



FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Fordingbridge Town Council, Kings Yard, 23 Salisbury Street, Fordingbridge, SP6 1AB

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SAFEGUARDING

Policy Approved : September 2025

Next review: September 2026

The designated Safeguarding Lead for Fordingbridge Town Council is the Town Clerk.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is protecting people's health, wellbeing and right to live free from harm, abuse or neglect.

It is people and organisations working together to prevent and stop the risk and experience of abuse or neglect.

Public Sector Services can play an important role in safeguarding promoting the welfare of children as part of their day-to-day work, recognising child welfare issues, sharing information, making referrals and subsequently managing or reducing risks.

Introduction

Fordingbridge Town Council (from here on referred to as the Council) believes that the action we take to promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and protect them from harm is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, young people and adults at risk has a role to play.

The aim of this policy is to protect and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk using or receiving services that are provided or commissioned by Fordingbridge Town Council. This policy supports the Council, staff, councillors, contractors and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

Staff, councillors, contractors & volunteers will encounter children, young people and adults at risk in a variety of different situations and roles at the Council. This might be someone you see at the front desk in reception/office, a child in a family you see in a park when you are litter picking or doing grounds maintenance, or a resident you speak to on the phone.

The Council's policy sets out what the potential risks are to children, young people and adults at risk, the ways you can report a concern, how you deal with concerns, or information/allegations of harm disclosed to you. It provides an understanding of safeguarding guidelines and best practice.

"If you see it, say it" is the key message in this policy. We want to give staff, councillors, contractors & volunteers the confidence to know how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns.

The Council is not a Children's Services Authority which is Hampshire County Council. It is not the role of the Council to investigate allegations of abuse by third parties. However, all staff, councillors, contractors and volunteers have a clear responsibility to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child, young person or adult at risk may be a victim of significant harm or abuse.

Fulfilling the Council's Safeguarding Obligations

The Children Act 2004¹ provides statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and specifies what is required of the Council:

- Have a clear statement of the Council's responsibilities towards children and young people be available for staff, councillors, volunteers, contracted services and the public.
- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people available for staff, councillors and volunteers.
- All contracted services and grant funded organisations have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place and are regularly monitored.
- Effective information sharing.

To fulfil its commitment to ensure good working practice in protecting children, young people and adults at risk the Council will undertake the following:

- ✓ Endeavour to keep residents and users of services safe from abuse. Suspicion of abuse will be reported when appropriate.
- ✓ Act in the best interests of the child, young person or adult at risk.
- ✓ Regarding recruitment, ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and adults at risk through robust recruitment procedures.
- ✓ Treat any concern raised by staff, councillors, contractors and volunteers or member of the public appropriately and sensitively.
- ✓ Safeguarding referrals made by staff, councillors, contractor or volunteer cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, the referrers may be required as witnesses. This should not deter you from making the report.
- ✓ Not tolerate harassment of any person who raises concerns of abuse or neglect.
- ✓ Work in co-operation with HCC as required under the relevant legislation and make appropriate changes and amendments to improve the Council's policies and procedure in light of changes to the legislative framework or as recommended by the relevant multi-agency Safeguarding Board.
- ✓ Prevent abuse by using good practice to create a safe and healthy environment and avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse could occur.
- ✓ Ensure that all staff, councillors & volunteers have an awareness and understanding of the policy. Identified roles with a specified safeguarding responsibility should be offered a safeguarding course as required.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

Roles & Responsibilities

This policy applies to all staff, councillors, volunteers or contractors. Everyone is responsible for ensuring that the activities in which they are involved during the course of their work are carried out in accordance with this general policy and related procedures. Safeguarding is included within the terms and conditions of all staff.

If you are a manager, it is your responsibility to ensure it is distributed to all relevant individuals, groups or contractors before they have contact with children, young people and/or adults at risk.

Employees should be able to recognise their responsibilities and be confident in the process of reporting signs of suspected abuse or neglect according to the arrangements set out in this policy.

Employees should be aware that safeguarding information will be shared across other agencies as a result of serious case reviews identifying that information sharing plays a critical role both in detection and prevention of safeguarding issues.

Lead Authority – Hampshire County Council

The key accountability for safeguarding lies with Hampshire County Council, and it is important to note the following:

- It is not the responsibility of any Councillor, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider to determine whether abuse is taking or has taken place.
- **The role of the councillor, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider is only to inform, not to investigate or judge.**
- The Council is only responsible for investigating any safeguarding incidents or allegations, involving a child, young person or adult at risk where allegations are made against a member of staff, councillor or volunteer where usual HR policies will apply.
- If presented by a safeguarding concern, for most staff who do not engage with safeguarding on a regular basis, the priority is to record the details using the **Safeguarding Reporting Form** as soon as possible and liaise with the Safeguarding Lead or their line manager to inform the relevant authority regarding the safeguarding incident.
- The Council may need to engage partner agencies around individuals or supporting families where safeguarding concerns are identified.

Where allegations are made against a member of staff, volunteer or contracted service provider, the matter will be referred to the Town Clerk in the first instance. If the matter concerns the Town Clerk then you need to contact the council's Chair of the Staff and Remuneration Committee. If appropriate, they will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) LADO@hants.gov.uk.

Training

Training needs and opportunities relating to children, young people and adults at risk, safeguarding and protection issues will be identified and addressed through the Council's Induction and Appraisal Procedures, and in response to any changes in legislation. Line managers will keep a record of all staff and volunteers who have received training.

Recruitment

The Council requires staff to have an enhanced DBS check if they have unsupervised contact with children, young people and adults at risk. The Town Clerk and Senior Managers are responsible for deciding which of their staff require a DBS check, the level of check required and for ensuring that DBS checks are kept up to date.

Organisations or contractors undertaking work on behalf of the Council should confirm that they have appropriate DBS checks in place when required. More information is available on the Government's website:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

Procurement, third party service providers, tenants and grant recipients

Where the Council works with, commissions or grant-funds other organisations which encounter children, young people and adults at risk they will be required to have safeguarding arrangements in place or subscribe to the procedures set out in this policy.

Where organisations are delivering services affecting children, young people or adults at risk on behalf of the Council:

- They will be expected to have robust safeguarding procedures in place.
- Contracts, Service Level Agreements or grant approval letters will set out the safeguarding arrangements required. As a minimum, where adults work or volunteer with children or adults at risk, they should be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check or be supervised by a person with a DBS check.

Definitions

Children and Young People

The term 'child' or 'children' applies to children and young people under 18 years of age and statemented ("vulnerable") young people under the age of 25.

The Children Act 1989² sets the legislative framework for child protection in England. Section 47, states that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The lead authority for managing child protection is Hampshire County Council, this is achieved through their Safeguarding Children Partnership. Where there is suspected abuse of a child that is known to the Council a partnership approach will be taken. See the Children Act 2004³ and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018⁴ for statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Adults at risk

An adult at risk is defined as any person aged 18 years and over who is receiving or may need community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

A person's need for additional support to protect them may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

The Care Act 2014⁵ sets down a general duty on all local authorities to promote wellbeing in relation to how adults are treated and includes added responsibility for adult safeguarding.

The Care Act 2014 places a requirement on a local authority, to make or cause safeguarding enquiries, if there is concern that an adult with care and support needs (met or unmet) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse and or neglect. This applies regardless of mental incapacity or capacity and setting.

Recognising Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with children, young people, or adults, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or already has taken place. Whilst it is accepted that staff, councillors, contractors and volunteers are not experts at such recognition everyone has a duty to act if they have any concerns and discuss with the Council's Safeguarding Lead.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents> ³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

Abuse is a form of maltreatment that can occur in several forms which are not mutually exclusive. It includes the following types of abuse as identified in the Working together to safeguard children 2018⁶ and the Care Act 2014:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Child Trafficking
- Physical
- Domestic violence
- Sexual
- Psychological or emotional
- Financial or material
- Modern slavery/Human trafficking
- Discrimination
- Organisational or institutional
- Neglect and acts of Omission
- Self-neglect/Self-injurious

It is important to understand that an adult at risk may be abused by another adult at risk, and equally, a child or young person may be abused by another child or young person.

Further information is available at Appendix A.

Dealing with Safeguarding Issues

The safeguarding flowchart in Appendix B gives an overview of the safeguarding procedure.

The following list of Dos and Don'ts has been produced as a quick and practical guide to dealing with safeguarding issues.

Do

- Call the Police on 999 if you think someone is in immediate risk of harm or danger.
- If you see it, say it – report anything that you feel could be a safeguarding issue.
- Speak to your line manager about any concerns.
- Speak to the Council's Safeguarding Lead (Town Clerk) for further guidance
- Respect the confidentiality of the situation and do not share or discuss information with anyone except on a "need-to-know" basis, as outlined in this document.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

- Remember that the Council's role is not to investigate but to report our concerns to Hampshire County Council.
- Only provide the support specified within your role.
- Be self-aware - particularly of your body language and tone.
- Ensure you set your privacy settings on any personal social media accounts; Always remember to ask for help and support if you need it.

If a child, young person or adult at risk makes a disclosure of abuse or bullying, you should:

- Remember that you may be the first person that a child, young person or adult at risk has trusted and it has probably taken a great deal of courage to tell you that something is wrong. It is rare for children, and particularly young children, to lie about abuse.
- Try to get another witness if it does not compromise the situation.
- Listen carefully to what is said and allow the person to talk at their own pace.
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain it is likely that information will need to be shared with other responsible people.
- Be aware that the child or adult at risk may have been seriously threatened not to tell.
- Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the person – think of how hard it must be to say it. You have been chosen because that person feels they can talk to you. If you show anger, disgust or disbelief then they may stop talking for fear of upsetting you further or feel that your negative feelings are being directed towards them.
- Only ask questions for clarification, the use of open questions e.g., what, where, when, who? is advisable, do not ask leading questions (that suggest certain answers as this could compromise evidence)
- Let them know what you are going to do next and why it is necessary.

As soon as practical, write down everything you have been told, using the Council's Safeguarding Reporting Form.

- Note what was said, using the exact words and phrases spoken if possible.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- Separate out factual information from your own opinion.
- Use a pen or biro with black ink, so that the report can be photocopied. Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.
- Make every effort to preserve any evidence which may be relevant to a police investigation, however taking into account that the wellbeing of the person is your first priority.

- The Safeguarding Lead may have a consultation with Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership or may ask you to help complete a formal referral.

Don't

- Promise to keep anything secret in the event of a safeguarding disclosure.
- Wait to report something if something feels wrong or makes you uncomfortable – trust your instincts.
- Offer help which is not part of your role – it might be appropriate to signpost or clarify the boundaries of your support.
- Give out personal phone numbers or emails – only use work phones.
- Undertake home visits if they have not been approved by your line manager – it is better to arrange appointments in authorised Council meeting rooms.
- Be worried about asking for support from another colleague to sit in on a meeting with you if someone makes a disclosure.
- Arrange meetings outside work hours or in any circumstances that could be misconstrued, e.g., coffee, lunch.
- Give out details of your personal life outside of work.
- Confide in your users of services.
- Engage in safeguarding discussions with anyone on any form of Social Media.
- Do not interrogate or question other than to clarify your understanding. If the matter is to be investigated further, it will be done by trained professionals. No matter how well you know the person, spare them having to repeat themselves over and over. Apart from anything else, the person may begin to think you do not believe them.

Details of how to contact Hampshire County Council:

[Report a Concern - Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(hampshirescp.org.uk\)](http://hampshirescp.org.uk)

Hampshire County Council have staff available 24 hours a day 7 days a week and can be contacted during the day and out of hours regarding safeguarding concerns.

There also lots of information and contacts for other organisations offering support.

Remember that if someone is in immediate danger, please call 999.

There are also contacts for adult services (over 18s) and Children's Services if the child or adult at risk lives in Southampton or Portsmouth.

A list of useful contact details can be found at Appendix D.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act of 2015⁷ places a duty on specified authorities **not including local councils** to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

The Council will ensure that frontline staff where appropriate have a good understanding of the Prevent Strategy aimed at reducing the risk of people being drawn into terrorism. Those roles that have direct contact with children, young people and adults at risk are trained to recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism and are aware of how to refer to programmes to deal with the issue. See [Radicalisation and Extremism - Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(hampshirescp.org.uk\)](http://hampshirescp.org.uk) for more information.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

The Modern Slavery Act 2015⁸ places a duty on specified authorities **not including local councils** to report and provide notification to the National Crime Agency about any potential victims of modern slavery or trafficking that staff encounter. Further information and reporting: <https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report>

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003

The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003⁹ covers abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM is illegal in the UK and it is important that everyone is aware of the issues around FGM including identifying risk factors. Suspicions may arise in several ways that a child is being prepared for FGM to take place abroad. These include knowing both that the family belongs to a community in which FGM is practised and is making preparations for the child to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations or planning absence from school. The child may also talk about a special procedure/ceremony that is going to take place.

Allegations or concerns about a Councillor, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider

It is essential that the Council has clear procedures for dealing with allegations against members of staff, to ensure they are treated fairly and appropriately and to ensure the Council is complying with its statutory duties. You should take the allegation or concern seriously.

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents/enacted>

⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/31/contents>

Immediately inform the Town Clerk or if it relates to the Town Clerk inform the Council's Chair of the Staff & Remuneration Committee.

Record Keeping

- a. To ensure that all the details of the allegation are maintained accurately for use in possible future court proceedings, the Safeguarding Lead/Town Clerk shall ensure that all relevant documentation is collated.
- b. These copies will be always kept securely and **kept for a period of six years.**
- c. Documents associated with allegations against a member of staff will be kept according to usual HR practices.
- d. Where there are concerns about the length of time for which individual records should be kept, see the Data Retention Policy, or seek the advice of the Town Clerk.

Updating the Policy

Fordingbridge Town Council will review this Policy on an annual basis or as appropriate in light of significant legislative changes.

Further guidance and information

Children and Young People

Further guidance including definitions of abuse is available on the Government's website www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/safeguarding-children and includes:

- Preventing neglect, abuse and exploitation (This includes [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))
- Keeping children safe in education and other settings
- Online Safety
- Safeguarding disabled children
- Runaway and homeless children
- Cross-border child protection

Guidance is available from Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership <https://www.hampshirescp.org.uk/> including:

- [Inter-agency referral to Children's Services - Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk)
- [Radicalisation and Extremism - Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [Be Safe Online - Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [Healthy Relationships - Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [Sexual Exploitation - Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

The Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has a lot of useful information about a range of safeguarding topics for professionals, parents & carers and children with contacts for other safeguarding organisations.

Adults at risk

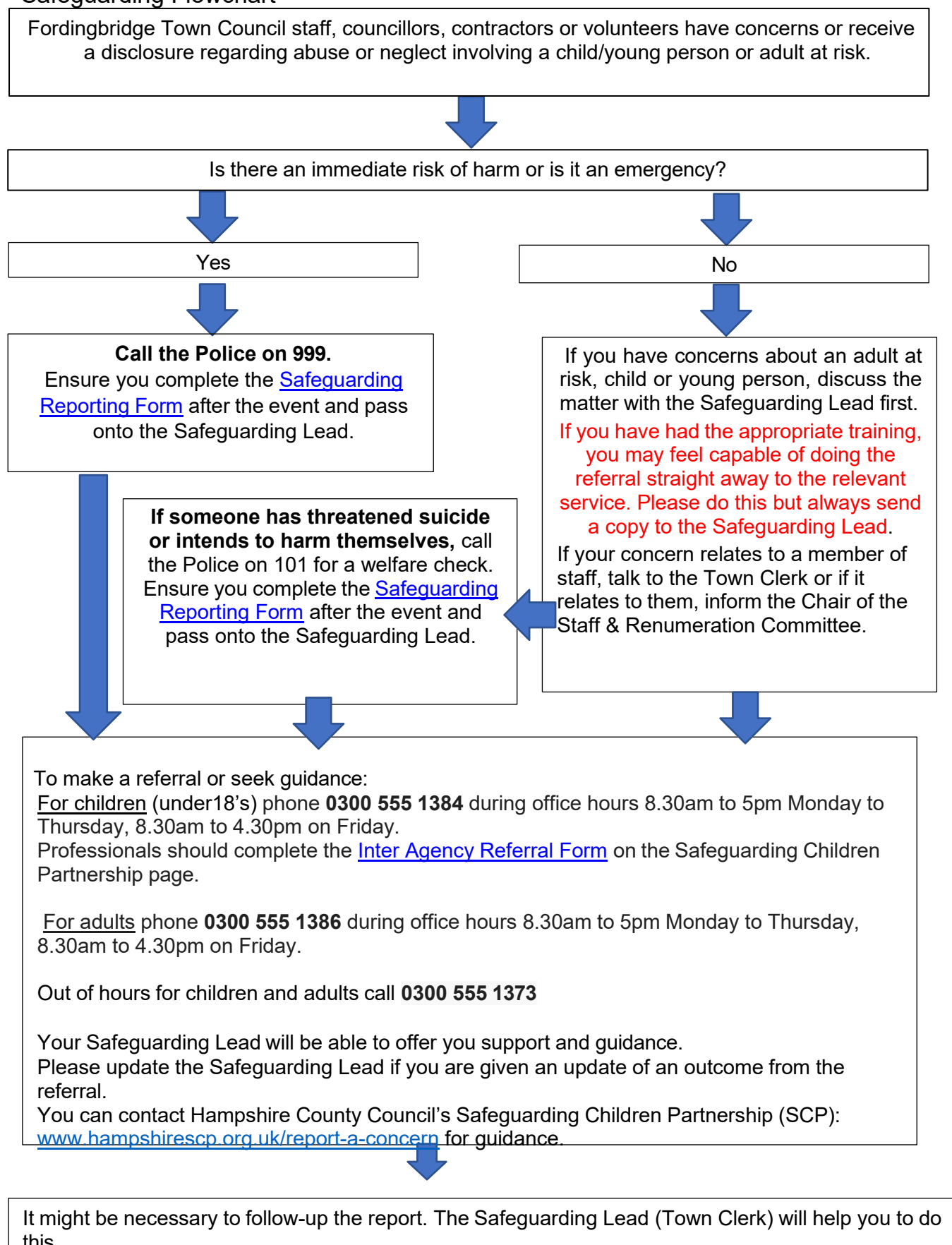
See Hampshire's Safeguarding Adults Board website: <https://www.hampshiresab.org.uk> which details useful local and national legislation and guidance. It includes:

- What is neglect or abuse?
- Keeping Safe
- Reporting Concerns

There is lots of other helpful information and contacts around adult safeguarding,

Information sharing Hampshire guidance: <https://hipsprocedures.org.uk/skyytg/safeguarding-partnerships-and-organisational-responsibilities/information-sharing>

Safeguarding Flowchart



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- If you see it, say it – report anything that you feel could be a safeguarding issue.
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- Speak to the Council's Safeguarding Lead/Town Clerk for further guidance.
- Respect the confidentiality of the situation and do not share or discuss information with anyone except on a "need-to-know" basis, as outlined in this document.
- Remember that the Council's role is not to investigate but to report our concerns to Hampshire County Council.
- Only provide the support specified within your role.
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- Let them know what you are going to do next and why it is necessary.

As soon as practical, write down everything you have been told, using the Council's Safeguarding Reporting Form.

- Note what was said, using the exact words and phrases spoken if possible.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- Separate out factual information from your own opinion.
- Use a pen or biro with black ink, so that the report can be photocopied. Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.
- Make every effort to preserve any evidence which may be relevant to a police investigation, however taking into account that the wellbeing of the person is your first priority.
- The Safeguarding Lead may have a consultation with Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership or may ask you to help complete a formal referral.

Don't

- Promise to keep anything secret in the event of a safeguarding disclosure.
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Useful Contact Numbers

- If someone is in immediate danger of risk of harm call police on 999 or 101 for a welfare check
- Contact Hampshire County Council's Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP): www.hampshirescp.org.uk/report-a-concern for guidance.
- For children (under 18's) phone 0300 555 1384 during office hours 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday.
- Professionals should complete the [Inter Agency Referral Form](#)
- For adults' phone 0300 555 1386 during office hours 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday.
- Out of hours for children and adults call 0300 555 1373
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection. You can make a report by visiting the CEOP website <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> or by calling Childline 0800 1111
- If you are worried about a child or young person, you can contact the NSPCC helpline for support and advice for free: 0808 800 5000. For more information about safeguarding: [Safeguarding children and child protection | NSPCC Learning](#)

Safeguarding Reporting Form

**FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
SAFEGUARDING – REPORTING FORM**

Staff, Councillors, Contractors and Volunteers should use this form if they have witnessed a child, young person or adult at risk being abused, a child, young person or adult at risk has disclosed that they are being abused or they suspect a child, young person or adult at risk is being abused. Please refer to the Policy for the protection of children, young people and adults at risk before completing this form. Don't worry if you don't know all the answers- complete with as much information as possible. Your line Safeguarding Lead/Town Clerk can give support.

Please use the back of this form to provide additional information if required.

Name of person reporting the incident and contact details (including phone number)

Name of Child, Young Person, Adult at risk

Date of Birth of Child, Young Person, Adult at risk

Address of the Child, Young Person, Adult at risk

Date and time of allegation or suspicion

Description of the allegation or suspicion

Observation of the emotional state (or physical state if appropriate)

Record of what the child/witness has said.

Any other comments

Name of Staff Member/Councillor/Contractor/Volunteer

Print Name:

Signature:

Date:

This form should be completed as soon as practicably possible after the complaint has been raised and passed immediately to the Safeguarding Lead/Town Clerk

For office use only:

Safeguarding Lead (Town Clerk) Received Date:	
Referral Made: to HCC Inter Agency Referral Form	Yes / No
Follow up action:	