

## HR Committee – 8 January 2026

### Safeguarding Policy Update

Purpose	This report outlines updates and amendments to the NFDC safeguarding policy to reflect changes in legislation, best practice and safeguarding operational structure within NFDC.
Classification	Public
Executive summary	<p>The safeguarding policy is reviewed at least every three years to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice.</p> <p>The updated and revised policy strengthens the council's commitment to protecting vulnerable individuals and embeds safeguarding principles across all services.</p> <p>Key updates include clearer guidance, links to training and additional information around domestic abuse.</p>
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>That the HR Committee review the revised and updated safeguarding policy prior to Portfolio Holder approval.</b>
Reasons for the recommendation(s)	<p>NFDC has a statutory duty to promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. And are primarily set out in the Children Act 2004, and the Care Act 2014.</p> <p>The revised and updated policy sets out a clear process which is aligned to published guidance and best practice of Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board and Children's Partnership.</p> <p>The updated policy supports the corporate priority of helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Dan Poole – Community, Safety & Wellbeing
Strategic Director(s)	Peter Matthew – Housing & Communities (Interim)

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## Introduction and background

1. The district council has a statutory duty to promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. The council's safeguarding duties are primarily set out in the Children Act 2004, and the Care Act 2014.
2. The council also holds a duty in the discharge of its functions to have due regard to the need of preventing people from being drawn into terrorism. This duty is known as the Prevent duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
3. As well as being duties for the council, this extends to those who are providing services for the council, e.g. contractors, voluntary sector partners etc.

## Policy revisions and amendments

4. The safeguarding policy is reviewed at least every three years and updated whenever there are changes to relevant legislation or statutory guidance. In addition, revisions are made to incorporate any lessons learned from the council's safeguarding responsibilities. This approach ensures the policy remains current, compliant, and fit for purpose.
5. In line with the council's commitment to maintaining an up-to-date and robust framework the following amendments have been made:
  - **Legislation and guidance updates** – All relevant legislation and statutory guidance within the policy have been reviewed and updated to ensure compliance where relevant.
  - **Enhanced learning resources** – The policy now includes embedded links that provide direct access to supplementary

learning resources, supporting staff in their ongoing professional development.

- **Disabled children** – Enhanced guidance to support officers in the identification and responding to the needs of disabled children who may be especially vulnerable to abuse.
- **Domestic abuse provisions** – Updates include:
  - Recognition of children as victims in their own right, in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
  - Inclusion of guidance on online and digital abuse.
  - Reference to the newly appointed Domestic Abuse Advocate within Housing Services, providing dedicated support for victims.
- **Human Resources** – Revised appraisal and 1:1 process with the implementation of the Growth & Goals framework.
- **Training and toolkits** – New training materials and practical toolkits have been introduced to strengthen safeguarding practice across the organisation.
- **Corporate template alignment** – The policy has been reformatted to comply with the new corporate policy template for consistency and accessibility.

The updated policy reflects NFDC's ongoing dedication to creating a safe and supportive environment for residents, employees, and partners. It also aligns with national safeguarding frameworks and addresses feedback received during previous audits and staff training. This continues to ensure the council is in a good position to fulfil its statutory safeguarding and Prevent obligations.

## **EMT feedback**

6. The revised policy was presented to the Executive Management Team (EMT) on Tuesday, 9 December 2025, with a recommendation for subsequent consideration by the HR Committee. The review concluded that the policy represents a valuable and necessary resource for staff, ensuring that appropriate procedures are consistently followed.
7. EMT noted that while safeguarding training strongly reinforces the principle that "*safeguarding is everybody's business*," this message was not explicitly reflected throughout the policy. To address this, the strapline "*safeguarding is everybody's business*" has been incorporated into the footer of every page, providing a clear and continuous reminder to all staff.

## **Corporate plan priorities**

8. People - Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.

## **Options appraisal**

9. The policy has been updated in accordance with national guidance and legislation and places the council in a positive position in meeting its duties.

## **Consultation undertaken**

10. The safeguarding policy updated in 2022 was recently reviewed by the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership as part of the Section 11 audit in 2025. Feedback from that review highlighted the need to update links to relevant strategies and explicitly recognise children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. These recommendations have been incorporated into the revised policy.
11. To maintain the policy's relevance and alignment with departmental standards, consultation was undertaken with Human Resources, ICT, Legal and Procurement regarding their respective sections. All recommended amendments have been incorporated, including:
  - Introduction of growth and goals conversations to replace annual appraisals and one-to-one meetings.
  - Updated details on the NFDC Data Protection policy.
  - Addition of ICT Security and Information Governance policy, including a direct link.

## **Financial and resource implications**

12. All safeguarding training is delivered in-house by the Safeguarding Leads ensuring cost-effective implementation without the need for external providers. There are no additional financial implications associated with the safeguarding policy updates.

## **Legal implications**

13. The council is under a legal (and a moral) duty to ensure that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. The safeguarding policy aims to outline legal duties, establish a clear framework, and define procedures for fulfilling safeguarding responsibilities. This includes promoting wellbeing, preventing harm, and responding effectively to concerns.

## **Risk assessment**

14. The implementation of this policy establishes a clear and structured framework for the operational delivery of the council's safeguarding duties protecting vulnerable persons, reducing risk of non-compliance and reputational harm. Alongside positive recruitment practices and robust vetting procedures, the policy also supports continuous staff training, clear accountability measures, and a culture of vigilance to ensure safeguarding standards are consistently upheld.

## **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

15. There are no direct implications arising from this report but there may be some indirect benefits through the implementation of this policy.

## **Equalities implications**

16. The council believes that all children, young people and adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse. The council is committed to safeguarding all children, young people and adults from harm and to treat them with respect during their dealings with the council irrespective of their age, gender, disability, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, transgender status or any other protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010).

## **Crime and disorder implications**

17. Implementing this policy ensures the council operates in line with current legislation and best practice. This strengthens the council's position in safeguarding vulnerable groups and helps reduce the risk of exploitative behaviours.

## **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

18. The collection, retention and deletion of resident's data is governed by GDPR and associated guidance. All data is collected and maintained in line with the required legislation and shared in accordance with defined and established information sharing protocols and procedures.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Children,  
Young People & Adults at Risk Policy

## **Background Papers:**

None