

Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy 2025/26 – 2027/28



Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	10 July 2025
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Joel Charles, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection
Lead Officer:	Sasha Taylor, Director – Public Protection
Contributing Officer:	Christine Howard, Strategic Manager for Community Safety, Youth and Engagement 01279 446192
Key Decision:	Yes
Forward Plan:	Forward Plan Number I018329
Call In:	This item is subject to call in procedures
Corporate Mission:	Protect Our Communities
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Executive Summary

- A** The Building Harlow's Future plan states that the council has six clear missions. Safeguarding comes under every mission; it is everyone's business. Doing nothing is not an option, this report sets out the Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy 2025/26-2027/28. Councils are required to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place, particularly concerning children and adults at risk, to ensure their wellbeing and protection from harm. These are requirements of the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 and, in relation to children, are further detailed in the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 guide.

Recommended that:

- A** The revised and updated Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy covering the period 2025/26 – 2027/28, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved.

Reason for decision

- A** To ensure the council remains compliant with Essex Safeguarding Children Board and Essex Safeguarding Adults Board requirements and can demonstrate best practice in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse or exploitation.

Other Options

- A** None. The council is required, under the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 to have a safeguarding policy in place. Failure to have a policy in place means the council will not be compliant with Essex Safeguarding Children Board and Essex Safeguarding Adult Board requirements and unable to demonstrate that robust safeguarding arrangements are in place to protect children and adults at risk.

Background

1. Primarily this Policy fits under the mission of Protect our communities, but it is everyone's responsibility and therefore runs through every council mission. Protecting our communities is one of the council's six core missions. By ensuring we have robust safeguarding arrangements in place we can effectively recognise and respond to situations where children and adults are, or may be, at risk of abuse or exploitation.
2. The council takes its responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk seriously and has followed all relevant guidance and examples of good practice in the development of its Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy. In doing so, the council has adopted a person-centred approach. This is because making sure more vulnerable people feel confident about seeking help is a council priority.
3. The policy provides clear roles and responsibilities and definitions of safeguarding to ensure officers are aware of their responsibilities when carrying out their roles and know how to act on and report safeguarding concerns.
4. The Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy is made available to all new members of staff during the first week of employment as part of the council's employee induction process. Elected members will also be sent the policy to ensure the council's approach to safeguarding and the process governing it is circulated to all key internal stakeholders.
5. The council continues to include a child and adult safeguarding training module as part of its mandatory training programme which all staff and elected members are required to complete to ensure they have at least a basic understanding and awareness of safeguarding matters and how to recognise and report concerns.

Issues/Proposals

6. All staff, volunteers, elected members and those working for and on behalf of the council will be made aware of the revised and updated policy, and members of the public will be able to access it on the council's website.
7. The Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy has served the council well over the period 2021/22 to 2023/24 therefore changes to this refreshed version have been minimal. Updates include the following:- a new foreword from the Cabinet Member for Public Protection (page 3); reference to the council's commitment to support community initiatives to help raise public awareness and understanding of safeguarding matters (page 5); a short paragraph referencing cases of non-recent abuse (page 16); the addition of the six guiding principles for adult safeguarding (page 13); addition of Appendix A which details legislation and guidance relevant to the policy (page 21) and amendments to the process chart at Appendix C to reflect new reporting pathways (page 27). In addition, all categories and definitions of abuse have been reviewed and updated to reflect the most recent Essex child and adult safeguarding board guidelines.

Implications

Equalities and Diversity

There will be no direct equality and diversity implications as a result of adopting the policy.

Climate Change

There will be no direct climate change implications as a result of adopting the policy.

Finance

There are no direct financial implications included within this report.

Author: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Director – Finance and Section 151 Officer

Governance

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to safeguard child and adults at risk, in accordance with the legislation highlighted above. This policy brings together key aspects of the legislation and statutory guidance and is ready for approval.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy 2025/26 – 2027/28

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

None.