

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

INTRODUCTION TO SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is a term used in the United Kingdom and Ireland to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults, to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

As a political party in our normal course of events we communicate directly with voters and volunteers who are over 18, there are instances here we do communicate with volunteers and children who are under the age of 18.

The Conservative Party is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults to promote good practice and expects all employees, colleagues, volunteers and partners to share this commitment. The Party is committed to the following principles and actions:

- The Conservative Party will ensure that a protective safeguarding culture is in place and is actively promoted within the organisation and will work together with other agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
- The Conservative Party will implement procedures to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and take all reasonable steps to protect them from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be safe and the activities they choose to participate in, and the Conservative Party is committed to fostering a safeguarding culture across the organisation.

All staff and volunteers will be required to adopt and abide by the Conservative Party's Code of Conduct and its procedures and will be provided with guidance to ensure that they are properly equipped to fulfil their responsibilities.

This policy sets out the Party's guidance on best practice in dealing with children, young people and vulnerable adults, protection procedures and specifies the roles and responsibilities of the Party's representatives for whom this policy is mandatory. The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety/protection and to allow Conservative Party representatives to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003. Sect 16-19 re-enacts and amends the offence of abuse of position of trust. Position of Trust offences apply to those who care for, train, supervise or are in sole charge of those up to the age of 16 years.

Key Definitions:

- Protection: the process of protecting individuals identified as either suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.
- Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child or adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.
- Children's Trust: the local statutory partnership that has a remit to ensure children and young people's issues are effectively addressed by all relevant agencies.
- Children/Young people: in line with the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 a child is anyone who has not yet reached his or her 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders' Institution, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.
- Separated/unaccompanied children: The term 'separated' describes children who are without an adult, or with an adult who is not legally responsible for them. Accompanying adults may be unrelated or abusive.

- A vulnerable adult or an adult at risk is a person over the age of 18 who is at risk of harm or who lacks the absolute most basic (as distinct from mid-level or typical level) human life skills. A vulnerable adult is unable, rather than unwilling, to properly learn or properly maintain these skills, and is usually completely without, and unable to obtain, any family, friends, acquaintances or other assistive persons in their lives to offer education or assistance in these areas. To be classed as vulnerable, the adult's circumstances must be unable to be altered or improved by the adult's own individual actions without direct assistance from a more typical adult. The vulnerable adult must also be shown to be, on some significant level, a risk to him or herself if assistance is not provided.

The Conservative Party representatives are defined as:

- Employees
- Agency Staff
- Contract Staff
- Volunteers - when working for and on behalf of the Conservative Party
- Parliamentary Staff including Members of Parliament

UPHOLDING

The safeguarding code of conduct. Any breaches of the code of conduct should be reported:

- Staff or volunteers should report breaches to their line manager, or to the dedicated Safeguarding Officer.
- Volunteers should report breaches to their Association or Regional Chairman or The Party's dedicated Safeguarding Officer. A detailed reporting and recording structure will be set out in a safeguarding reporting procedure. Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to the Party's disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another organisation will result in them being reported to the appropriate safeguarding officer within that organisation. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency i.e. the police and/or the local authority children's social care department if it is thought that the breach amounts to harm or risk of harm to a child or young person.

Children of all ages may be abused

The abuser may be a family member. Or they may be someone the child encounters within the community, including during sports and leisure activities. Child abusers can be found in all areas of society, and from any professional, racial and religious background. Contrary to the popular image child sex abusers often appear kind, concerned and caring towards children. But this is deliberate - by forming close relationships with children, abusers can build their trust and help prevent adult suspicion. Often an abused child will suffer more than one type of abuse at the same time. For example, parents who physically abuse their children may also be neglectful.

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child or young person is at significant risk.

However, staff and volunteers do have a responsibility to act if they have a concern.

In dealing with vulnerable adults the previous information for children should be applied.

The role of staff and volunteers

It is important that staff and volunteers, including elected representatives and senior officials, are aware that they may be seen as role models by children, young people and vulnerable adults and therefore must act in an appropriate manner at all times. Elected representatives and others in positions of authority must take particular care that their status and power is not used, or may seem to be used, inappropriately to influence children, young people and vulnerable adults or to cause them harm.

Abuse of a Position of Trust

When engaging with children, young people and vulnerable adults on behalf of the Conservative Party, staff and volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of trust. Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship. Young people of 16 or 17 as well as vulnerable adults can legally consent to sexual activity, but they may still be relatively immature emotionally. It is essential that those who may be in a position of trust recognise this vulnerability and ensure it is not exploited.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a young person under 18, it is an offence in certain circumstances for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that young person, or to cause or incite that young person to engage in or watch sexual activity even if the young person appears to consent. Therefore, given this principle, the Conservative Party expects that:

- Any behaviour, which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the child or young people in their care, must be avoided;
- Any sexual relationship within a position of trust relationship is not allowed so long as the relationship of trust continues.

Recruiting

At each stage of recruitment, safer recruitment applies equally to paid full time/part time staff and volunteers. This includes a Safeguarding Statement in recruitment adverts to the effect that 'recruitment is done in line with safer recruitment practices'. Job descriptions and duties outline responsibility for safeguarding.

When working with children, young people and vulnerable adults through any Conservative Party activities or events, it is essential that you:

- Have parental consent;
- Uphold this code, and any additional safeguarding procedures, at all times;
- Treat children, young people and vulnerable adults fairly, without prejudice or discrimination and avoid favoritism;
- Ensure allegations or disclosures about abuse by a child, young person or another adult are taken seriously and reported, including peer-on-peer abuse by children or young people and any allegations made against you. Follow the Conservative Party safeguarding procedures for reporting such concerns;
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations and suspicions of abuse regardless of the status of the adult(s), including their political office, or organisation(s) that may be implicated in so doing;
- Respect a child, young person or vulnerable adult's right to personal privacy but never agree to keep any information relating to the harm of a child, young person or vulnerable adult confidential;
- Ensure all direct contact, interactions and communications (face-to-face and online) with children, young people and vulnerable adults are appropriate and relevant to the work of the Conservative Party and always use language which is appropriate and is neither bullying, offensive, sexist, racist, homophobic, intimidatory or discriminatory regardless of political differences;
- Maintain appropriate conduct and avoid threatening or potentially violent behaviour such that children, young people or vulnerable adults have no cause to feel anxious or frightened by adult behaviour during meetings or events;
- Value and take children and young peoples' contributions seriously, actively involving children and young people in planning activities wherever possible;

- Plan activities so that they involve more than one other person being present, or at least within sight and hearing of others. There may be occasions where this is not possible so in such circumstances the meeting should be conducted in a room with an open door or visual access.
- Plan activities so that they are held in suitable venues and locations for children, young people and vulnerable adults and that appropriate travel arrangements and health and safety measures are in place where necessary;
- When canvassing with children, young persons or vulnerable adults always ensure two adults are present, and the child, young person or vulnerable adult is never left alone;
- Ensure that the focus of your relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult that you have met through the Conservative Party always remains professional .
- Foster a culture where children, young people and adults alike feel comfortable enough to raise any concerns they may have about inappropriate attitudes or behaviour towards children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- Consider carefully any physical contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult as there may be occasions where a distressed child, young person or adult needs comfort. Staff and volunteers should use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate and not unnecessary or unjustified contact. Be aware that physical contact with a young person may be misinterpreted, no matter how well intentioned. This means you should: - consider the way in which they offer comfort and reassurance to a distressed child, young person or adult and do it in an age-appropriate way; - never touch a child or young person in a way which may be considered indecent; - record and report situations which may give rise to concern from either party; - not assume that all children, young people or vulnerable adults seek physical comfort if they are distressed;
- Ensure that if any kind of physical support is required during any activities, it is provided only when necessary in relation to the activity and that this is done in a way that other colleagues can observe you and, in a way, that the child or young person is comfortable;

In addition, it is essential that you DO NOT:

- Conduct a sexual relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff, member or volunteer and a child, young person or vulnerable adult involved in Conservative Party activity represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member, party member or volunteer and is not normally acceptable. However, there may be exceptions to this for example if the adult is married to the young person or had a pre-existing relationship prior to the young person's involvement in the Party;
- Physically, emotionally or sexually abuse, maltreat or exploit any child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- Exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues nor allow allegations against staff, volunteers and elected representatives to go unreported or simply 'investigate' them yourself;
- Use inappropriate language in any media, or undertake activity which lessens the effectiveness of this code by displaying an attitude or behaviours which are not conducive to protecting and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children, young people and vulnerable adults or discuss adult sexual relationships in front of them;
- Rely on your reputation or that of the Party or any elected office you hold to protect you;
- Adopt an attitude of complacency with regard to your own conduct. Remember, even well-intentioned actions may be misinterpreted by others;
- Give or receive gifts and/or substances such as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, e-cigarettes from or to a child, young person or vulnerable adult;

- Encourage or appear to encourage children or young people to drink alcohol or take drugs;
- Allow your judgment to be impaired by alcohol or any other substance when acting in a position of trust.
- Smoke cigarettes or vape with, or in front of, children and young people;
- Arrange any residential event involving children, young people or vulnerable adults without ensuring that another approved person will be present and parental consent has been given;
- Use any type of physical punishment in order to discipline. Shouting at children, young people and vulnerable adults should be avoided whenever possible and only if alternative forms of discipline have failed;
- Photograph or film children, young people or vulnerable adults for which no prior consent has been provided.

Online e-safety code of conduct the term e-safety can be defined as the process of limiting the risks to young people, our staff, and volunteers when communicating via the internet, digital and mobile devices and using social media. Social media includes blogs, online communities, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter and Instagram.

As an organisation that engages with children and young people, the Conservative Party acknowledges the positive impact and involvement that social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have on the lives of people and their ability to learn about and engage in political debate. The online environment is utilised by the Conservative Party to encourage children and young people in our campaigning work and events. At the same time, we recognise the dangers and potential risks that online activity can pose to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

There is a wide range of ways to communicate with people and this is a rapidly changing environment as new technologies, applications and social media sites merge. No code of conduct for e-safety can cover all of these separately. However, there are broad principles that we expect all staff and volunteers to adhere to in order to safeguard young people and themselves in respect of using all these forms of media, devices, apps and social networking sites:

Content

- When communicating directly with people online observe the same rules of behaviour as if speaking with them in person that is by being professional - polite, respectful, not swearing or saying anything (using the written word, images or icons) that could be regarded as sexual innuendo, bullying, intimidation or discrimination;
- Ask yourself whether the content of the message could be misunderstood or misinterpreted by someone else;
- Always ensure the content of any online communication has a clear 'work' purpose; don't use any 'text speak' abbreviations, symbols or emoticons even if you ordinarily use these in your personal life;
- Never disclose non-public and confidential information about the Party, its staff/volunteers or the children, young people or vulnerable adults with whom we are working;
- Contact with children and young people online should only be a recognised element of your work and done strictly for Party business purposes only;
- Do not send any illegal or inappropriate content (written, images or icons) including sexting via mobile phones or sharing of abusive images of children or young people.

Openness and scrutiny

- Always communicate with children, young people and vulnerable adults in a way that is open to others to see if necessary;

- Do not use private messaging facilities on social networks or apps rather if it needs to be private then do this by email exchange or phone and note the conversation afterwards;
- Ensure there is always a record of such conversations that would be open to others to check if necessary;
- It should always be clear who the communication is from when the Party is communicating with a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- There should be no use of anonymous apps – that is where the sender can remain anonymous.
- Recording: Only use social media and apps where there is a permanent record of what's been said and sent thereby being open to scrutiny e.g. the use of Snapchat is inappropriate.
- Use of equipment Party equipment (including computers, laptops, mobile phones, notebooks, etc.) must not be used to view, download, create or share (with colleagues or children) illegal content including abusive images of children or young people).

Expectations for paid staff, volunteers and members:

The requirements of conduct online of all Party staff with respect to children and young people are that they must not:

- Within the scope of this document if any image is taken of a young person in the normal course of activity the consent for such an image must be given by a parent or guardian.
- Use your own digital camera/video for work – this includes integral cameras on mobile phones unless this is part of Party official business and has been agreed and documented by the line manager;
- Play online games with any child, young person or vulnerable adult unless part of official Party business using professional accounts and devices;
- Seek to befriend a child, young person or vulnerable adult or their family online whom you have met through work for any purpose whatsoever including for the purpose of developing a personal and/or sexual relationship;
- View or share abusive images of children and young people (sometimes referred to as 'child pornography').
- Use your personal mobile phone to communicate directly with young people and vulnerable adults unless an emergency or agreed as part of event procedures.

The use of text messaging to communicate directly with individual young participants increases the vulnerability of both the young person and (typically) the member of staff or volunteer. However, there may be circumstances in which it is justified, subject to appropriate safeguarding considerations. In these circumstances the following guidelines will apply:

- The decision to use text messaging should not be made by a staff/volunteers in isolation and should be discussed and agreed with the relevant line manager;
- Only those staff and volunteers approved to send bulk or individual messages are permitted to do so;
- Staff and volunteers should only send individual text messages to a young person or vulnerable adult in response to a specific question or immediate request; staff and volunteers should not engage in general conversation with children, young people and vulnerable adults via text message;
- All messages should not be edited or deleted;
- Children, young people's as well as vulnerable adults mobile phone numbers should be kept secure via passcode locks on phones and computers. The mobile phone numbers should not be shared with anyone else unless consent has been given;

- The content should relate solely to Party activity;
- All bulk text messages sent to children, young people and vulnerable adults should also be sent through approved channels and recorded for external moderation if required.

Responding to disclosure

If you receive information concerning disclosure you should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Tell the child, young person or vulnerable adult that he/she is not to blame and that he / she was right to tell you.
- Take what the child, young person or vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child, young person or vulnerable adult who has a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- You should not attempt to investigate the abuse. Remember that an allegation of abuse or neglect may lead to court action to protect the person or to punish the abuser. Both could be jeopardised if you act inappropriately. Your role is to listen and record. Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. **DO NOT ASK CLOSED OR LEADING QUESTIONS** such as “did he touch you?” Allow the individual to talk freely and be supportive.
- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult but do not make promises of secrecy or confidentiality, as these may not be feasible as a result of subsequent developments.

Procedure

Action to take:

- Complete a Safeguarding Protection Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix A)
- Pass the completed form to the Safeguarding Officer immediately (or as soon as practically). Reporting the matter should not be delayed by attempts to obtain further information.
- If you believe that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger of harm, you should personally contact the Police ensuring that the Safeguarding Officer is made aware at the earliest opportunity. (The police will automatically inform Children and Young People’s Services). A record should be made of the name and title of the police officer to whom the concerns were passed together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is needed.

Recording Information on the Safeguarding Protection Incident Reporting Form:

All concerns, disclosure or incidents should be recorded on the Safeguarding Protection Incident Reporting Form (Appendix A). The form maintains a record of any incident. The form should always be filled out as soon as possible after disclosure, incidents or concerns.

To ensure that information is as accurate and helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording information, you should confine yourself to the facts. Distinguish your personal knowledge from what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- The person’s name, age, date of birth and ethnicity
- The home address and telephone number
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else’s
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- A description of any visible bruising or injury, e.g. location, size etc. Also give details of any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes

- Details of witnesses to the incident
- The account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred if appropriate
- Have the parents or guardian been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details, however sketchy the details might be, it is essential that you support your concerns with information - record the disclosure or document the allegation, where possible use the Safeguarding Protection Incident Reporting Form.

All concerns and allegations should be recorded on the Safeguarding Protection Incident Reporting Form. This applies whether the concern or allegation refers to a member of staff, volunteer, member or any other person.

Remember: Concern does not necessarily need to be related to a single specific incident. It may also arise from the accumulation of minor concerns. Failure to report concerns early may allow abuse to continue or escalate with catastrophic consequences.

In all cases, if you are not sure what to do you should contact the Safeguarding Officer who will be able to provide advice.

Information Sharing

- GDPR 2018 legislation is not a barrier to sharing information about safeguarding;
- Seek advice from appropriate professionals before action is taken;
- Keep a record of what information has been shared and keep it necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure. Do not record opinion or assumptions, only facts.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in the relevant legislation or any other adopted standard of best practice.

Appendix A

Template Safeguarding incident reporting form

Your name:	Name of organisation:
Your role:	
Contact information (you):	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Telephone numbers:	Email address:
Persons name:	Date of birth:
Ethnic origin:	Does the individual have a disability?
Gender:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Parent's, carer's or guardian's name(s):	
Contact information (parents/carers/guardians):	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Telephone numbers:	Email address:
Have parent's / carer's / guardian's been notified of this incident?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If YES, please provide details of what was said/action agreed:	
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Responding to my own concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else	

If responding to concerns raised by someone else: *Please provide further information below*

Name:

Position within the sport or relationship to the individual:

Telephone numbers:

Email address:

Details of the incident or concerns: *Include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay.*

Person's account of the incident:

Please provide any witness accounts of the incident:

Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident:

Name:

Position within the club or relationship to the individual:

Date of birth (if child):

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone numbers:

Email address:

Please provide details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury:

Name:

Position within the club or relationship to the individual:

Date of birth (if child):

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone numbers:

Email address:

Please provide details of action taken to date:

Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?

Yes No

If YES, please provide further details:

Name of organisation / agency:

Contact person:

Telephone numbers:

Email address:

Agreed action or advice given:

Your Signature:		Print name:	
Date:			

Contact The Safeguarding Officer in line with reporting procedures.

Parental Consent Form

Name of Child: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Parent/ Guardian: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Tel (day): _____ Tel (evening): _____

Mobile: _____ E-mail: _____

Does your child suffer from any medical conditions/allergies that the program should be aware of (including any current medication): _____

Please provide details of medication that must be administered: _____

Emergency contact details: (If different from above)

Name: _____ Telephone no: _____

Relationship to child: _____

CONSENT (please read carefully)

- a) I agree to my son/ daughter taking part in the activities of the Campaigns and Field Work team.
- b) I confirm to the best of my knowledge that my son/ daughter does not suffer from any medical condition other than those listed above.
- c) I consent to my son/ daughter travelling by any form of public transport, minibus or motor vehicle organised by the Campaigns and Field Work team to any event in which the team is participating.
- d) I understand that my son/daughter may be both photographed and filmed as part of the campaigning and field work process.

Signed: _____ (Parent/ Guardian) Date: _____