



**Wareham Town Council  
And  
Wareham Town Museum**

**CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULTS' PROTECTION  
POLICY**

## **Policy Statement**

Wareham Town Council (“the Council”) and Wareham Town Museum (the “Museum”) are committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Council or Museum.

The Council and Museum recognises that service users must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse wherever and however it might occur, within the family, others or from abusive behaviour on the part of the service’s staff. It takes every possible action to prevent abuse and to deal with it promptly and effectively if it occurs or is reported as occurring.

## **Policy Objective**

To ensure that, where possible all facilities and activities offered by the Council and Museum are designed and maintained to limit risk to children and vulnerable people.

To promote the general welfare, health, and development of children by being aware of child protection issues and to be able to respond where appropriate as a local government organisation.

To develop procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect.

As the Council or Museum do not directly provide care or supervision services to children, it expects all children using its facilities to do so with the consent and the necessary supervision of a parent or other responsible adult.

The Council and Museum undertake to work in compliance with No Secrets (the Department of Health guidance on multi-service policies and other national policy documents and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse) as well as observing the relevant sections of CQC’s Essential Standards. The Council and Museum both work in accordance with local Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults protocols and multi-service working guidelines (these should be available from the principal authority’s Safeguarding Protection of Vulnerable Adults unit).

The Council and Museum recognise that service users who might lack mental capacity are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. It is accordingly mindful of the need to follow the principles and practice guidance that has accompanied the Mental Capacity Act 2005. These apply particularly to investigations of possible abuse in which it is important to seek means of ascertaining the experiences and views of any victim or indeed alleged perpetrator who might lack capacity, for example, by seeking the services of independent advocates. (See also the Council and Museum’s policy on Working with Service Users who Might Lack Mental Capacity).

The Council and Museum make all staff aware of the policy and instruct them in the specific procedures for preventing, observing and reporting suspicions or signs of abuse. In reporting possible abuse, staff are made fully aware of the service’s whistleblowing policy, which recognises that the safety of service users is always their paramount concern. All service users and stakeholders are made aware of the Council and Museum’s determination to take action where it comes across abuse. (See also policy on Whistleblowing.)

## **Aims**

The aim of this policy document is to guide staff, members and volunteers of Wareham Town Council and Wareham Town Museum should any child protection issue arise during their

work.

## **Principles**

The policy is based on the service's conviction that:

- vulnerable people are at risk of abuse in varied forms
- they are in a position to be abused by different people, including family members, friends, strangers and possibly service staff.
- it has a duty of care to do everything possible to prevent, report and tackle abuse wherever it is encountered.

## **Recognising Abuse**

The Council and Museum expect their staff to be vigilant regarding the welfare of service users. It provides staff training so that they can recognise the risks and signs of abuse. It acknowledges that abuse may take any of the following forms and more than one might be present in an abusive situation:

- physical abuse
- neglect
- psychological abuse
- financial or material abuse
- sexual abuse
- racial, discriminatory, religious or cultural abuse
- failure to prevent self-harm
- inhuman or degrading treatment.

## **Responsibilities and Procedures**

The role of Child Protection Officer will be appointed to the Town Clerk, or Deputy Clerk in the Town Clerk's absence, and his/her responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring that before any Council or Museum organised event with children or vulnerable people, the Child Protection Officer has briefed participants appropriately.
- Ensuring that members are aware of the risk they may face in certain circumstances whilst carrying out their duties.
- Ensuring that whilst Council members are unlikely to be involved with children during the performance of their duties, they are mindful of the risk they face.
- Ensuring that before any volunteers or paid members of staff are recruited to work with children and vulnerable people they are interviewed, and two references taken up.
- Such employees will be required to have a DBS check made by the Council and a risk assessment be carried out.
- All new Councillors are to be provided with a copy of the child protection policy and are required to acknowledge they will abide by it.

Councillors and staff will adhere to the 'List of Recommended Behaviour' namely:

- A minimum of two adults present when supervising children.
- Not playing physical contact games.
- Adults to always wear appropriate clothing
- Ensure that accidents are recorded in an accident book.
- Never do anything of a personal nature for a young person.

Staff and volunteers must:

- Avoid one-to-one situations with children or vulnerable adults.
- Never engage in inappropriate physical contact or language.
- Obtain written consent for photography or digital media use.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.

## **Reporting Abuse**

Any member of staff who knows or believes that abuse is occurring has an obligation to report it as quickly as possible to their manager. If the victim requests that the matter should not be reported, the staff member should inform them that they have a duty to report the matter. The staff member should then reassure the service user that the matter will not be taken further than the manager without their consent unless there are exceptional circumstances. The service will take vigorous action against anyone trying to suppress a possible report of abuse.

## **Action in Emergency Situations**

If the situation is an emergency, with a service user in immediate danger, staff are instructed to call for assistance immediately. They should give any necessary first aid and contact appropriate emergency services if necessary. If the abuser remains present and poses a threat to any service staff present as well as the victim, staff are not expected to put themselves at risk of violence or other harm. They should then put into action service procedures on how to respond to abusive, aggressive or violent behaviour, which forms part of the service's policies on health and safety of its staff. (See policy on dealing with violence and aggression.)

## **Immediate Action to be Taken by Managers**

When a manager receives a report of suspected, imminent or actual abuse, an investigation must be opened as soon as possible. The staff member investigating the abuse takes steps to arrange for the service user to be interviewed and, if possible, to give their consent to further investigation and action. If the service user refuses consent, their wishes must be respected unless the manager judges that they or others are in serious danger or if they are clearly incapable of making an informed decision.

In cases of proven or suspected incapacity, the manager acts in accordance with the "best interests" principle laid down in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and pursues the matter by obtaining the services of an independent advocate or another independent representative to elicit the service user's views and wishes.

If the suspected abuser is a member of the service's staff, the manager takes appropriate steps under the disciplinary procedure. The service expects its staff to take all possible steps to co-operate with further investigations by the local authority safeguarding unit, CQC investigating inspectors and the police if involved.

## **Referral to External Agencies**

Where the vulnerable person is thought to be at risk of further abuse, the situation should be reported as soon as possible to the manager of the principal authority's safeguarding unit who will take a decision on whether further investigation is needed under the principal authority's safeguarding procedures.

## **Reporting to the Police**

If it is suspected that a criminal act might have been committed, the situation will be reported to the police. Every effort should be made not to interfere with possible evidence.

## **Action Generally**

Records of all incidents or allegations made by any young person or vulnerable adult to any committee member, member of staff or volunteer will be kept in an incident book. The incident book will be presented to the Town Council full meeting for inspection at least annually if any allegations or incidents take place.

In the event of a contractor working directly for the Council or Museum who is deemed to be working in any area where children may be at risk, then that contractor will be asked to provide their Child Protection Policy.

## **Declaration**

Wareham Town Council and Wareham Town Museum are fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children by protecting them from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect.

All members of Wareham Town Council should read the Council's Child Protection Policy. Having read the Policy, they should be proactive in providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable people who are involved in Town Council activities.

This Policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of adoption, or sooner if there are any legislation changes.