



## **Safeguarding policy**

### **Mission statement**

Machynlleth Town Council (the Council) strives to provide services and activities that minimise risk and are as safe as we can make them for the public, children, young people and adults. We aim to protect them from harm or abuse, prevent disruption to health or development and ensure safe and effective provision. We will work in partnership with local and national agencies to put in place suitable procedures for reporting, making referrals, accessing training and specialist support, when required. We will give priority to ensuring that everyone who works for us, paid or voluntary, is selected and trained with the objectives of this mission in mind.

### **Recruitment**

When recruiting we will use appropriate procedures, safeguards and checks:

- We will request references for all posts and voluntary roles before appointment.
- We will use Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks to help us assess suitability and when it is eligible to do so by determining which roles are regulated activity and are therefore subject to an enhanced check of the barred lists and those roles that are eligible only for the standard DBS check.
- We will assess any disclosed criminal record information in accordance with our data protection and equalities policies (treating ex-offenders fairly).
- We will provide an induction program for all new volunteers and staff, appropriate training to enable all volunteers and staff to carry out their duties safely and confidently, and ongoing training for the benefit of individuals' personal and professional development and the development of our organisation.
- We regularly review our recruitment procedures in response to changes in legislation and systems external to our organisation e.g. DBS checks and checklist checks.

### **Volunteers**

We will ensure that all volunteers are treated fairly, have clear expectations of their role and are supported to fulfill that role. The Town Clerk will support all voluntary roles.

- Volunteers will be treated equally alongside any paid staff, and all volunteers will be offered the same opportunities in terms of development, responsibility, training and qualifications, and recognition for their contribution to our projects.
- Our volunteers will always adhere to the Code of Conduct when representing the Projects. Any voluntary roles, which would be an unsupervised regulated activity, will be appropriately supervised in accordance with statutory guidance.

### **Safeguarding Officer**

We will appoint and nominate a safeguarding officer, with the role of supporting service users and other employees:



- He / she will be available to all staff, volunteers and service users to discuss any safety concerns, issues or complaints, the welfare or behavior of service users, volunteers and staff.
- He / she will have access to appropriate training to support them in these roles.
- He / she will liaise with local and national agencies, contribute to relevant policies, maintain records and maintain confidentiality, adhering to and promoting this policy within the Council.
- He / she will provide help or access to support for individuals who suffer harm or abuse.

### **Harm and abuse**

The Council will demonstrate an understanding of harm and abuse, and we will have a legal duty to act if it occurs in our Projects. Harm may be caused by accidents, intentional abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, financial), neglect (willful or not) or factors such as bullying, prejudicial attitudes or failure to enable an individual to participate in activities that are open to the majority of his contemporaries.

We will respond appropriately to all incidents of harm to anyone connected with our service in order to reduce risks and improve our service. Deliberate acts of harm (physical, sexual, emotional and financial) and neglect are abusive to the individual and will be subject to disciplinary action, as well as reports and referrals to social services, the police, other professional bodies and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if in a regulated activity.

### **Significant harm**

Where there is a risk of significant harm, the Safeguarding Officer will have the power to act accordingly, taking the following steps:

- Record all discussions regarding issue
- Sign and request signatures on reports and statements
- Seek confidential advice from specialist sources
- Share concerns (with consent when necessary and appropriate) internally with the Council Chair.
- Share concerns and make referrals to Social Services or Police as appropriate
- Make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service regarding staff or volunteers in a regulated activity whose behavior is detrimental to service users and when removed from a regulated activity

### **Confidentiality**

The Council will ensure retention of all reports and records (including staff and volunteer records) is secure and confidential in accordance with our data protection policy and confidentiality statement, or in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice if appropriate, until or unless it is necessary to share



this material with the agencies named above. Information will only be shared on a "need to know" basis.

### **Communication**

We will plan and prepare for appropriate information sharing within the Council and beyond. We will make sure that anyone who has difficulties communicating, hearing, seeing, reading, talking and so on has a right to speak up about things that concern them.

We will communicate this policy to all staff and volunteers. We support and encourage everyone to speak up and contact the Safeguarding Officer when there is a

- concern, or
- exposure (information about individuals at risk of, or suffering significant harm) or
- allegation (the possibility that a volunteer or staff member may cause harm to a person in their care)

Staff or volunteers may report things that are not right, which are illegal or if anyone in the workplace neglects their duties, puts someone's health and safety at risk or hides wrong doings. In the first instance they should speak to the Safeguarding Officer who has the appropriate responsibility. We would prefer using internal processes where possible to report as above, but this does not prevent them from reporting or referring to statutory agencies such as Social Services or the Police, in their own right as a private individual. We also support our staff or volunteers to raise concerns or disclose information, which they believe constitutes misconduct - whistleblowing (disclosure in the public interest).

To encourage everyone involved with our organisation to understand that safeguarding is everyone's business, we will:

- put the issue on the agenda of the Full Council from time to time
- provide opportunities to discuss issues and concerns, policy and procedures to reflect, review and continue to learn and improve in our safeguarding responsibilities.

(The above policy in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 includes the Statutory Guidance 'Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Working Together to Protect People Volume 1 - Introduction and Overview')

Adopted by Machynlleth Town Council at its meeting on 30/01/2023