

Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council



Safeguarding Policy

Review Date: Annually

Version Control

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding is a statutory responsibility across all public services in Wales. Every Councillor, employee, volunteer, contractor and partner organisation has a duty to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are protected from abuse, neglect and harm.

Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) and Working Together to Safeguard People (Part 7 statutory guidance), all relevant partners must report any child, young person or adult at risk where there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse, neglect or harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's business. As your policy states, all individuals have the right to be safe "regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or circumstances".

2. Policy Statement

Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council (BTMCC) is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk by ensuring that our services, activities and premises promote wellbeing, safety and prevent abuse.

The Council recognises that:

- Anyone working with or on behalf of the Council owes a duty of care.
- The Council provides facilities and services that may involve contact with children, young people and adults at risk.
- Safe recruitment, training and supervision are essential to preventing harm.
- Effective safeguarding depends on multi-agency working.
- All Councillors, staff and volunteers must identify concerns and report them promptly.
- Safeguarding links to other Council policies including health and safety, equality, data protection and risk management.

3. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Clerk to the Council is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL is responsible for:

- receiving and recording safeguarding concerns
- providing advice to Councillors, staff and volunteers
- making referrals to statutory agencies
- maintaining secure safeguarding records
- ensuring training and policy compliance
- acting as the Council's liaison with Caerphilly County Borough Council Social Services, Gwent Police and other safeguarding partners.

A Deputy DSL will be considered and appointed if deemed essential.

4. Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council Commits to:

- Clear lines of accountability for safeguarding.
- Clear reporting procedures and guidance.
- Designing services and activities that promote safety and wellbeing.
- Safe recruitment and vetting of staff and volunteers.
- Mandatory safeguarding training for all Councillors, staff and volunteers.

- Maintaining secure safeguarding records for monitoring and audit.
- Ensuring hirers of Council premises have appropriate safeguarding arrangements.
- Promoting a culture where safeguarding concerns are raised without fear.

5. Policy Definitions

Children and Young People - Anyone under the age of 18 years.

Adult – Anyone over the age of 18 years

At risk – Those who are:

- experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect
- exhibiting needs for care and support
- because of those needs, are unable to protect themselves

Councillors, Employees and Volunteers- Anyone working for, or on behalf of Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council whether paid or voluntary.

Abuse - a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons which results in significant harm. (In Safe Hands, National Assembly for Wales July 2000)

Safeguarding - the actions taken to keep children, young people and adults safe from abuse, neglect or harm, and to promote their wellbeing. It's about noticing when someone might be at risk, doing the right thing to protect them, and making sure services and environments are safe for everyone.

Regulated activity - This describes certain types of work with children, young people or adults at risk that are considered high-risk and therefore require the strictest level of vetting — including an Enhanced DBS check with a barred-list check. Regulated activities might arise when personnel are required to:

- Run or supervise youth activities
- Work directly with children, young people or adults at risk
- Provide one-to-one support
- Provides personal care or transport for at risk individuals
- Consult with contractors or hirers who use council premises for activities involving children, young people and adults at risk.

Digital Safeguarding - protecting people from online harm, including grooming, bullying, exploitation, inappropriate communication or unsafe sharing of images or information.

6. Safe environments

Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council will:

- Provide safe, accessible facilities.
- Conduct regular risk assessments of buildings, events and activities.
- Ensure safeguarding is considered in all Council decisions.
- Require hirers running activities for children or adults at risk to have their own safeguarding policy and appropriate DBS checks.
- Ensure contractors understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

7. Safer Recruitment

Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Community Council will

- Clearly state in job/volunteer adverts when a role involves regulated activity.
- Require Enhanced DBS and barred-list checks where legally required.
- Make all offers conditional on satisfactory checks.

- Maintain a secure record of DBS checks and renewal dates.
- Require new checks when roles change to include regulated activity.
- Reassign or withdraw duties where checks indicate unsuitability.
- Take immediate action if an individual becomes barred during employment.

8. Training

All Councillors, staff and volunteers must complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

- Basic safeguarding awareness – required for all.
- Role-specific training – required for those in regulated activity.
- Refresher training – every 3 years or sooner if legislation changes.

The DSL will maintain a training log.

9. Reporting concerns

All Councillors, staff and volunteers must remain vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or harm.

Concerns may relate to:

- physical, emotional, sexual or psychological abuse
- financial exploitation
- sexual exploitation or grooming
- neglect or self-neglect
- discriminatory abuse
- organisational abuse
- online abuse

Anyone who suspects harm must report immediately to:

- The DSL (Clerk)
- If unavailable, Caerphilly IAA Service
 - Adults: 0808 100 2500
 - Children: 0808 100 1727

Reports must be factual, timely and recorded using the Council's safeguarding form.

10. Whistleblowing

The Council encourages anyone with concerns about unsafe practice, misconduct or failure to follow safeguarding procedures to report this without fear of reprisal.

Concerns can be raised with:

- the DSL
- the Chair of Council
- Caerphilly Social Services
- Gwent Police

11. Record Keeping and Data Protection

The Council will:

- Keep safeguarding records securely and separately from personnel files.
- Restrict access to the DSL and Chair.
- Retain records for at least 7 years, or longer if required by law.
- Dispose of records securely.

- Comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

12. Investigation and Disciplinary Action

The Council will investigate all safeguarding concerns in line with disciplinary procedures.

Where appropriate, concerns will be referred to:

- Caerphilly County Borough Council Social Services
- Gwent Police
- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Suspension may be used where necessary to protect individuals or the investigation.

Misconduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

13. Duty to Refer to the DBS

The Council has a legal duty to refer individuals to the DBS where:

- they have harmed or may harm a child or adult at risk
- they are dismissed or removed from regulated activity due to safeguarding concerns
- they resign before disciplinary action can be taken

14. Preventing Radicalisation

Although community councils are not specified authorities under the Prevent Duty, vulnerability to radicalisation is recognised as a safeguarding concern.

The Council will report concerns to the DSL, who will liaise with Social Services or Police as appropriate.

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.