

**Safeguarding Children and Young People, Adults at Risk and Managing Domestic Abuse: Policy and Procedure**



Date: February 2014

## How this Policy Document Works

The Council is required to have policies in place which outline its response to Safeguarding Children, and Safeguarding Adults at Risk.

This combined safeguarding policy is split into three distinct sections:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk
- Domestic Abuse

Each section is designed to stand alone; therefore there is some duplication across the three sections. Please be aware that although the general reporting procedures are the same for children and adults at risk and some of the signs to look out for are similar, there are differences across the sections.

<b>Section 1</b>	Section 1 of this policy sets out how West Lindsey District Council will respond to safeguarding <b>children and young people</b>
<b>Section 2</b>	Section 2 of this policy sets out how West Lindsey District Council will respond to safeguarding <b>adults at risk</b>
<b>Section 3</b>	Section 3 of this policy sets out how West Lindsey District Council will respond to <b>domestic abuse</b>

## Policy Statement

West Lindsey District Council accepts the social, moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for children, young people, adults at risk and anyone at risk of, or experiencing domestic abuse, to safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or provided by the Council.

The purpose of this Policy and its associated procedures is to help protect children, young people, adults at risk and anyone at risk of, experiencing domestic abuse and to protect West Lindsey District Council, its staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone else working on behalf of and / or representing the council.

### Policy Aims

- Raising awareness of the duty of care and responsibilities relating to safeguarding throughout the council
- Actively encouraging good practice amongst all staff, elected members, volunteers and anybody else working for and / or on behalf of the council and promoting wider awareness wherever possible (for example, partner organisations and service user groups)
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all of our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur

- Listening to, respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of everyone using or engaging with our services
- Minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies
- Recruiting, training, supervising and supporting staff, elected members and volunteers appropriately and in accordance with [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS) guidance
- Responding to any allegations appropriately
- Ensuring that anybody who undertakes work for the council has appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place

### Policy Objectives

- To provide appropriate training for staff, elected members and volunteers to enable them to recognise the potential signs and indicators of abuse and to continually develop good practice
- To maintain a record of all training undertaken by staff and to monitor outstanding training needs
- To support staff, elected members, volunteers and others working for and / or on behalf of the council to respond sensitively and seriously to disclosures or information about abuse and be confident and able to take appropriate action swiftly, regardless of whom the allegation is about (for example, carer / staff member)
- To maintain good working practices at all times
- To promote the general welfare and wellbeing of everyone who accesses or engages with our services
- To develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to incidents or accidents
- To develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to complaints or alleged abuse

## Safeguarding is Everyone's Business

This policy affects every West Lindsey District Council staff member, Elected Member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and / or representing the council.

The aims of the policy are extremely important to the health and wellbeing of children, young people, adults at risk and anyone who is experiencing or is at risk of domestic abuse. As such, the council expects all employees to understand the need for the policy and to comply fully with it. **If any employee finds that for whatever reason they do not believe that they can comply with this policy and associated procedures, they must notify the lead safeguarding officer immediately.**

## Reporting Concerns

Throughout each section of the policy you will see the 'jigsaw' logo. **To report a concern, you can click on this logo anywhere in the policy or on Minerva.** This will enable you to forward your concerns using an online reporting form which will be sent automatically to the Corporate Safeguarding Officers.



Alternatively, and for staff without ICT access; please telephone the Safeguarding Officers on **01427 675199** to report a concern.

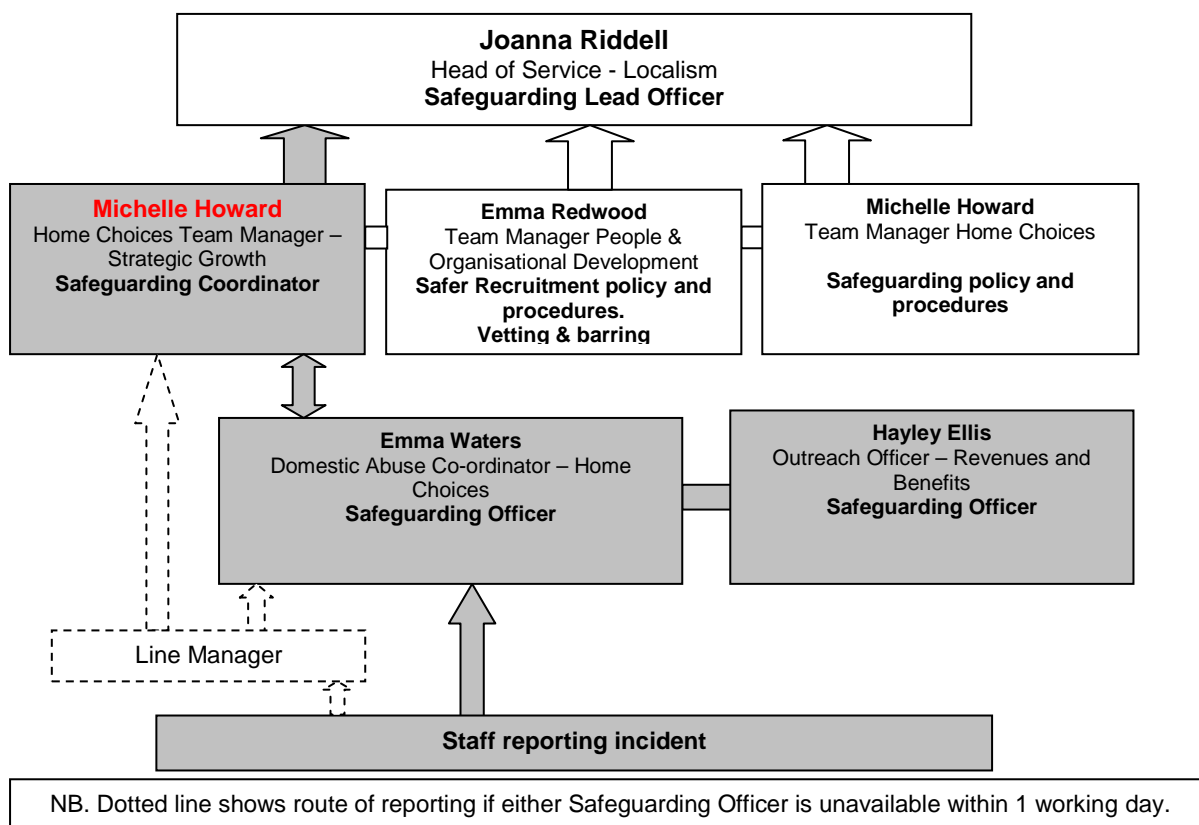
## West Lindsey District Council – Corporate Safeguarding Structure

Whilst safeguarding is everyone's business, the council has named officers who take responsibility for:

- supporting officers to report concerns
- developing and reviewing policies and procedures
- working in partnership with other organisations to develop best practice and shared learning
- providing training for staff and elected members
- providing training to all new staff and elected members as part of the council's induction process
- ensuring compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act (as demonstrated through the Section 11 assessment)
- engaging in serious case reviews and domestic homicide reviews
- hosting a safeguarding working group that is represented by all service areas and by elected member champions

The West Lindsey District Council corporate safeguarding structure is set out on the following page.

## WLDC Corporate Safeguarding Structure (February 2014)



## Corporate Safeguarding Structure – Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Overview of Responsibilities	Corporate Lead Officer(s)
<b>Safeguarding Lead Officer</b>	<p>The safeguarding lead officer will represent the council on safeguarding matters at an external and strategic level and has overall responsibility for ensuring the council is meeting its safeguarding requirements.</p> <p>The safeguarding lead officer will also represent the council in the instance of any serious case review or domestic homicide review.</p> <p>The safeguarding lead officer will be the council spokesperson in the event of any public / media enquiries.</p>	<b>Joanna Riddell –</b> Head of Service, Localism
<b>Safeguarding Coordinator</b>	The safeguarding coordinator will represent the council on safeguarding matters at an external and strategic level and is responsible for implementing the	<b>Michelle Howard –</b> Team Manager, Home Choices

	<p>safeguarding agenda for the council.</p> <p>The safeguarding coordinator will oversee and support safeguarding officers with safeguarding concerns and incident reports for the council.</p> <p>The safeguarding coordinator will brief the safeguarding lead officer in relation to any serious incidents dealt with by the council.</p> <p>The safeguarding coordinator will be the council spokesperson in the event of any public / media enquiries in the absence of the safeguarding lead officer.</p>	<p>(nb: temporary arrangement)</p>
<p><b>Safeguarding Officers x 2</b></p>	<p>The safeguarding officers have operational responsibility for receiving all safeguarding concerns and incident reports for the council. In this capacity, safeguarding officers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review incident reports and concerns with the person who reported the incident</li> <li>- Decide on the next course of action and deal with any referral that needs to be made</li> <li>- Keep a record of every report and actions taken</li> <li>- Follow up referrals with LCC / Police</li> <li>- Feedback as appropriate to the person who reported the incident</li> <li>- Attend case conferences or multi-agency meetings as required</li> </ul> <p>The safeguarding officers will brief the safeguarding coordinator in relation to any incidents they have dealt with.</p>	<p><b>Emma Waters –</b> Domestic Abuse Coordinator, Home Choices</p> <p><b>Hayley Ellis -</b> Outreach Officer, Revenues and Benefits</p>
<p><b>Safer Recruitment Lead</b></p>	<p>Employers need to identify candidates who may be unsuitable for certain jobs, especially work that involves vulnerable groups including children. The safer recruitment lead will ensure that West Lindsey District Council makes safe recruitment decisions in line with the requirements of the <a href="#">Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)</a>.</p>	<p><b>Emma Redwood –</b> Team Manager, People and Organisational Development</p>


<p><b>Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Lead</b></p>	<p>The safeguarding policy and procedures lead will ensure that the Council's safeguarding policy is up to date; is revised on an annual basis and in response to legislative changes; and that the principles of the policy and procedures are embedded throughout the organisation.</p> <p>The safeguarding policy and procedures lead will coordinate the Council's Section 11 self-assessment, external audit and associated actions plan.</p>	<p><b>Michelle Howard –</b> Team Manager, Home Choices</p>
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**Elected Member Champions**

West Lindsey District Council has identified two elected member champions for safeguarding. These members will join the West Lindsey District Council safeguarding working group and will assist with safeguarding awareness and policy review. The members appointed to be safeguarding champions are: Cllr Gillian Bardsley Cllr Angela Lawrence.

**Domestic Abuse Champions**

A number of West Lindsey District Council officers have received extensive training regarding domestic abuse awareness, risk assessment, target hardening and support, refuge accommodation and safety planning.

	<p><b>Domestic Abuse Champions</b></p> <p>If you are concerned about domestic abuse and would like further advice or information you can contact any of the people listed below:</p> <p>Emma Waters (Domestic Abuse Coordinator)</p> <p>Michelle Howard (Home Choices Team Manager)</p> <p>Rachel Cooper (Senior Home Choices Officer)</p> <p>Paula Clarke (Home Choices Officer)</p> <p>Hayley Ellis (Outreach Officer – Revenues and Benefits)</p>
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**NOTE: Disclosure and Barring Service**

The DBS was established under the [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#) and started operating on 1 December 2012. It carries out the functions previously undertaken by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for England and Wales and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### Monitoring and Review

Each section of this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, and updated where appropriate, however if a weakness is identified in procedures or national guidelines change, the policy will be reviewed and revised immediately.

Any amendments to national or local guidelines and legislation will be recorded within the policy and signed off by the Core Management Team. Staff, Elected Members, volunteers and anyone working for and / or on behalf of the council will be notified of any changes to the policy or associated procedures through wider management team, the weekly staff bulletin and on Minerva. Head of Service and Team Managers are expected to disseminate information to their teams.



**Section 1: Safeguarding Children and Young People: Policy and Procedure**



**Date: February 2014**

## **How this Policy Document Works**

**Section 1** of this policy sets out how West Lindsey District Council will respond to safeguarding children and young people.

The council is required to have policies in place which outline its response to Safeguarding Children, and Safeguarding Adults.

This policy is split into three distinct sections:

- Section 1: Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Section 2: Safeguarding Adults at Risk
- Section 3: Domestic Abuse

Each section is designed to stand alone; therefore there is duplication across the three sections. Please be aware that although the general reporting procedures are the same for children and adults at risk and some of the signs to look out for are similar, there are differences across the sections.

## **Introduction**

Everybody has a responsibility to ensure the safety of children and young people where possible. In accordance with the Children Act (2004), as an organisation with responsibility for children and young people across its services; West Lindsey District Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care. We have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people who participate in or are supported by our services, and a moral obligation to be alert to child protection issues at all times.

The [Children Act \(2004\)](#) places a duty on key statutory agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Act embodies five principles that are key to wellbeing in children and young people:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic wellbeing

The Council has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and young people in which their welfare is of paramount importance. To assist us all in our duty of care of children and young people, this policy and its associated procedures reflect the principles and practices promoted in the Government guidance [‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013’](#).

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013’](#) sets out key principles of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Please note; this policy will be revised in line with any amendments to the Working Together guidance.

## Safeguarding is Everyone’s Business

*“I don’t directly work with children, so does this policy affect me?”*

**Yes it does!**

The policy applies to all situations within the council’s operation, which could potentially involve children or young people, from children running around in a reception area to home visits where children or young people are present.

This Policy is intended as practical guidance for anyone working on behalf of the Council who may come into contact with children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families. This policy affects every West Lindsey District Council staff member, Elected Member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and / or representing the council. For the purposes of this policy and ease of reading, all of those named above will be referred to as ‘staff’.

Although your work may not directly impact on or relate to children or young people, you have a duty to recognise and respond to child protection situations and concerns appropriately and you must be aware of this policy and its procedures.

Staff must also be aware that young people (under 18) will be working within the council’s buildings; either as members of staff, or as part of apprenticeships or work experience schemes. All staff must remember that these individuals are children and as such, are protected by this policy and associated procedures.

***“Safeguarding children – the action we take to promote the welfare of children to protect them from harm – is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play”***

***“No single professional can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action”.***

Working Together (2013)

## Abuse and Neglect

A person may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting. Children and young people may be abused by someone known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

There are many ways in which children, young people and vulnerable adults can be harmed:

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse can include, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or other-wise causing physical harm. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or failure to act to protect.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates symptoms or deliberately causes ill health to a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to them that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young people. It may also involve causing children or young people to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child or young person. Emotional abuse can include the seeing or hearing of ill-treatment of others, for example through domestic abuse. Further instances of concern could include the over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of or consent to what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as prostitution, rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involvement in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging them to act in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and / or females, by adults and / or by other young people.


## Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs. Neglect may:

- occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse
- involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- involve failing to protect from physical and emotional harm or danger
- involve failure to ensure adequate supervision or access to appropriate medical care or treatment

### Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is not the responsibility of council staff, elected members or volunteers to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child or young person is at significant risk. They do however have a responsibility to act if they have concerns and to pass on information.

	<p>Many safeguarding concerns arise on a day-to-day basis, and often, they will not develop into abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The role of staff, elected members, volunteers and other working for and / or on behalf of the Council is to help to identify concerns and pass them onto the relevant agency.</p> <p>It is the role of Children's Services, Adults Services and/or the Police to investigate allegations or concerns.</p> <p><b>REMEMBER: It is not your job to judge or to investigate, but to inform and share your concerns</b></p>
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Every child and young person is unique and it is difficult to predict how their behaviour will change as a result of their experience of abuse. The table below outlines some physical signs and behavioural indicators that may be associated with a risk of abuse.

It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these signs and indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as bereavement, the birth of a new baby in the family, relationship problems between parents / carers etc.

It is important that staff have an understanding and awareness that some children and young people are potentially more vulnerable and may have additional care needs. This could include children, young people and vulnerable adults from families affected by domestic violence, substance misuse and mental illness as well as those from ethnic minority backgrounds, migrant and travelling communities, those with a disability or learning difficulty, living away from home, in care or other temporary accommodation, as well as those who are in custody or have run away from home.

Regard should always be given to a child or young person's religion or belief. It should be noted that children with disabilities, migrant children and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, child victims of trafficking, domestic abuse and bullying may have additional care needs and this should be remembered when considering the behavioural indicators.

All children, regardless of background, should be given the same level of support and protection.

### Indicators of Abuse

Type of abuse	Physical Indicator	Behavioural Indicator
<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent or unexplained bruising, marks or injury</li> <li>• Bruises which reflect hand marks or shapes of articles e.g. belts</li> <li>• Cigarette burns</li> <li>• Bite marks</li> <li>• Unexplained broken or fractured bones</li> <li>• Scalds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of parent being contacted</li> <li>• Behavioural extremes – aggressive/angry outbursts or withdrawn</li> <li>• Fear of going home</li> <li>• Flinching when approached or touched</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Keeping arms/legs covered</li> <li>• Reluctance to change clothes</li> <li>• Panics in response to pain</li> <li>• Reports injury caused by parents</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays in physical development or progress</li> <li>• Sudden speech disorders</li> <li>• Failure to thrive</li> <li>• Bedwetting and/or diarrhoea</li> <li>• Frequent psychosomatic complaints, headaches, nausea, abdominal pains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental or emotional development lags</li> <li>• Behaviours inappropriate for age</li> <li>• Fear of failure, overly high standards, reluctance to play</li> <li>• Fears consequences of actions, often leading to lying</li> <li>• Extreme withdrawal or aggressiveness, mood swings</li> <li>• Overly compliant, too well-mannered</li> <li>• Excessive neatness and cleanliness</li> <li>• Extreme attention-seeking behaviours</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor peer relationships</li> <li>• Severe depression, may be suicidal</li> <li>• Runaway attempts</li> <li>• Violence is a subject for art or writing</li> <li>• Complains of social isolation</li> <li>• Forbidden contact with other children</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain/itching in the genital area</li> <li>• Bruising/bleeding near genital area</li> <li>• Sexually transmitted disease</li> <li>• Vaginal discharge/infection</li> <li>• Frequent unexplained abdominal pains</li> <li>• Discomfort when walking/sitting</li> <li>• Bed wetting</li> <li>• Excessive crying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge for the child's age</li> <li>• Promiscuity</li> <li>• Sudden changes in behaviour</li> <li>• Running away from home</li> <li>• Emotional withdrawal through lack of trust in adults</li> <li>• Unexplained sources of money or 'gifts'</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexually explicit drawings or stories</li> <li>• Bedwetting or soiling</li> <li>• Overeating or anorexia</li> <li>• Sleep disturbances</li> <li>• Secrets which cannot be told</li> <li>• Substance/drug misuse</li> <li>• Reports of assault</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant hunger</li> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> <li>• Weight loss/underweight</li> <li>• Inappropriate dress</li> <li>• Consistent lack of supervision/abandonment</li> <li>• Unattended physical problems or medical needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begging/stealing food</li> <li>• Truancy/late for school</li> <li>• Constantly tired/listless</li> <li>• Regularly alone/unsupervised</li> <li>• Poor relationship with care giver</li> </ul>

**Important: Please note that the table below does not provide an exhaustive or definitive statement of what to look out for: it must be viewed only as a guide to some common indicators of abuse. There may be other reasons that a child or young person is exhibiting some of the signs and indicators. If you have any concerns or question, please speak to a safeguarding officer as soon as possible.**

Additional guidance is available in the Policy and Procedures Manual of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board:

[www.proceduresonline.com/lincolnshirescb](http://www.proceduresonline.com/lincolnshirescb)

## Responding to Disclosures, Concerns and Allegations

These procedures inform all staff, elected members, volunteers and anybody working for and / or on behalf of West Lindsey District Council of what actions should be taken if they have concerns about, or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse.

In addition to responding to things that an individual may see, there are three common situations when those listed above may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse. These are:

1. Responding to a child or young person disclosing abuse (i.e. they make a direct or indirect allegation of abuse)
2. Responding to allegations or concerns raised about a member of staff, elected member, volunteer or anybody else working for and / or on behalf of the council
3. Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person who may be abusing a child (i.e. parent, carer or other service user)

The procedure for responding in each of these situations is set out below.

### Responding to a child or young person making an allegation of abuse

Abused children and young people will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child or young person is saying, you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately

- Stay calm.
- **Listen** carefully to what is said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – **do not promise to keep secrets.**
- Allow the child or young person to continue at their own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times **avoid asking questions** that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or young person's own words, as soon as possible. In your record you should include:
  - The date and time.
  - The child or young person's name, address and date of birth.
  - The nature of the allegation.
  - A description of any visible injuries.
  - Your observations – e.g. a description of the child or young person's behaviour and physical and emotional state.



- Exactly what the child or young person said and what you said. Record the child or young person's account of what has happened as close as possible.
  - Any action you took as a result of your concerns e.g. who you spoke to and resulting actions. Include names, addresses and telephone numbers.
  - Sign and date what you have recorded (signature not required with electronic form).
  - Store the information in accordance with relevant procedures, e.g. data protection
- Follow the Council's [online reporting procedures](#) or telephone the safeguarding officers on **01427 675199** to report a concern.

### **Responding to allegations or concerns against a member of staff, Elected Member, volunteer or any other person**

- Take the allegation or concern seriously.
- Consider any allegation or concern to be potentially dangerous to the child or young person.
- Record in writing all the details that you are aware of as soon as possible.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, Elected Member or volunteer, the People and Organisational Development (POD) Team Manager and the Lead Safeguarding Officer must be informed immediately. The POD Team Manager and Lead Safeguarding Officer (or in their absence, the safeguarding coordinator) will inform the Chief Executive and the Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) and consideration will be given to suspending the member of staff from work or moving them to alternative duties not involving contact with children, young people, or adults at risk – in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. If the POD Team Manager or the Lead Safeguarding Officer are the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made directly to the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive.

If it is necessary to conduct an investigation into events surrounding the complaint, this will be conducted in accordance with advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and through the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, and will include any further procedures as set out by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board.

The consideration of suspension in such circumstances does not imply guilt but is a neutral course of action, which is designed to ensure that both employees and complainants are protected during the investigation. If any allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed, resigns or ceases to provide his/her services or the Authority ceases to use the person's services West Lindsey District Council will refer the allegation details directly to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). If circumstances allow that the person remains within the employment of the council following an allegation being substantiated, they would be moved to a role that

involved no possible contact with children, young people or adults at risk. In such circumstances the matter would also be referred to the DBS. A referral form and associated guidance can be obtained from Human Resources.


If the complaint is against a person other than a member of staff, Elected Member or volunteer i.e. parent, carer, other service user, etc, then a Safeguarding Officer must be informed in line with the Council's reporting procedures.

## Reporting Concerns

**Staff, Elected Members, volunteers and people working for and / or on behalf of the council have a duty of care to the child or young person to report any suspicions or concerns. It may be that your concerns are important in enabling relevant statutory agencies to decide whether any action is necessary.**

Abuse thrives on secrecy and needs to be handled in a sensitive, accepting way. In order to achieve this staff may have to overcome certain barriers also as;

- Sometimes it may be hard to believe what they are saying
- It may be difficult in that the suspicion may be about someone that is known.
- There is the fear of 'getting it wrong'
- There is the fear of what consequences there may be for 'getting it wrong' for the child, young person or vulnerable adult, for the family and for themselves.
- There is a worry that it may make it worse for the child, young person or vulnerable adult
- You simply do not want to become involved
- You feel you do not have the necessary information on what to do or who to contact

	<b>REMEMBER: It is not your job to judge or to investigate, but to inform and share your concerns</b>
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## How to Report a Concern

Any officer, in the course of their duties, may witness or be informed of an issue that they feel should be referred to Children's Social Care. All instances should be reported to a Safeguarding Officer using the Council's [reporting procedures](#). If officers are confident to do so, following discussion with the Lead Safeguarding Officer, they should then refer to Children's Social Care. All other referrals will be made by a Safeguarding Officer.

It is possible that the Council will have allegations referred to them by third parties. For example, neighbours may contact staff to advise that they suspect that the welfare of a child or young person is suffering. Under these circumstances staff should again use the Council's [reporting procedure](#) to advise a Safeguarding Officer of the concerns raised.

Alternatively, and for staff without ICT access; please telephone the Safeguarding Officers on **01427 675199** to report a concern.

The only exception to this reporting mechanism is for concerns of immediate danger to 'life or limb' of a child or young person:

**If there is an immediate threat:**

Take appropriate action if the child, young person or vulnerable adult is in need of urgent attention by reporting the matter to the **LCC Customer Services Centre (CSC)** on:

**01522 782111 or emergency out of hours 01522 782333**

**The CSC will contact the Police Public Protection Unit.**

**If all else fails contact the Police on 101 or 999 and report immediately to the Councils Safeguarding Officer**



**REMEMBER: It is not your job to judge or to investigate, but to inform and share your concerns**

**IMPORTANT:** Officers should be aware that in the case of professional referrals relating to child protection, the assumption of the Lincolnshire Children's Safeguarding Board (LSCB) is that the family may be told where the referral has come from by Children's Services officers. Any referral made by an officer of West Lindsey District Council is regarded as a professional referral but can be made in the name of a safeguarding officer.

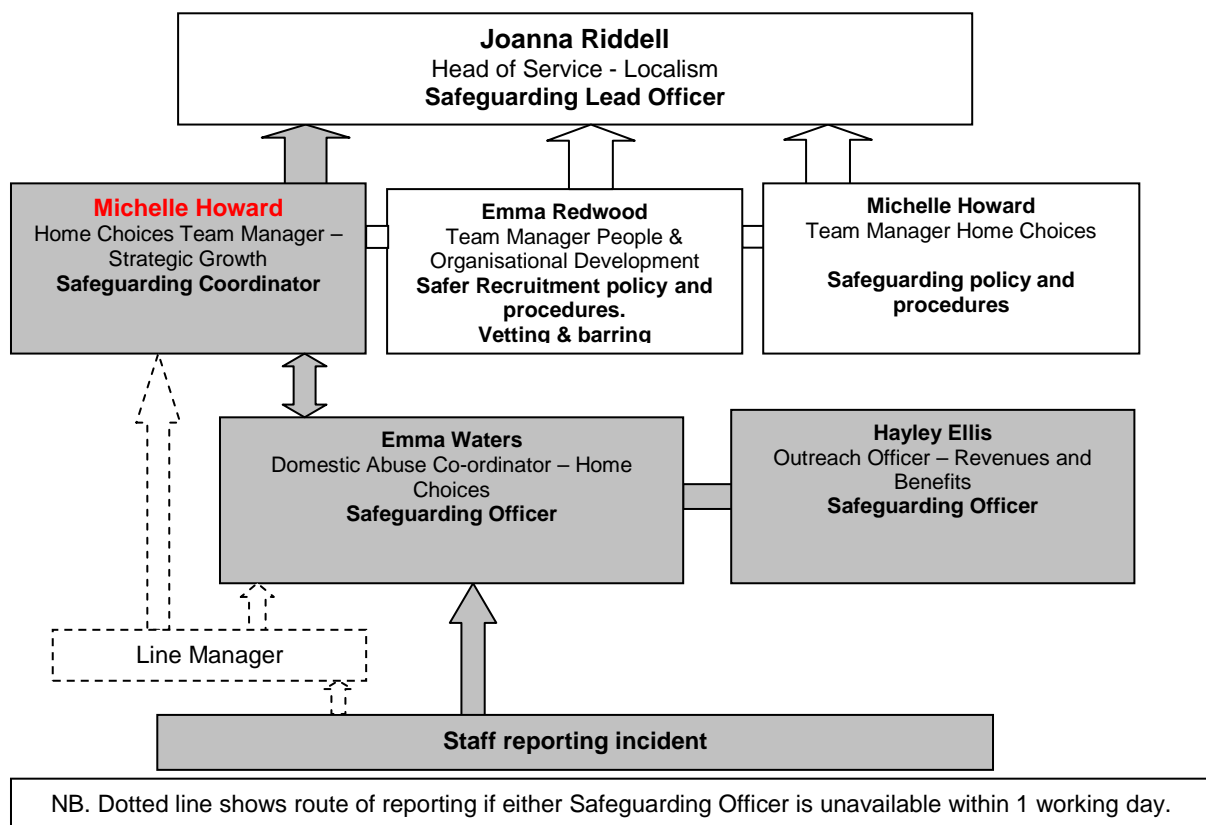
**However you must be aware that if there is a need by Children's Social Care or the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board to open a Child Protection Plan or Serious Case Review you may be called to give evidence. In these instances, you will be supported by a safeguarding officer**

## West Lindsey District Council – Corporate Safeguarding Structure

Whilst safeguarding is everyone’s business, the council has named officers who take responsibility for:

- supporting officers to report concerns
- developing and reviewing policies and procedures
- working in partnership with other organisations to develop best practice and shared learning
- providing training for staff and elected members
- providing training to all new staff and elected members as part of the council’s induction process
- ensuring compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act (as demonstrated through the Section 11 assessment)
- engaging in serious case reviews and domestic homicide reviews
- hosting a safeguarding working group that is represented by all service areas and by elected member champions

The West Lindsey District Council corporate safeguarding structure is set out below:



## Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only (i.e. designated safeguarding officer, children’s services, adult social care

and the Police). It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, to their family and any child protection, adult safeguarding or police investigations that may follow.

Informing the parents of a child or young person you have concerns about needs to be dealt with in a sensitive way and should be done in consultation with children's services / police. Any individual under suspicion has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice any investigation.

Recorded information should be stored in a secure place, with access limited to officers named within the corporate safeguarding structure, in line with data protection laws.

If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is vital that staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working for / on behalf of the council are briefed as required so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. The safeguarding lead officer will be the designated spokesperson in the event of any public / media enquiries. In the absence of the safeguarding lead officer, the safeguarding coordinator will be the designated spokesperson. In the absence of both of these officers, the query should be escalated to the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive.

## **Good Practice Guidance**

It is possible to limit the situations where the abuse of children, young people or adults may occur, by promoting good practice to all staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working for / on behalf of West Lindsey District Council.

These guidelines aim to promote positive practice and are examples to help to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. They will also protect staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working for / on behalf of West Lindsey District Council.

### **Good Practice Guidelines**

- Avoid situations where you and an individual child or young person are alone unobserved
- Children or young people should never be left unattended. For example, it is the parents/carers responsibility to supervise any children in their care whilst they are visiting the council offices and children should not be left unattended within the council offices
- Respect the child or young person and provide a safe and positive environment
- If any form of physical contact is required it should be provided openly and according to appropriate guidelines, i.e. National Governing Body of Sport Guidelines

- If supervision in changing rooms or similar environments is required, ensure you work in pairs and never enter opposite sex changing rooms
- With mixed groups, supervision should be by a male and female member of staff, where possible
- Staff, Elected Members and volunteers must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the context of the activity
- Every assessment should reflect the unique characteristics of the child within their family and community context. The Children Act 1989 promotes the view that all children and their parents should be considered as individuals and that family structures, culture, religion, ethnic origins and other characteristics should be respected
- Where appropriate, use a simple Equality Monitoring form for Children and Young People to help you assess how accessible our services are to children and young people
- Staff, Elected Members and volunteers must place the well-being and safety of the child or young person above the development of performance
- Staff, Elected Members and volunteers must feel confident to report concerns or worries about other staff members, Elected Members, volunteers or people working for and / or on behalf of West Lindsey District Council to a member of the corporate safeguarding team. If a safeguarding officer is not available on the **same working day** staff should report their concerns to a member of the senior management team who will then report directly to Children's Services (Social Services), LADO and/or the Police. In the absence of all identified Corporate Safeguarding Officers / members of the senior management team, staff should report concerns directly to the Customer Service Centre of Lincolnshire County Council
- If a child or young person is accidentally injured as the result of a staff member, Elected Member or volunteer's actions; seems distressed in any way; appears to be sexually aroused by your actions; misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, always report such incidents as soon as possible to a Safeguarding Officer and make a written report
- If a child or young person arrives at the activity or service showing any signs or symptoms that give you cause for concern you must act appropriately and follow the safeguarding concern reporting procedures

It is **not** good practice for staff, Elected Members and volunteers to:

- Spend unreasonable amounts of time alone with children or young people away from others
- Take children or young people alone on a car journey, however short
- Take children or young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- Arrange to meet children or young people outside an organised activity or service
- Agree to 'look after' or be left in sole charge of children, even for short periods of time, during the course of your duties
- Staff should not knowingly visit or enter a property unless in the company of an adult who resides at the property. No member of staff should enter a property where only a child is present. If a child left alone is suspected of being below an

age when an adult should supervise him/her, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (see section 8) should be contacted

- Children should not be asked to leave a message for their guardians and direct contact must be made with the guardian before it can be assumed that a message has been received. Similarly, children should not be asked to interpret for their guardians.
- Staff must avoid being left alone in a room with a child. This may happen if the adult present is distracted by, for example, a telephone call in another room. Under such circumstances, the member of staff must mention the situation to the adult concerned and if the adult is intent on leaving the member of staff alone with a child, the member of staff must leave the property.

If these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full prior knowledge and consent of your line manager and the child or young person's parents/carer

Staff, Elected Members and volunteers should **never**:

- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay
- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use it yourself
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in fun
- Let any allegation a child or young person makes be ignored or go unrecorded
- Do things of a personal nature for children and young people that they can do for themselves, e.g. assist with changing
- Share a room with a child or young person (e.g. overnight accommodation)
- Enter areas designated only for the opposite sex without appropriate warning (e.g. cleaning staff for toilets etc)
- Take a child to the toilet, unless this is an emergency and a second, same sex member of staff is present
- Use a mobile phone, camera or other recording device in any changing area or other single sex location such as toilets (exceptions to this may arise, for example, where a photographic record of vandalism to a changing room is required). In such circumstances customers should be temporarily excluded from the location

## Photography and Pornography

There is increasing evidence that some people have used children and young persons' activities and events, as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children and young people. Staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working for and / or on behalf of the council should be vigilant at all times and any person using cameras or videos within West Lindsey District Council services and at events or activities that involve children and young people should be approached and asked to complete a consent form for the use of cameras and other

image recorders. For a copy of the Council's consent form please refer to the Minerva site or contact a safeguarding officer on ext. 199.

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to cover Council services, events and activities you must ensure that you make your expectations clear in relation to child protection.

- Check credentials of any photographers and organisations used
- Ensure identification is worn at all times, if they do not have their own – provide it
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or young people or one to one photographic sessions
- Do not allow photographic sessions outside of the activities or services, or at a child or young person's home
- Parents must be informed that photographs of their child or young person may be taken during Council services, activities or events, and parental consent forms need to be signed agreeing to this. This must include information about how and where these photographs will be used. For a copy of the Council's consent form please refer to the Minerva site or contact a safeguarding officer on ext. 199
- It is recommended that the names of children or young people should not be used in photographs or video footage

## Information Sharing

Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing:

- **Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately
- **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so
- **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible
- **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgment, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgment on the facts of the case
- **Consider safety and well-being:** Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions
- **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely



- **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose

## **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, and up-dated where appropriate, however if a weakness is identified in procedures or national guidelines change, the policy will be reviewed and revised immediately.

Any amendments to national or local guidelines and legislation will be recorded within the policy and signed off by the Core Management Team. Staff, Elected Members, volunteers and anyone working for and / or on behalf of the council will be notified of any changes to the policy or associated procedures through wider management team, the weekly staff bulletin and on Minerva. Head of Service and Team Managers are expected to disseminate information to their teams.

Section 2: Safeguarding Adults at Risk: Policy and Procedure



**Date: February 2014**

## **How this Policy Document Works**

**Section 2** of this policy sets out how West Lindsey District Council will respond to safeguarding adults at risk.

This policy is split into three distinct sections:

- Section 1: Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Section 2: Safeguarding Adults at Risk
- Section 3: Domestic Abuse

Each section is designed to stand alone; therefore there is duplication across the three sections. Please be aware that although the general reporting procedures are the same for children and adults at risk and some of the signs to look out for are similar, there are differences across the sections.

## **Policy Statement**

West Lindsey District Council accepts the social, moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for 'adults at risk', safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or provided by the council.

This policy is intended to contribute to raising levels of awareness and to encourage safeguarding reports by professionals where appropriate, and sets out the Council's commitment to safeguarding adults at risk.

This policy also sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring and promoting good practice to promote the wellbeing of adults in circumstances which make them vulnerable.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- The needs and interests of adults at risk are always respected and upheld
- The human rights of adults at risk are respected and upheld
- A proportionate, timely, professional and ethical response is made to any adults at risk or who may be experiencing abuse
- All decisions and action are taken in line with the [Mental Capacity Act](#) (MCA) 2005.

The procedures also aim to ensure that each adult at risk maintains:

- Choice and control
- Safety
- Health
- Quality of Life
- Dignity and Respect

**This policy applies to all staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone else working on behalf of and / or representing the council that may come into contact with adults at risk in the course of their work / duties, whether in someone's home, on council premises or in the community.**

The aims of the policy are extremely important to the health and wellbeing of adults at risk and the council expects all employees to understand the need for the policy and to comply fully with it. **If any employee finds that for whatever reason they do not believe that they can comply with this policy and associated procedures, they must notify the lead safeguarding officer immediately.**

## Introduction

In May 2011, the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) endorsed the Director of Social Services and Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA) definition of safeguarding adults:

*“Adult Safeguarding incorporates the concept of prevention, empowerment and protection to enable adults who are in circumstances that make them vulnerable, to retain independence, wellbeing and choice, and to access their right to a life free from abuse and neglect”*

West Lindsey District Council accepts the social, moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for ‘adults at risk’, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or provided by the council.

The council is required to have policies in place which outline its response to Safeguarding Children, and Safeguarding Adults.

## Safeguarding is Everyone's Business

*“I don't directly work with adults at risk so does this policy affect me?”*

### Yes it does!

The policy applies to all situations within the council's operation, which could potentially involve contact with adults at risk.

This policy applies to all staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone else working on behalf of and / or representing the council that may come into contact with adults at risk in the course of their work / duties, whether in someone's home, on council premises or in the community. It should be a priority of all of the above to ensure the safety and protection of adults at risk and to fulfil their duty to act in a timely manner for any concern or suspicion that an adult is being, or is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited

All staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone else working on behalf of and / or representing the council should be aware of the [multi-agency procedures](#) for Lincolnshire which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013.

## Safeguarding, Vulnerability and 'Adults at Risk'

In May 2011, the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) endorsed the Director of Social Services and Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA) definition of safeguarding adults:

*“Adult Safeguarding incorporates the concept of prevention, empowerment and protection to enable adults who are in circumstances that make them vulnerable, to retain independence, wellbeing and choice, and to access their right to a life free from abuse and neglect”*

It is important to remember that mental ill health can impact on a person's ability to self-protect against significant harm or exploitation **whether or not** the person has capacity to make informed choices concerning their own safety.

Although the following list is not exhaustive, an 'adult at risk' may be a person who:

- Is frail due to age, ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment, or a combination of these
- Has a learning disability
- Has a physical disability and/or sensory impairment
- Has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- Has a long term illness/condition
- Misuses substances or alcohol
- Is a carer such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse
- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support

It is important to note that just because someone is old, frail or has a disability, this does not mean that they are inevitably 'at risk'. A person with a disability who has mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety may be perfectly able to make informed choices and protect themselves from harm. It is equally important to note that people with capacity can also be vulnerable. Further guidance is provided later in this policy.



**IMPORTANT:** In the context of safeguarding adults, the vulnerability of the adult at risk or related to how able they are to make and exercise their own informed choices free from duress, pressure or undue influence of any sort, and the extent to which they can protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

**Factors determining vulnerability:**

<b>Personal characteristics of the adult at risk that <u>increase</u> vulnerability may include</b>	<b>Personal characteristics of the adult at risk that <u>decrease</u> vulnerability may include</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not having mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety including fluctuating mental capacity associated with mental illness and other conditions</li> <li>• Communication difficulties</li> <li>• Physical dependency – being dependent on others for personal care and activities of daily life</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Experience of abuse</li> <li>• Childhood experience of abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety</li> <li>• Good physical and mental health</li> <li>• Having no communication difficulties or if so, having the right equipment/support</li> <li>• No physical dependency or, if needing help, able to self-direct care</li> <li>• Positive former life experiences</li> <li>• Self-confidence and high self-esteem</li> </ul>
<b>Social/situational factors that <u>increase</u> the risk of abuse may include</b>	<b>Social/situational factors that <u>decrease</u> the risk of abuse may include</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being cared for in a care setting, i.e. more or less dependent on others</li> <li>• Not receiving the right amount or the right kind of care</li> <li>• Isolation and social exclusion</li> <li>• Stigma and discrimination</li> <li>• Lack of access to information and support</li> <li>• Being the focus of anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good family relationships</li> <li>• Active social life and a circle of friends</li> <li>• Able to participate in the wider community</li> <li>• Good knowledge and access to a range of community facilities</li> <li>• Remaining independent and active</li> <li>• Access to sources of relevant information</li> </ul>

## What is Abuse?

For the purpose of the Safeguarding Adults policy and procedures, the term ‘abuse’ is defined as:


*“A violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons, which may result in significant harm”*

Abuse is about the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. Where there is dependency, there is a possibility of abuse or neglect unless adequate safeguards

are put in place. Abuse can take place anywhere, such as; a person's own home, day or residential centres, supported housing, educational establishments, nursing homes, clinics and hospitals.

Abuse may be:

- A single act or repeated acts
- An act of neglect or a failure to act
- Multiple acts (for example, an adult at risk may be neglected *and* financially abused)

	<p><b>IMPORTANT: A number of abusive acts are crimes. As such, informing the police must be a key consideration</b></p>
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## Types of Abuse

### Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Recognising abuse is not easy. It is not the responsibility of council staff, elected members or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if an adult is at significant risk. They do however have a responsibility to act if they have concerns and to pass on information.

Abuse can be viewed in terms of the following categories (although this is not an exhaustive list):

Type of abuse	Physical examples	Behavioural Indicator
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<p><b>Physical</b></p>	<p>Hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force-feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained or inappropriately explained injuries</li> <li>• Person exhibiting untypical self-harm</li> <li>• Unexplained bruising to the face, torso, arms, back, buttocks, thighs, in various stages of healing. Collections of bruises that form regular patterns which correspond to the shape of an object or which appear on several areas of the body</li> <li>• Unexplained burns on unlikely areas of the body (e.g. soles of the feet, palms of the hands, back), immersion burns (from scalding in hot water/liquid), rope burns, burns from an electrical appliance</li> <li>• Unexplained or inappropriately explained fractures at various stages of healing to any part of the body</li> <li>• Medical problems that go unattended</li> <li>• Sudden and unexplained urinary and/or faecal incontinence</li> <li>• Evidence of over-/under-medication</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual</b></p>	<p>Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts that the adult at risk has not consented to. Including: penetration of any sort, incest, situations where the alleged abuser touches the abused person's body (eg breasts, buttocks, genital area), exposes his or her genitals, coerces the abused person into participating in or looking at pornographic videos or photographs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person has urinary tract infections, vaginal infections or sexually transmitted diseases that are not otherwise explained</li> <li>• Person appears unusually subdued, withdrawn or has poor concentration</li> <li>• Person exhibits significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlook</li> <li>• Person experiences pain, itching or bleeding in the genital/anal area</li> <li>• Underclothing is torn, stained or bloody.</li> <li>• A woman who lacks the mental capacity to consent to sexual intercourse becomes pregnant</li> </ul>



<b>Psychological</b>	Includes 'emotional abuse'; threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, rejection, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, indifference, harassment, verbal abuse (including shouting or swearing), and isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untypical ambivalence, deference, passivity, resignation</li> <li>• Person appears anxious or withdrawn, especially in the presence of the alleged abuser</li> <li>• Person exhibits low self-esteem</li> <li>• Untypical changes in behaviour (e.g. continence problems, sleep disturbance)</li> </ul>
<b>Financial or material abuse</b>	Theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills or property and the misappropriation of property or benefits. It also includes the withholding of money or the unauthorised or improper use of a person's money or property. Staff borrowing money or objects from a service user is also considered financial abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of money, especially after benefit day</li> <li>• Inadequately explained withdrawals from accounts</li> <li>• Disparity between assets/income and living conditions</li> <li>• Service user not in control of their direct payment or individualised budget</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect and acts of omission</b>	Ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. A failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk for themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person has inadequate heating and/or lighting</li> <li>• Person's physical condition/appearance is poor (e.g. ulcers, pressure sores, soiled or wet clothing)</li> <li>• Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and/or is dehydrated</li> <li>• Person cannot access appropriate medication or medical care</li> <li>• Person is not afforded appropriate privacy or dignity</li> <li>• Person and/or a carer has inconsistent or reluctant contact with health and social services</li> <li>• Callers/visitors are refused access to the person</li> <li>• Person is exposed to unacceptable risk</li> </ul>
<b>Discriminatory</b>	Discrimination on the	May not always be obvious and may


<p><b>abuse</b></p>	<p>grounds of race, faith or religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and political views, along with racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes. It also includes not responding to dietary needs and not providing appropriate spiritual support</p>	<p>also be linked to acts of physical abuse and assault, sexual abuse and assault, financial abuse, neglect, psychological abuse and harassment, so all the indicators listed above may apply to discriminatory abuse A person may reject their own cultural background and/or racial origin or other personal beliefs, sexual practices or lifestyle choices</p>
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Other types of abuse include:

- Institutional abuse
- Self-neglect
- Hate crime
- Domestic abuse
- Honour based violence
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Human trafficking
- Exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence

For more information regarding these definitions please refer to LCC Policy:

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/adult-social-care/asc-manual/>

	<p>Many safeguarding concerns arise on a day-to-day basis, and often, they will not develop into abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The role of staff, elected members, volunteers and other working for and / or on behalf of the Council is to help to identify concerns and pass them onto the relevant agency.</p> <p>It is the role of Adults Services and/or the Police to investigate allegations or concerns.</p> <p><b>REMEMBER: It is not your job to judge or to investigate, but to inform and share your concerns</b></p>
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## Significant Harm

In determining what justifies intervention and what sort of intervention is required, Government guidance ['No secrets'](#) uses the concept of 'significant harm'. This refers to:

- ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical)
- the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health, and/or
- the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development

The importance of this definition is that, in deciding what action to take, consideration must be given not only to the immediate impact on and risk to the person, but also to the risk of future, longer-term harm.

Seriousness of harm, or the extent of the abuse, is not always clear at the point of the referral. All reports of suspicions or concerns should be approached with an open mind and could give rise to action under the Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure.

## Mental Capacity

The presumption is that adults have the mental capacity to make informed choices about their own safety and how they live their lives. Issues of mental capacity and the ability to give informed consent are central to decisions and actions in safeguarding adults. All interventions need to take into account the ability of adults to make informed choices about the way they want to live and the risks they want to take. This includes their ability:

- to understand the implications of their situation
- to take action themselves to prevent abuse
- to participate to the fullest extent possible in decision-making about interventions

## Responding to Disclosures, Concerns and Allegations

This policy and associated procedures inform all staff, elected members, volunteers and anybody working for and / or on behalf of West Lindsey District Council of what actions should be taken if they have concerns about, or encounter a case of alleged or suspected abuse of an adult at risk.

These procedures are governed by a set of key principles and themes, to ensure that people who are subject to abuse, neglect and exploitation experience the

process in such a way that it is sensitive to individual circumstances, is person-centred and is outcome-focussed. It is vital for successful safeguarding that the procedures in this section are understood and applied consistently by all staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working for and / or on behalf of West Lindsey District Council.



**IMPORTANT:** A safeguarding referral must always be made when the person is an adult at risk and there is concern that they are being, or are at risk of being abused or neglected, or are at risk of, or have experienced significant harm

**IMPORTANT:** It is important to establish whether the adult at risk has the capacity to make decisions. In the event of the adult at risk not having capacity, relevant decisions and/or actions must be taken in the person's best interests. The appropriate decision maker will depend on the decision to be made. For further information, please speak to a safeguarding officer

**IMPORTANT:** Allegations / concerns should not be discussed with the person alleged to have caused harm, unless the immediate welfare of the adult at risk makes this unavoidable.

In addition to responding to things that an individual may see, there are three common situations when those listed above may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse. These are:

1. Responding to an adult at risk disclosing abuse (i.e. they make a direct or indirect allegation of abuse)
2. Responding to allegations or concerns raised about a member of staff, elected member, volunteer or anybody else working for and / or on behalf of the council
3. Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person who may be abusing an adult at risk (i.e. parent, carer or other service user)

The procedure for responding in each of these situations is set out below.

### **Responding to an adult at risk making an allegation of abuse**

Abused adults at risk will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the person is saying, you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

## Acting to protect the adult at risk and deal with immediate needs

- Make an immediate evaluation of the risk and take steps to ensure that the adult at risk is in no immediate danger
  - If possible, make sure that other service users are not at risk - are there any other adults at risk who needs safeguarding?
  - Contact Children's Services at Lincolnshire County Council (01522 782111) if there are any children (aged under 18) at risk
  - Evaluate the risk to them and the need for a protection plan
  - Where appropriate, dial 999 for an ambulance if there is a need for emergency medical treatment
- Consider supporting and encouraging the adult at risk to contact the police, if a crime has been or may have been committed
- Do not disturb or move articles that could be used in evidence. Secure the scene if possible (i.e. locking the door to a room)

## Responding to an adult at risk who is making a disclosure

- Stay calm
- Speak to them in a private and safe place. It is essential that the person alleged to have caused harm is not present
- **Listen** carefully to what they are telling you – stay calm, and get as clear a picture as you can. Avoid asking too many questions at this stage, unless for clarification
- Let them talk at their own pace
- Do not give promises of complete confidentiality – **do not promise to keep secrets**
- Explain that you have a duty to tell a designated safeguarding officer and that the adult at risk's concerns may be shared with other professionals who could have a part to play in protecting them
- Reassure the adult at risk that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Reassure the adult at risk that they will be involved in decisions about what will happen
- Explain that you will try to take steps to prevent them from further abuse or neglect
- If they have specific communication needs provide support and information in a way that it most appropriate to them
- Do not be judgmental
- Do not jump to conclusions
- Record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said, using the person's own words, as soon as possible. In your record you should include:
  - The date and time
  - The person's name, address and date of birth
  - The nature of the allegation
  - A description of any visible injuries

- Your observations – e.g. a description of the person’s behaviour and physical and emotional state
- Exactly what the person said and what you said. Record the person’s account of what has happened as soon as possible
- Any action you took as a result of your concerns e.g. who you spoke to and resulting actions. Include names, addresses and telephone numbers
- Sign and date what you have recorded (signature not required with electronic form)
- Store the information in accordance with relevant procedures, e.g. data protection
- Report to relevant person’s – follow the Council’s reporting procedures or, in an emergency contact Adult Social Care and/or the Police

**Responding to allegations or concerns against a member of staff, Elected Member, volunteer or any other person**

- Take the allegation or concern seriously
- Consider any allegation or concern to be potentially dangerous to the person
- Record in writing all the details that you are aware of as soon as possible

If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, Elected Member or volunteer, the People and Organisational Development (POD) Team Manager and the Lead Safeguarding Officer must be informed immediately. The POD Team Manager and Lead Safeguarding Officer (or in their absence, the safeguarding coordinator) will inform the Chief Executive and the Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) and consideration will be given to suspending the member of staff from work or moving them to alternative duties not involving contact with and adults at risk – in accordance with the Council’s Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. If the POD Team Manager or the Lead Safeguarding Officer are the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made directly to the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive.

If the complaint is against a person other than a member of staff, Elected Member or volunteer i.e. parent, carer, other service user, etc, then a Safeguarding Officer must be informed in line with the Council’s reporting procedures.

**Consent**

It is always essential in safeguarding to consider whether the adult at risk is capable of giving informed consent in all aspects of their life. If they are able, their consent should be sought.

If, after discussion with the adult at risk who has mental capacity, they refuse any intervention, their wishes will be respected *unless*:

- there is an aspect of *public interest* (e.g. not acting will put other adults or children at risk)
- there is a *duty of care on a particular agency* to intervene (for example the police if a crime has been or may be committed)

### **Obtaining consent before making a referral**

The mental capacity of the adult at risk and their ability to give their informed consent to a referral being made and action being taken under these procedures is significant but not the only factor in deciding what action to take.

The test of capacity in this case is to find out if the adult at risk has the mental capacity to make informed decisions:

- about a referral
- about actions that may be taken under multi-agency policy and procedures
- about their own safety, including an understanding of the potential for longer-term harm as well as immediate effects and
- an ability to take action to protect themselves from future harm

### **Referring without consent**

If there is an overriding public interest or vital interest, or if gaining consent would put the adult at further risk, a referral *must* be made. This includes situations where:

- other people or children could be at risk from the person causing harm
- it is necessary to prevent crime against an adult at risk or if a serious crime against an adult at risk may have been committed
- there is a high risk to the health and safety of the adult at risk
- the person lacks capacity to consent

The adult at risk would normally be informed of the decision to refer and the reasons for this, unless telling them would jeopardise their safety or the safety of others. If the adult at risk is assessed as not having mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety and to consent to a referral being made, the referring officer, Elected Member or volunteer, must make a decision in the adult's best interest.

The key issue in deciding whether to make a referral is the harm or risk of harm to the adult at risk and any other adults who may have contact with the person causing harm or with the same organisation, service or care setting.


If the member of staff, Elected Member or volunteer is unsure whether to refer, they should contact a safeguarding officer for advice.

It is important that all staff, Elected Members and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. However, staff, Elected Members and volunteers do have a duty of care to the adult at risk to report any

suspicions you may have. It may be that your concerns are important in enabling the statutory agencies to decide whether any action is necessary.

Any officer, in the course of their duties, may witness or be informed of an issue that they feel should be referred to Adult Social Care. All instances should be reported first to a safeguarding officer. If an officer feels confident in doing so, they may make the referral directly to Adult Social Care. If this is the case, the details of such referrals should be passed to a Safeguarding Officer for recording purposes. All other referrals will be made by a Safeguarding Officer. All officers should be aware, however, that if there is a need by Adult Social Care or the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board to open an Adult Protection Plan or Serious Case Review they may be called to give evidence.

If none of the people with designated responsibility are available on the **same working day** of the awareness of the issue, staff, Elected Members or volunteers should report their concerns directly to Adult Social Care.

	<p><b>IMPORTANT RULE: It is not your job to judge or to investigate, but to inform and share your concerns</b></p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> Officers should be aware that in the case of professional referrals relating to an adult at risk, the assumption of the Safeguarding Adults Team of Lincolnshire County Council is that adult at risk may be told where the referral has come from. Any referral made by an officer of West Lindsey District Council is regarded as a professional referral but can be made in the name of a safeguarding officer.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> However you must be aware that if there is a need by Adult Social Care or the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board to open an Adult Protection Plan or Serious Case Review you may be called to give evidence. In this instance, you will be supported by a safeguarding officer.</p>
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## Reporting Concerns

**Staff, Elected Members, volunteers and people working for and / or on behalf of the council have a duty of care to the adult at risk to report any suspicions or concerns. It may be that your concerns are important in enabling relevant statutory agencies to decide whether any action is necessary.**



Abuse thrives on secrecy and needs to be handled in a sensitive, accepting way. In order to achieve this staff may have to overcome certain barriers also as;

- Sometimes it may be hard to believe what they are saying
- It may be difficult in that the suspicion may be about someone that is known
- There is the fear of 'getting it wrong'
- There is the fear of what consequences there may be for 'getting it wrong' for the adult at risk, for the family and for themselves.
- There is a worry that it may make it worse for the adult at risk
- You simply do not want to become involved
- You feel you do not have the necessary information on what to do or who to contact

	<p><b>IMPORTANT RULE: It is not your job to judge or to investigate, but to inform and share your concerns</b></p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> Officers should be aware that in the case of professional referrals relating to an adult at risk, the assumption of the Safeguarding Adults Team of Lincolnshire County Council is that adult at risk may be told where the referral has come from. Any referral made by an officer of West Lindsey District Council is regarded as a professional referral but can be made in the name of a safeguarding officer.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> However you must be aware that if there is a need by Adult Social Care or the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board to open an Adult Protection Plan or Serious Case Review you may be called to give evidence. In this instance, you will be supported by a safeguarding officer.</p>
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Any officer, in the course of their duties, may witness or be informed of an issue that they feel should be referred to Adult Social Care. All instances should be reported to a Safeguarding Officer using the [Council's reporting procedures](#). If officers are confident to do so, following discussion with a Safeguarding Officer, they should then refer to Adult Social Care. All other referrals will be made by a Safeguarding Officer.

It is possible that the Council will have allegations referred to them by third parties. For example, neighbours may contact staff to advise that they suspect that the welfare of an adult at risk is suffering. Under these circumstances staff should again follow the online [reporting procedure](#) to advise a Safeguarding Officer of the concerns raised.

**Alternatively, please telephone the Safeguarding Officers on 01427 675199 to report a concern.**

The only exception to this reporting mechanism is for concerns of immediate danger to 'life or limb' of an adult at risk.

**If there is an immediate threat:**

Take appropriate action if the adult at risk is in need of urgent attention by reporting the matter to the **Adult Social Care Customer Service Centre (CSC)** on:

**01522 782155 or emergency out of hours 01522 782333**

**The CSC will contact the Police Protection Unit.**

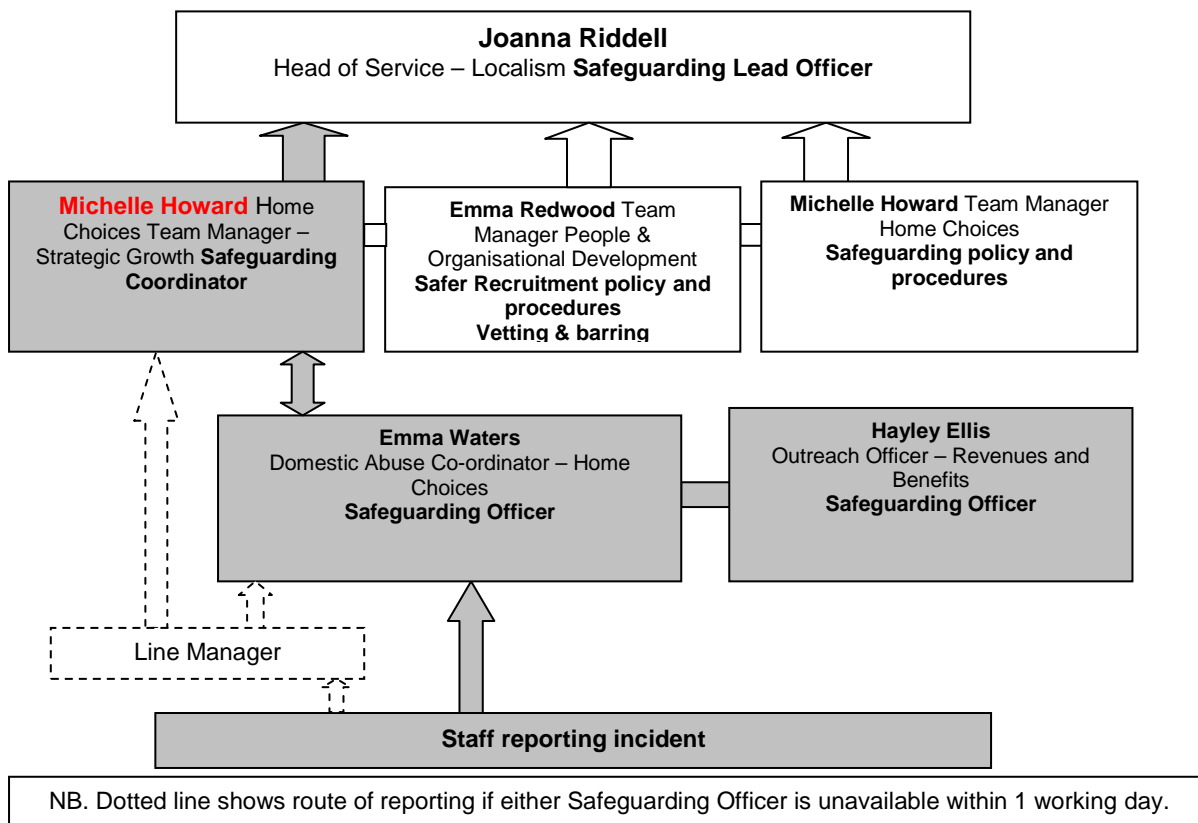
**If all else fails contact the Police on 101 or 999 and report immediately to the Councils Safeguarding Officer**

### **West Lindsey District Council – Corporate Safeguarding Structure**

Whilst safeguarding is everyone's business, the council has named officers who take responsibility for:

- supporting officers to report concerns
- developing and reviewing policies and procedures
- working in partnership with other organisations to develop best practice and shared learning
- providing training for staff and elected members
- providing training to all new staff and elected members as part of the council's induction process
- ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and guidance
- engaging in serious case reviews and domestic homicide reviews
- hosting a safeguarding working group that is represented by all service areas and by elected member champions

The West Lindsey District Council corporate safeguarding structure is set out on the following page:



## Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only (i.e. designated safeguarding officer, children’s services, adult social care and the Police). It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the adult at risk and investigations that may follow.

Informing the adult at risk of any concerns that you may have, must be done so in a sensitive way – it should be done in consultation with adult social care and/or the police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice any investigation.

Recorded information should be stored in a secure place, with access limited to officers named within the corporate safeguarding structure, in line with data protection laws.

If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is vital that staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working for and / on behalf of the council are briefed as required so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. The safeguarding lead officer will be the designated spokesperson in the event of any public / media enquiries. In the absence of the safeguarding lead officer, the safeguarding coordinator will be the designated spokesperson. In the absence of both of these officers, the query should be escalated to the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive.

## Information Sharing

### Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing

- **Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately
- **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so
- **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible
- **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgment, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgment on the facts of the case
- **Consider safety and well-being:** Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions
- **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely
- **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose

## Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, and up-dated where appropriate, however if a weakness is identified in procedures or national guidelines change, the policy will be reviewed and revised immediately.

Any amendments to national or local guidelines and legislation will be recorded within the policy and signed off by the Core Management Team. Staff, Elected Members, volunteers and anyone working for and / or on behalf of the council will be notified of any changes to the policy or associated procedures through wider management team, the weekly staff bulletin and on Minerva. Head of Service and Team Managers are expected to disseminate information to their teams.

Section 3: Domestic Abuse: Policy and Procedure



Date: February 2014

## How this Policy Document Works

**Section 3** of this policy sets out how West Lindsey District Council will respond to Domestic Abuse.

This policy is split into three distinct sections:

- Section 1: Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Section 2: Safeguarding Adults at Risk
- Section 3: Domestic Abuse

Each section is designed to stand alone; therefore there is duplication across the three sections. Please be aware that although the general reporting procedures are the same for children and adults at risk and some of the signs to look out for are similar, there are differences across the sections.

## Policy Statement

West Lindsey District Council accepts the social, moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for people at risk of domestic abuse, safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or provided by the council.

This policy is intended to contribute to raising levels of awareness and to encourage reporting of domestic abuse by professionals where appropriate, and sets out the Council's commitment to safeguarding people at risk of domestic abuse.

This policy also sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring and promoting good practice to promote the wellbeing of adults in circumstances which make them vulnerable.

This Policy is intended as practical guidance for anyone working on behalf of the Council who may come into contact with people at risk of, or experiencing domestic abuse. This policy affects every West Lindsey District Council staff member, Elected Member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and / or representing the council.

The aims of the policy are extremely important to the health and wellbeing of anybody who is experiencing, or is at risk of domestic abuse. The council expects all employees to understand the need for the policy and to comply fully with it. **If any employee finds that for whatever reason they do not believe that they can comply with this policy and associated procedures, they must notify the lead safeguarding officer immediately.**

## Introduction


Domestic Abuse involves the misuse of power and is based on a range of control tactics including physical, sexual, psychological, social, economic abuse or neglect of an individual. Forced Marriage and so called 'honour based' crimes are also forms

of domestic abuse. Largely hidden behind closed doors it leaves the victims feeling isolated and powerless.

Sometimes you will hear the phrase domestic abuse, sometimes domestic violence. They mean the same thing. Domestic abuse encompasses a range of abusive behaviours which are used by an abusive partner (or ex-partner) to maintain power and control over you. Domestic abuse is not just a disagreement. It can also affect anyone, regardless of age, social background, gender, religion, sexual preference or ethnicity.

There are many different types of abusive behaviour. It should be recognised that abuse is an ongoing pattern of behaviour, which often escalates over a period of time.

- Physical violence - such as assault
- Psychological abuse - such as some forms of harassment
- Sexual abuse - such as rape or indecent assault
- Emotional abuse - harm deliberately or recklessly inflicted on another person's emotional well being
- Financial abuse - where one partner maintains control over the other's money.
- Stalking or harassment - such as following their victim, appearing at their home or workplace, repeatedly making phone calls, sending texts and emails

	<p>Home Office definition of domestic violence and abuse (2013):</p> <p><i>'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality'</i></p>
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Domestic Abuse has a significant impact on individuals, families and our communities. Nationally, nearly 1 million women experience at least one incident of domestic abuse each year. 1 in 10 men report they have experienced domestic abuse and at least 750,000 children a year witness domestic abuse. It is likely many of us are affected whether through intimate partnerships, family members, friends or our colleagues at work.

The ['Call to end violence against women and girls' report \(VAWG\)](#) outlines the need for a multi-agency response focussing on high risk victims with a commitment to

preventative work. In recognising that men and boys are also victims of domestic abuse as well as playing an important role in challenging attitudes and beliefs.

The [Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership \(LCSP\)](#) has set domestic abuse as one of its priorities. Reporting to the LCSP, the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Management Board (the Board) takes responsibility for delivering activity aimed at reducing domestic abuse. We do this by working in partnership to create an environment where domestic abuse is not tolerated and to reduce the impact on victims in Lincolnshire. The Domestic Abuse Delivery Group (DADG) reports to the Board with an extensive membership including senior practitioners from statutory and voluntary agencies.

The [Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Strategy \(2013 – 2016\)](#) has been developed in consultation with partner agencies, elected members and with victims and survivors of domestic abuse across Lincolnshire and sets the vision and direction for Lincolnshire.

Please note that all work in this area for West Lindsey District Council aligns closely with:

- Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Strategy (2013 – 2016)
- Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) and associated policies



### Safeguarding is Everyone's Business

*"I don't directly work with children, families or adults at risk of domestic abuse so does this policy affect me?"*

**Yes it does!**

This policy applies to all staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone else working on behalf of and / or representing the council that may come into contact with adults at risk in the course of their work / duties, whether in someone's home, on council premises or in the community. It should be a priority of all of the above to ensure the safety and protection of



adults at risk and to fulfil their duty to act in a timely manner for any concern or suspicion that an adult is being, or is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited.

West Lindsey District Council is committed to the following principles and beliefs set out in the Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Strategy (2013 – 2016):

- **That domestic abuse will not be tolerated**
- **That domestic abuse is not the fault of the victim**
- **That staff and managers should be aware of domestic abuse, its impact and how to respond appropriately**
- **That partner agencies must work together to provide a joined up approach when responding to domestic abuse situations**
- **That prevention, provision of services and partnership working in relation to domestic abuse remains a priority**
- **That there is a commitment to justice for victims and reduction in risk**

### **What is Domestic Abuse?**

Domestic abuse encompasses a range of abusive behaviours which are used by an abusive partner (or ex-partner) to maintain power and control over a victim.

Domestic abuse is not just a disagreement. It can also affect anyone, regardless of age, social background, gender, religion, sexual preference or ethnicity. Abusive behaviour may occur in a variety of relationships: married, separated, divorced, living together, dating, heterosexual, gay or lesbian, child on parent abuse and elder abuse.

Sometimes you will hear the phrase domestic abuse, sometimes domestic violence. They mean the same thing.

**The Home Office definition of domestic abuse (from 1st April 2013) is set out below:**


*‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality’*

People who suffer domestic abuse, rarely experience one incident. Once begun, the abuse and violence will repeat itself. Domestic abuse that causes serious injury is mainly committed by men against women.

There are many different forms of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse can encompass (but is not limited to) the following types of abuse:


- Psychological
- Physical

- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional
- 

	<p><b>Controlling Behaviour is defined as:</b> ‘a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour’</p> <p><b>Coercive Behaviour is defined as:</b> ‘an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim’</p>
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Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviours, some causing physical injury, others not, some criminal, others not, but all potentially emotionally damaging. Frequently, domestic abuse includes threats of violence, threats of suicide, or threats to take the children from the abused person.

It may also include breaking objects, hurting pets, abusive language, sexual abuse, driving recklessly to endanger or scare the abused person, isolating family members from others, and controlling access to money, cars and other personal belongings.

	<p><b>NOTE:</b> The goal of an abusive person is to establish and maintain control over the person they are in or have been in a relationship with. Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour whose effects, without intervention, will become more destructive and sometimes even life threatening over time.</p>
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## Who can Experience Domestic Abuse?

Domestic Abuse does not have any boundaries. Anyone can experience domestic abuse regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or religious group, class, disability or lifestyle. Domestic abuse also affects children, who are witness to the abuse.

Domestic abuse can take place in heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender relationships.

## Domestic Abuse Perpetrators

There is no typical 'Domestic Abuse Perpetrator'; however psychologists have identified some common characteristics:

Many abusers suffer from low self-esteem, and their sense of self and identity is tied to their partner. Therefore, if abusers feel they are somehow losing the victim, either through separation, divorce, emotional detachment, or pregnancy (fearing victims will replace love for them with love for a child), they will lash out.

If victims "leave" through any of these methods, abusers feel they are losing power, control and their self-identity. This is why it is particularly dangerous for victims during periods of separation or divorce from their partner. Abusers will often do anything to maintain control and keep the victim under control. This dynamic also makes escalating Abuse inevitable, as many victims must become emotionally unavailable, or must physically leave, in order to survive.

While the public may think of Domestic Abuse abusers as out of control, crazy and unpredictable, the contrary is most often true. Use of psychological, emotional and physical abuse, intermingled with periods of respite, love and happiness are deliberate coercive tools used to generate submission. Abusers may violently assault, and then minutes later offer words of regret. Many will buy gifts of flowers, chocolates and other presents in order to win favour and forgiveness.

This creates a very confusing environment for victims. Abusers may say they will never harm their partners again, and promise to obtain help or counselling. Often, these promises are only made to prevent victims from leaving. Without getting help, the Abuse will most likely recur.

The abuse used by abusers is controlling and manipulative. Victims often can predict exactly when Abuse will erupt. Many police officers have commented on their surprise at finding significant evidence of a violent incident, a harmed victim and a composed perpetrator casually speaking with officers as if nothing had occurred.

Finally, many victims describe Domestic Abuse perpetrators as having a "Jekyll and Hyde" personality. Abusers often experience dramatic mood swings of highs and lows. They may be loving one minute and spiteful and cruel the next. Abusers are frequently characterised by those outside the home as generous, caring and good, and behave drastically differently in their home environment.

## Types of Abuse

**Recognising domestic abuse is not easy.** There are many different types and examples of abusive behaviour. The table below details some of the types of abuse that may be present in an abusive relationship however it is important to note that the list below is not exhaustive.

It should be recognised that abuse is an ongoing pattern of behaviour, which will escalate over a period of time. The goal of an abusive person is to establish and maintain control over the person they are in or have been in a relationship with. Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour whose effects, without intervention, will become more destructive and sometimes even life threatening over time.

Category of Abuse	Examples
<b>Psychological/Emotional</b>	<p>Intimidation, insulting, isolating a person from friends and family, criticising.</p> <p>Denying abuse, treating them as inferior, threatening to harm children or take them away, forced marriage.</p> <p>Swearing, undermining confidence, making racist remarks, making a person feel unattractive, calling them stupid or useless, eroding their independence, threatening suicide if the person leaves them</p>
<b>Physical</b>	<p>Shaking, smacking, punching, kicking presence of finger or bite marks, starving, tying up, stabbing, suffocation, throwing things, using objects as weapons, female genital mutilation, 'honour violence'.</p> <p>Physical effects are often on areas of the body that are covered and hidden</p>
<b>Sexual</b>	<p>Forced sex, forced prostitution, ignoring religious prohibitions about sex, refusal to practice safe sex, sexual insults, sexually transmitted diseases, preventing breastfeeding</p>
<b>Financial</b>	<p>Not letting a person work, undermining their efforts to find work or study, refusing to give them money, asking for an explanation of how every penny is spent, making them beg for money, gambling, not paying bills</p>

## Why do People Stay in Abusive Relationships?

There are a number of reasons that people do not leave an abusive relationship. It is important to understand some of these reasons. The information below sets out some of the reasons that a victim may feel unable to leave. Please note that the list below is not exhaustive.

### ***Fear of further violence***

Leaving may end the relationship but it doesn't always end the abuse. Many victims of abuse are tracked down and further abused when they leave, often for weeks and months afterwards. Research suggests that about half of all women murdered by their partners have left or were in the process of leaving when they were killed

### ***Lack of knowledge and access to help***

Despite increased awareness about domestic abuse, many victims don't know how to take advantage of their legal and housing rights. Even if they are aware of these services, some may experience problems due to language difficulties, inappropriate responses from service providers, living in isolated areas or a lack of funds.

### ***Economic dependence***

If a victim is working, he/she may lose their job due to needing time off work, moving too far away or staying off work so they can't be found there. For other victims, becoming a single parent may mean working is no longer possible; others may face months of legal wrangling over property and other financial matters.

### ***Staying because of the children***

Many abused victims think they should stay in their relationship for the sake of their children.

### ***Social isolation***

Most victims experiencing domestic abuse are extremely isolated either because their partners have deliberately tried to isolate them from sources of support including family and friends or because they are too ashamed or afraid to tell anyone. Or if they have, the responses have been unhelpful and judgmental.

### ***Emotional dependence***

Conflicting feelings of fear, shame, bewilderment, care for the abuser, hope that things will improve, a commitment to the relationship but not the abuse, often contribute to a victim staying in an abusive situation.

### ***Lack of confidence***

After living with an abusive partner, the self-esteem of most victims has been eroded to the point where they no longer have confidence in themselves, including their ability to survive alone, and may believe that there are no other options.

### **Cultural reasons**

Many victims and abusers have been brought up to believe that real fulfillment comes from being a husband/wife and mother/father or that divorce is wrong and may even be encouraged to stay in the relationship by family members or religious leaders.



**IMPORTANT:** Never judge a person for not leaving an abusive relationship, support them regardless of their decision and advise them how to keep safe while living with domestic abuse and when they are ready to move enable them to do it safely.

## **Leaving an Abusive Relationship**

Making a decision to leave a violent and abusive partner is not easy.

Listed below, is some information to help people stay safe when ending an abusive relationship:

- Consider contacting the local council to assist with home security or alternative housing
- Carry a panic alarm
- Install security systems including additional locks, burglar alarms etc
- Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for each floor of your house
- Install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person comes near the house
- Inform neighbours/family that your partner no longer lives with you, and/or show a picture of your partner so that they can inform you if they see him near your home and/or contact the police
- Ask for an unlisted number or dial 141 before dialling a person's number on the telephone so that your number is unobtainable by that person
- Have easy access to a telephone within the house
- Keep a list of emergency numbers by you at all times
- Use an answering machine to screen all calls
- Keep a copy of any civil injunctions in case you need to produce these for the Police in an emergency

Sometimes the only way to stay safe is to leave home. Listed below are some of the things to consider if a victim needs to leave home:

- Keep with you any useful telephone numbers or try to learn them
- Photocopy or know where important documents are such as marriage and birth certificates, passports, financial papers.
- Open a savings account in your own name to establish your independence. Make sure the bank has a safe address to contact you
- Try and get an extra set of keys cut for the house, car etc. and leave them together with an extra set of clothes for you and your children in a bag, and leave it with a trusted neighbour, friend or keep it in a safe place.
- Decide who you could stay with, and if the need arises, who would lend you some money.
- Try and keep some spare change, phone card, mobile phone charger etc. with you at all times for emergencies. Keep spare change for taxis and bus fares if needed.
- Arrange to leave when your partner is not around.
- Keep all medicines for you and your children together in a box.

In a crisis situation safety is vital. If a victim is planning to leave the following things are important to take if possible:

- Driver's License
- Car Registration
- Child's Birth Certificate
- Your Birth Certificate
- Rent or mortgage and benefit papers
- House Keys
- Passport
- Injunctions/solicitors Papers
- Money
- Jewelry
- Toiletries
- Clothes - You and your Children
- Medication
- Photographs

Tips and information to help you stay safe:

- Make sure your home is secure
- Inform your employer about your situation
- Consider where your wages/benefits are paid to
- Consider getting protection on your National Insurance Numbers, Electoral Role
- Plan safe routes home from work and vary them, and use different modes of transport
- Think about what you would do if something happened while you were on your way home
- Do not go out alone, especially if going out of the building
- Avoid usual routines e.g. shopping times and places
- Choose a different bank to go to - cancel shared cards and accounts
- Keep any court orders with you
- Keep a mobile phone with you if possible and make sure it is charged up. Consider changing the sim card if you experiencing ongoing harassment (you should consider saving any evidence of harassment on your phone and reporting this to the police)
- Make sure that a person or organisation does not pass on your name or address

## **Responding to Concerns, Allegations and Disclosures**

This policy and associated procedures inform all staff, elected members, volunteers and anybody working for and / or on behalf of West Lindsey District Council of what actions should be taken if they have concerns about, encounter or receive a disclosure about domestic abuse.

These procedures are governed by a set of key principles and themes, to ensure that people who are subject to domestic abuse experience the process in such a way that it is sensitive to individual circumstances, is person-centred and is outcome-focussed. It is vital that the procedures in this section are understood and applied consistently by all staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working for and / or on behalf of West Lindsey District Council.

If a victim discloses domestic abuse to you:

- Be non-judgmental
- Believe them



- Tell them help and support is available. Give them helpline numbers/card
- Listen to them and ask what they want to do
- Do they need an interpreter?
- Do they need help with housing and benefits?
- Do not pressure them into leaving their partner
- If they choose to stay with their partner, respect that decision
- Tell them you will continue to support them no matter what they do
- Encourage them to think about their safety
- Recognise the complexity of the process
- Acknowledge that everyone has their own coping strategies which may differ from your own ideas
- Acknowledge ethnocentric biases and views of family life of yourself and your agency and find ways to challenge these
- Remember that victims may be frightened of having children taken into care
- Supporting non-abusing parents protects children and is expected by the Children Act 1989 and Every Child Matters 2004
- Children may need breathing space from a violent parent but may want contact again after time
- Beware of minimising abuse and the danger over time
- Accurate advice and information is essential
- Recognise that support may be needed over a number of years

## Confidentiality and Security

### **Disclosing domestic abuse is not easy.**

- At all times the person who has experienced Domestic Abuse must be dealt with in confidence. This is important to maximise the confidence that the individual has in the colleague/manager/practitioner and the organisation
- At all times take steps to protect the victim, accept their perception of the danger they are in and listen appropriately
- Permission must be sought to share information. Information should never be discussed with other members of the public and should only be shared with colleagues where it is appropriate (e.g. the [MARAC](#) process)

- The [DASH/CAADA Risk Assessment toolkit](#) should be used in all cases and its' use explained to the victim – **a domestic abuse trained officer will assist you to complete the risk assessment, or may complete this with the victim**
- Concerns about the welfare of any children will take precedence over issues of confidentiality and be over-ridden by Child Protection procedures
- Never give out the address of a refuge. Be aware of the referral procedure in your local area. It is good practice not to place the victim's new address on any forms or official papers without their permission
- Ensure that at all times the victim is aware of organisational procedures and any action you are taking. Records should be kept of all interviews. This may be important for later evidential purposes. Use the client's exact words to record the abuse. Be as precise e.g. "my husband hit me with a cricket bat" rather than "client has been abused"
- Do not insist on joint sessions with the victim and the perpetrator or that they should seek legal remedies if they do not wish to do so
- If the victim concerned does not want to leave yet, it does not mean they will never leave, nor that they do not require ongoing and continual support
- If the victim is working, discuss the possibilities and consequences of taking sick or annual leave. If s/he has a joint bank account, discuss freezing the account until matters are resolved. If this has occurred, cheques and direct debits will not be honoured. Offer /signpost to advice about debts and their management
- A change of name may be required for protection purposes. The client can be known by any name providing all agencies are informed of the name she wishes to be known by. If a permanent change is required this can be obtained via a solicitor



**IMPORTANT:** Never judge a person for not leaving an abusive relationship, support them regardless of their decision and advise them how to keep safe while living with domestic abuse and when they are ready to move enable them to do it safely.

**IMPORTANT:** It is not your job to judge or to investigate, but to inform and share your concerns

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed,

as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the adult at risk and investigations that may follow.

Recorded information should be stored in a secure place, with access limited to officers named within the corporate safeguarding structure, in line with data protection laws.

If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is vital that staff, elected members, volunteers and anyone working for and / on behalf of the council are briefed as required so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. The safeguarding lead officer will be the designated spokesperson in the event of any public / media enquiries. In the absence of the safeguarding lead officer, the safeguarding coordinator will be the designated spokesperson. In the absence of both of these officers, the query should be escalated to the senior management team.

## Reporting Concerns

**Staff, Elected Members, volunteers and people working for and / or on behalf of the council have a duty of care to the adult at risk to report any suspicions or concerns. It may be that your concerns are important in enabling relevant statutory agencies to decide whether any action is necessary.**

Abuse thrives on secrecy and needs to be handled in a sensitive, accepting way. In order to achieve this staff may have to overcome certain barriers also as;

- Sometimes it may be hard to believe what they are saying
- It may be difficult in that the suspicion may be about someone that is known
- There is the fear of 'getting it wrong'
- There is the fear of what consequences there may be for 'getting it wrong' for the adult at risk, for the family and for themselves.
- There is a worry that it may make it worse for the adult at risk
- You simply do not want to become involved
- You feel you do not have the necessary information on what to do or who to contact

Any officer, in the course of their duties, may witness or be informed of an issue that they feel should be referred to a domestic abuse trained officer. This can be done using the councils standard reporting procedure or by contacting a domestic abuse champion. If officers are confident to do so, following a discussion with a domestic abuse champion they should complete a DASH risk assessment. Officers completing a risk assessment should discuss the outcome with a domestic abuse champion.


For all other referrals – please follow the [council's reporting procedures](#) and a risk assessment will be completed by a safeguarding officer or another domestic abuse trained officer.

It is possible that the Council will have allegations referred to them by third parties. For example, neighbours may contact staff to advise that they suspect that

somebody is at risk of or is experiencing domestic abuse. Under these circumstances staff should again follow the council's [online reporting procedure](#).


**Alternatively, and for staff without ICT access; please telephone the Safeguarding Officers on 01427 675199 to report a concern.**

It is important that all staff, Elected Members and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. However, staff, Elected Members and volunteers do have a duty of care to the adult at risk to report any suspicions you may have. It may be that your concerns are important in enabling the statutory agencies to decide whether any action is necessary.

	<p>If there is an immediate threat:</p> <p><b>Contact Lincolnshire Police on 101 or 999 and report immediately to the Councils Safeguarding Officer</b></p>
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### **West Lindsey District Council – Domestic Abuse Champions**

A number of West Lindsey District Council officers have received extensive training regarding domestic abuse awareness, risk assessment, target hardening and support, refuge accommodation and safety planning.

	<p><b>Domestic Abuse Champions</b></p> <p>If you are concerned about domestic abuse and would like further advice or information you can contact any of the people listed below:</p> <p>Emma Waters (Domestic Abuse Coordinator)</p> <p>Michelle Howard (Home Choices Team Manager)</p> <p>Rachel Cooper (Senior Home Choices Officer)</p> <p>Paula Clarke (Home Choices Officer)</p> <p>Hayley Ellis (Field Officer – Revenues)</p>
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## Information Sharing

### Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing

- **Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately
- **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so
- **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible
- **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgment, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgment on the facts of the case
- **Consider safety and well-being:** Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions
- **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely
- **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose

## Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, and up-dated where appropriate, however if a weakness is identified in procedures or national guidelines change, the policy will be reviewed and revised immediately.

Any amendments to national or local guidelines and legislation will be recorded within the policy and signed off by the Core Management Team. Staff, Elected Members, volunteers and anyone working for and / or on behalf of the council will be notified of any changes to the policy or associated procedures through wider management team, the weekly staff bulletin and on Minerva. Head of Service and Team Managers are expected to disseminate information to their teams.

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Aby uzyskać więcej informacji na ring 01427 676676  
Pentru mai multe informații inel 01427 676676  
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If you would like a copy of this in large, clear print, audio, Braille or in another language, please telephone **01427 676676**

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