

Summary for Safeguarding discussion

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people—especially children, young people and vulnerable adults—to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Leigh Town Council has a duty to ensure that the children, young people and vulnerable adults that we work with are adequately safeguarded.

What steps should be taken?

- There is a tendency to assume that if everyone has a DBS, then we have met our obligations. Often, the better step is to ensure that we don't permit situations where children, young people and vulnerable adults are not on their own with a volunteer, external contractor or member of staff. This is to protect not just our users but our staff, volunteers and contractors.
- It is also important that we communicate clearly to users what steps we take and don't take – for example, parents often assume that we DBS all hirers that use our rooms. As far as I am aware, we don't and personally, I am not sure it would be workable. However, we need to ensure this decision is communicated to parents. For example, a statement on the Community Centre noticeboard, such as 'Leigh Town Council does not inspect DBS certificates for its hirers. Parents and carers are recommended not to leave children, young people and vulnerable adults alone.' (I'm sure this could be better worded!)

What is a DBS?

A DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check is a background check by the Council on a person's criminal record. It is commonly used to vet potential employees or volunteers and assess their suitability for an organization. Enhanced DBS checks are mandatory for roles that involve working with children.

However

- a DBS is simply a check at a point of time. I could have a DBS and then carry out an 'infringement' and still continue in my role. For this reason, many organisations - eg schools - ask for regular DBS checks (eg every three years).
- There have been many situations where a serious crime has been committed (eg fraud against an elderly, vulnerable person) but it has never been reported to authorities. People like this would pass a DBS check but obviously we would not want them eg volunteering with our elderly residents. For that reason, steps such as ensuring volunteers are never alone with users are very important, perhaps just as important as a DBS.
- A DBS check requires private information. The request/recording/ retention of this information must be carefully managed – in accordance with employee rights and GDPR.

Next steps

In my opinion, the next steps are as follows

- An assessment of our safeguarding risks and their inclusion on our risk register. I have attached a draft which we could include on the register with your input/ suggested changes.
- An up-to-date safeguarding policy that answers those risks. I have attached our current safeguarding policy with suggested amendments for us to discuss

Draft Risk Assessment

These are some preliminary suggestions not exhaustive and open to challenge!

SAFEGUARDING

Subject	Risks Identified	H/M/L	Management / Control of risk	Review/ Assess/ Revise
Users, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults	Failure to safeguard children or vulnerable adult e.g. Lost Children services	?	<p>Trained safeguarding officer in position.</p> <p>All staff and councillors to receive safeguarding training.</p> <p>Safeguarding policy reviewed annually. Steps followed up by safeguarding officer. Eg volunteer policy/ training</p> <p>Ensure that parents and carers are advised that external hirers are not DBS checked by the council and that parents/ carers must not leave children, young people and vulnerable adults unattended.</p> <p>Ensure that for any events arranged by the council, that any contractor provides a copy of their ID, DBS and safeguarding</p>	Review

			<p>policy (plus insurance)</p> <p>Ensure any volunteers and appropriate staff (councillors?) are DBS checked.</p>	
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