



MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children and vulnerable adults, are protected and keep them safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with March Town Council ("the Council").

The Policy sets out the commitments made by March Town Council, and it informs staff, members, and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

March Town Council understands safeguarding to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from encountering its staff, volunteers, and members of the Council.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the Glossary of Terms on pages 5 and 6 of this Policy document.

SCOPE

- All employees of March Town Council
- Members (Councillors) of March Town Council
- Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to March Town Council, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; visitors (including journalists, dignitaries, celebrities, and politicians).

POLICY STATEMENT

March Town Council believes that everyone with whom it has contact has, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin, the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The Council is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Town Council within the parish of March.

The Council will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff, councillors or associated personnel.

The Objectives of this policy are to;

- ensure that, where possible, all facilities and activities offered or delivered by March Town Council are designed and maintained to limit risk to children and vulnerable adults
- promote the general welfare, health, and development of children by being aware of child protection issues and to be able to respond where appropriate to a local government organisation
- develop procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect.

NOTE: As March Town Council does not directly provide care or supervision services to children and vulnerable adults, it expects that all children and vulnerable adults using its services/activities do so with the consent and the necessary supervision of a parent, carer, or other responsible adult.

This Policy addresses the following areas of safeguarding;

- Child safeguarding
- Adult safeguarding
- Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

March Town Council is committed to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of i) prevention, ii) reporting and iii) response.

PREVENTION

March Town Council responsibilities;

March Town Council will:

- appoint a Safeguarding Officer (The Town Clerk or other officer so nominated by her/him)
- ensure that all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this Policy
- design and undertake all its activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Town Council within the parish of March. This includes the way in which information about individuals is gathered and communicated
- implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing, and deploying staff, members, and associated personnel
- ensure that staff and members receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role and responsibilities
- follow-up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Responsibilities of staff, members, and associated personnel;

Child safeguarding

March Town Council staff, members and associated personnel must not:

- engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 years
- sexually abuse or exploit children
- subject a child to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children, including child labour or trafficking.

Adult safeguarding

March Town Council staff, members, and associated personnel must not:

- sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults.

- subject a vulnerable adult to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

March Town Council staff, members and associated personnel must not exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual activity.

Additionally, March Town Council staff, members, and associated personnel are obliged to:

- contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by any March Town Council staff, member, or associated personnel to the council's Safeguarding Officer.

REPORTING

March Town Council will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff, members of the council and the appropriate authorities.

March Town Council will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners, and official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern;

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Council's Safeguarding Officer (The Clerk).

If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to the Safeguarding Officer (for example, if he or she feels that the report would not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern), he or she may report to any other appropriate staff or member of the Town Council.

RESPONSE

March Town Council will follow-up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory requirements.

March Town Council will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found to be in breach of this Policy.

March Town Council will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff, members, or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and should be always kept secure.

DECLARATION

March Town Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect.

All members and staff of March Town Council and volunteers supporting the council in delivery of services to members of the public will be provided with a copy of this Policy, which they should read. Having read the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, they should be proactive in providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults who are involved in Town Council activities.

This Policy was adopted by March Town Council on 6 October 2025.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Beneficiary of Assistance - Someone who directly receives services from March Town Council.

Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that March Town Council serves and can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

- Child - A person under the age of 18 years.
- Harm - Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights.

Psychological harm - Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement, and isolation.

- Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The term used by the humanitarian and development community refers to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

- Safeguarding

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

In the local council sector, we understand safeguarding to mean protecting people, including children and vulnerable adults, from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with March Town Council.

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from the council's values and principles and shapes its culture.

The Council pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across the council's activities and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing, and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable, and transparent systems for response, reporting, and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centered and protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all that the Council does.

- Sexual abuse

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

- Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

- Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience, and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

- Vulnerable adult

A person who is over 18 years of age, who, according to paragraph 14.2 of the Care Act 2015:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect
- as a result of their care needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.