors to undertake work on its premises and land.

It is expected that any organisation who has their staff working on Parish Council land will ensure that their staff are recruited safely and that it is appropriate for them to work in an area where children, families and young people may be present. The responsibility will lie with the organisation to ensure that staff on council land are appropriately checked.

5. Good Working Practices

It is important that Council staff and Members demonstrate appropriate behaviour to children and young people at all times. All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect children, and should therefore adhere to the following principles:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations) and encourage an open environment (e.g. no secrets).
- Treat all young people/vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children.
- Build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust, which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensure any person working for or volunteering with the council does not transport young people in their car.
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

6. Disclosure of abuse

If a child or young person says or indicates that he/she is being abused (by an adult or another child) or information is obtained which gives concern that a young person is being abused, the following action should be taken:

The person receiving the information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Tell the child he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell someone.

- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Reassure the child, but do not make promises of confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible using the Child Protection Report form in Appendix A
- Inform the Clerk immediately

The person receiving the disclosure should avoid:

- Panicking.
- Allowing their shock or distaste to show.
- Probing for more information than is offered.
- Speculating or make assumptions.
- Making negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Approaching the alleged abuser.
- Making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.
- Non-action is not an option in Child Protection.

It is important to note that it is not your responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has or is taking place, that is the responsibility of the professional bodies to which the matter will be referred.

7. Suspicion of Abuse

If you suspect that a child or young person is being abused through your observations, you should inform the Clerk immediately and complete the Child protection form in Appendix A.

8. Reporting Procedures

A flow chart identifying the route of information is shown at Appendix B. This identifies where, when and to whom the information is passed.

Information passed to Social Care and Health or the Police must be as helpful as possible and it may be used in any subsequent legal action, hence the necessity for making a detailed record.

The report (Appendix A) should be used to record the appropriate information.

9. Records and Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people:

- The designated person in charge (the Clerk or nominated Councillor)
- The person who received the disclosure
- The person making the allegation.
- Appropriate professional bodies i.e. Police, Social Care and Health

10. Indicators of Abuse

Definitions of what constitutes abuse are described in Appendix C. Abuse can happen wherever there are young people, and young people and vulnerable adults of any age can be abused.

The effects of abuse can be so damaging and if untreated, they may follow a person into adulthood.

Indications that a child may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexual explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Has difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

Any one of those behaviours could be related to other family issues such as family upset of parental separation, divorce or bereavement, therefore abuse cannot be assumed in any case.

**Lanchester Parish Council
Child Protection Report Form**

Appendix A

Date reported: _____

Your details

	Person reporting the incident	Person recording the incident
Name		
Job Role		
Knowledge of and relationship to the young person		
Contact Address		
Telephone Number (s)		
E-mail		

Contact details of Child

Full Name			
Date of Birth			
Contact Address			
Telephone Number (s)			
Ethnicity		Disability	

Incident details

Location of incident (if relevant)	
Date and time of incident	

Detailed information (in child's own words if possible)

Details of any observations made by you or to you (e.g. description of visible bruising, other injuries, young persons emotional state). If injuries are present please record size, location and colour, NB – make a clear distinction between what is fact and hearsay.

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Action taken so far

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Alleged / Suspected Abuser’s Details (if known)

Name			
Date of Birth			
Relationship with child			
Occupation			
Address			
Telephone Number (s)			
Ethnicity		Disability	

External Agencies Contacted

Agency	Yes/No	Contact Name	Contact Number	Date	Time	Details of Advice received
Police						
Social Care and Health						
Other						
(Please name)						

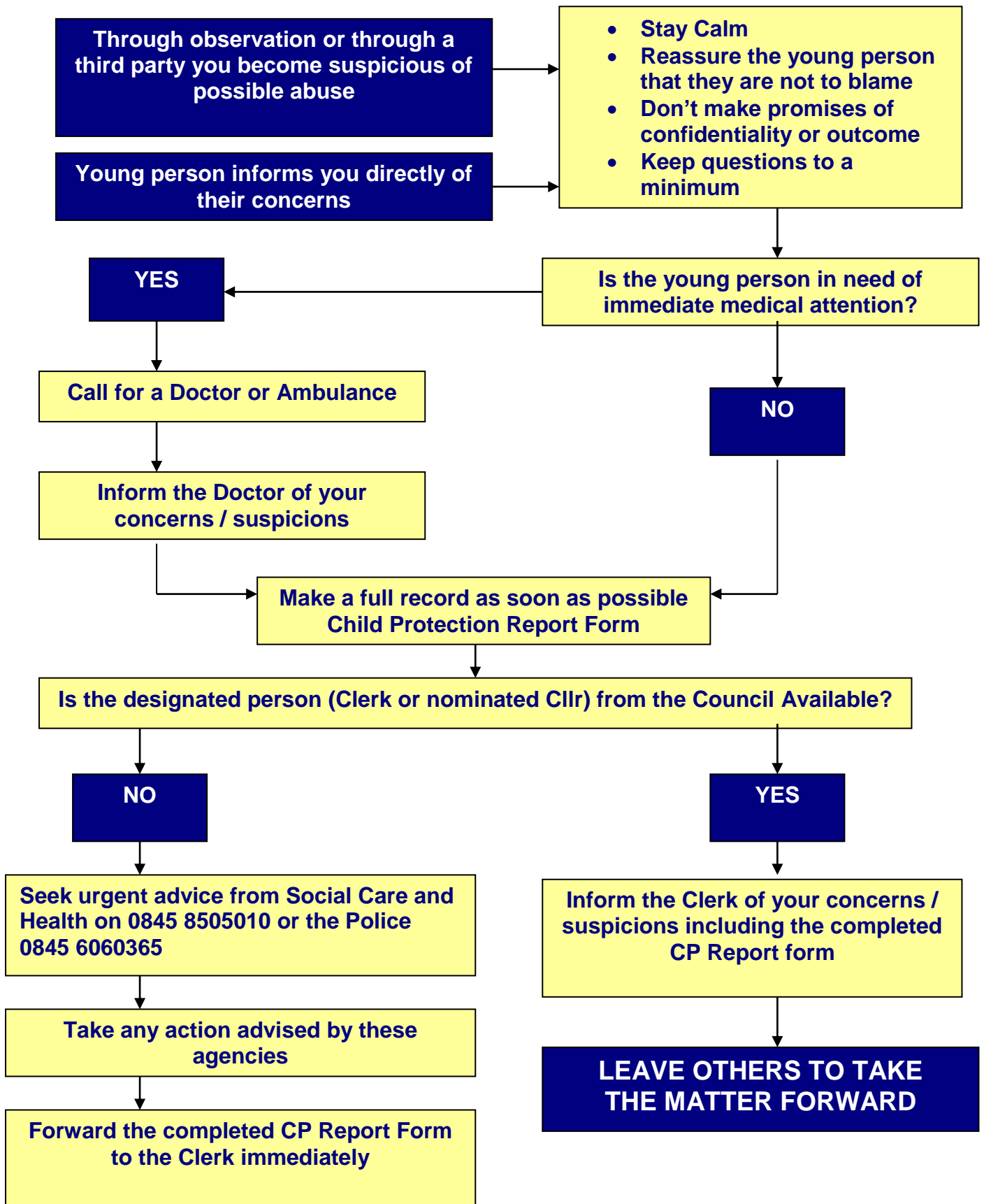
I acknowledge that the details described are accurate and will remain strictly confidential between appropriate reporting channels and myself.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please submit this form immediately to:
Clerk of the Council, Lynwood House, Durham Road, Lanchester DH7 0LS
Tel. 01207 520146

Appendix B

Procedures for responding to disclosure, allegations and suspicions



Appendix C

Definitions of Abuse

Neglect - where adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, it is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development (e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.) It may also include refusal to give children love, affection and attention.

Physical abuse - Where adults and or other young people physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Sexual abuse - where girls and boys are abused by adults (both male and female) and or other young people who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse - is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued

only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child.

In addition to the four main types of abuse, disabled children in residential homes or other institutions might experience:

Institutional abuse - when staff in a home or other institutions sacrifice the needs, wishes and lifestyle of a disabled child in favour of the institution's regime. For example, by showing lack of respect for a child's' dignity or privacy, or denying them opportunity to make day-to-day choices or decisions about their life.

Financial abuse - deliberate misuse and exploitation of a disabled child's' money or possessions. For example, if the child is not allowed to spend their money as they wish, or if someone takes it from them to spend on themselves.