



Personnel Committee 11th February 2026

HR Policies & Procedure reviews

Report from the Director of Finance & Resources

1. Purpose and Background of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek committee approval to adopt the updated versions of the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

These policies form part of the Council's core governance framework and are essential to ensuring:

- the Council meets its statutory and moral duties to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk
- the Council meets its legal obligations to promote equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace
- staff, Members, volunteers and contractors are clear on responsibilities, reporting requirements and expected standards of behaviour.

A review is necessary to ensure that both policies remain aligned with:

- current legislation and statutory guidance
- best practice and learning from service delivery
- organisational structures, commissioned services and partnership working
- the Council's values and priorities.

The updated policies are presented for adoption to ensure consistent implementation across the council.

2. Options for Council

Option 1 – Approve review and adopt updated policies (Recommended)
Members approve the review and adoption of revised Safeguarding and EDI policies, including consultation and final adoption through the appropriate governance route for use with immediate effect.

Option 2 – Defer decision
Delay review and adoption. This is not recommended as it may leave the Council operating under outdated policy arrangements.



3. Reason for Recommendation

Option 1 is recommended because both policies are now overdue for review: safeguarding and equality compliance are fundamental responsibilities of the Council. Updated policies will ensure the Council:

- remains legally compliant
- provides clear guidance for staff and partners
- reduces safeguarding and discrimination risks
- Demonstrates good governance and accountability.

4. Expected Benefits

Adopting the new policies will:

- strengthen safeguarding practice and escalation arrangements
- improve clarity of roles, responsibilities and reporting routes
- support consistent application across all services
- reinforce an inclusive organisational culture
- ensure contractors and commissioned providers meet Council expectations
- increase public confidence in the Council's governance and service delivery.

5. Implications

5.1. Legal

Adoption of the new policies supports the Council's legal duties, including:

- safeguarding responsibilities in relation to children and adults at risk
- compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty
- adherence to relevant statutory guidance and good governance expectations.

5.2. Risks

Key risks of not reviewing and adopting these new policies include:

- safeguarding failures due to unclear or outdated procedures
- inconsistent practice across teams and services
- increased risk of discrimination, harassment or exclusion
- increased likelihood of complaints, legal challenge and reputational damage
- unclear contractor responsibilities and oversight.



The new policies will mitigate these risks.

5.3. Financial Implications

The review and adoption can be managed within existing budgets. Minor costs may arise from:

- staff time for drafting and consultation
- communications and publication
- updating training materials and delivery.

Any significant additional costs would be reported separately.

5.4. Timescales

On approval at this meeting

5.5. Stakeholders

- Members
- Senior Leadership Team
- HR / Organisational Development
- Safeguarding leads / designated officers
- Service managers and staff
- Trade unions
- Partner organisations (where appropriate)
- Community groups and equality networks (where appropriate).

5.6. Contractors

Adoption of the new policies will ensure safeguarding and EDI expectations are embedded in commissioning and contracts, including:

- minimum standards of conduct
- reporting of concerns/incidents
- training and compliance requirements
- monitoring and contract management arrangements.



5.7. Crime & Disorder (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)

There may be a positive impact as updated safeguarding arrangements can:

- strengthen responses to exploitation, abuse and anti-social behaviour
- improve reporting and referral pathways
- support early intervention and prevention.

5.8. Biodiversity (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)

There are no direct biodiversity implications arising from adoption of these policies.

Impact is expected to be neutral.

5.9. Privacy Impact (consider Privacy Impact assessment)

Safeguarding and EDI matters can involve sensitive personal data. Adoption of new policies will:

- strengthen clarity on information handling and sharing
- support compliance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- ensure that Privacy Impact Assessments / DPIAs are undertaken where required.

5.10. Equality & Diversity (councils have a legal duty to consider impact)

The adoption of the new EDI policy directly supports the Council's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 by:

- promoting equality of opportunity
- preventing discrimination and harassment
- improving accessibility and inclusive service delivery
- strengthening accountability for inclusive practice.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be considered where appropriate to support adoption and implementation.

6. Appendices

Drafts of the new policies accompany this report

- a) Draft – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



- b) Draft – Safeguarding policy and procedure

7. Members are recommended to:

1. Approve the new Safeguarding Policy for adoption
2. Approve the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Helen Morton

Director of Finance & Resources

Drafted 3rd February 2026



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Safeguarding policy and procedure

Date	Version	Author	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
27 th January 2026	V1	Director of Finance & Resources		

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council

Date policy adopted	February 2026
Review cycle	Bi-annually
Review date	February 2028

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1. Policy Statement

Weston-super-Mare Town Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and to ensuring that they are protected from harm, abuse and neglect.

The Council recognises its legal, moral and corporate responsibilities to put in place safeguarding arrangements that are proportionate to the nature of its activities and services. These arrangements are designed to ensure that individuals are protected while engaged in, attending, or affected by Council-led activities, events, services, facilities or land.

This policy has been developed in line with current legislation and national guidance, including guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all those working on behalf of the Council are expected to act in a way that safeguards the welfare of others at all times.

2. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy is informed by, and complies with, current safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, including the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Care Act 2014, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Data Protection Act 2018 together with UK GDPR. It also reflects NALC and SLCC safeguarding guidance for local councils.

3. Definitions

A child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in accordance with the Children Acts 1989 and 2004.

An adult at risk is defined in line with the Care Act 2014 as a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or risk of abuse.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Weston-super-Mare Town Council, all town councillors, volunteers, work experience placements, contractors, agency staff, and any partner organisations or individuals delivering services or activities on behalf of the Council.

The policy applies to all Council services, activities, events, whether delivered directly by the Council or in partnership with others.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Director of Community Services is the Council's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has overall responsibility for safeguarding within Weston-super-Mare Town Council. In the absence of the DSL the CEO/Town Clerk will take over this responsibility.

The DSL is responsible for acting as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns, ensuring that concerns are responded to promptly and appropriately, and making referrals to statutory safeguarding agencies where necessary. The DSL will liaise with safeguarding partners, ensure that safeguarding procedures are implemented and kept under review, ensure that appropriate safeguarding training is in place, and maintain secure and confidential safeguarding records.

5.2 All Staff, Councillors and Volunteers

All staff, councillors and volunteers working on behalf of the Council have a responsibility to be alert to potential safeguarding concerns and to act in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk.

Individuals must follow this policy and associated procedures, report safeguarding concerns immediately, never promise confidentiality to a person making a disclosure, and co-operate with safeguarding processes and investigations as required. Failure to follow safeguarding responsibilities may result in disciplinary or other appropriate action.

6. Safer Recruitment and DBS

Weston-super-Mare Town Council is committed to safer recruitment practices. The Council sees all roles as having some regulated activity and ensure that appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are undertaken where required.

Risk assessments will be used to determine whether DBS checks are necessary for volunteer roles. Safeguarding responsibilities will be clearly set out in role descriptions, contracts, and induction processes, and appropriate safeguarding training will be provided.

7. Training and Awareness

The Council will ensure that safeguarding training is provided at a level appropriate to the role of the individual. Training will be refreshed periodically to ensure continued awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and current best practice. Councillors will receive safeguarding awareness training relevant to their role.

8. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Any safeguarding concern must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns may arise through direct disclosure, observation, or information received from a third party.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child, young person or adult at risk, emergency services must be contacted immediately by calling 999.

9. Procedures

The Council's safeguarding reporting procedure is set out in Appendix A. All staff, councillors and volunteers must familiarise themselves with this procedure and follow it whenever a safeguarding concern arises.

10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to safeguarding concerns will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis. While confidentiality will be respected wherever possible, it will not prevent information being shared where this is necessary to protect a child, young person or adult at risk.

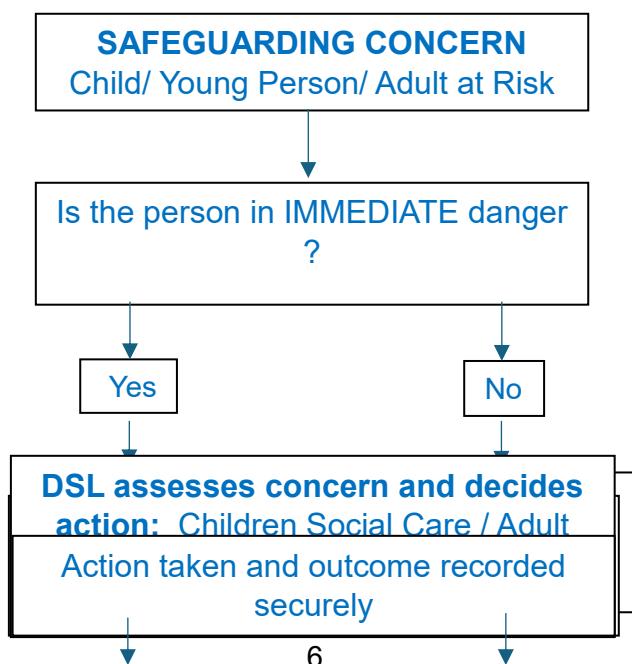
All information will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at bi-annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, or following a safeguarding incident where a review is deemed necessary.

Appendix A

Safeguarding Reporting Procedure – Flowchart





WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

History of Policy Changes

Date	Version	Author	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
27 th January 2026	V1	Director of Finance & Resources		

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council

Date policy adopted	February 2026
Review cycle	Annually
Review date	February 2027

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1. Our commitment

Weston-super-Mare Town Council (“the Town Council”) is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure fairness and equality for all employees, councillors, job applicants, contractors, volunteers, service users and members of the public. The Town Council will not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Town Council recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect and that it may be intentional or unintentional. All forms of discrimination are unacceptable.

In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Town Council will have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations when developing policies, delivering services and managing employment practices.

We aim to create an inclusive culture where differences are respected and valued, dignity is promoted, and individuals are supported to reach their full potential.

2. Legal duties

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides the main legal framework for equality and discrimination law in the UK.

Under section 149 of the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires the Town Council, as a public authority, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Marriage and civil partnership are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, but they are not covered by the PSED requirements to advance equality and foster good relations.

Specific duties

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require the Town Council to:

- Publish equality information annually to demonstrate compliance with the PSED; and
- Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years.

Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

From October 2024, employers have a new legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment. The Town Council is committed to meeting this duty through clear policies, training, reporting mechanisms and prompt action where concerns arise.

Other relevant legislation

This policy also takes account of, but is not limited to:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

3. Discrimination

Discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation will not be tolerated and will be addressed promptly.

The Equality Act 2010 recognises the following forms of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment (including sexual harassment)
- Victimisation
- Discrimination arising from disability
- Associative discrimination
- Perceptive discrimination

This policy applies:

- In the workplace;
- During work-related activities, events and training;
- When dealing with service users, contractors, suppliers and members of the public; and
- In any context connected to employment or service delivery.

All employees and councillors are expected to comply with this policy and to report suspected or actual discriminatory behaviour.

4. Disability and reasonable adjustments

The Town Council recognises its duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, applicants and service users, and that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat disabled people more favourably.

Employees are encouraged to disclose a disability so that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments can be considered.

Where difficulties arise at work due to a disability, employees should discuss this with their line manager in the first instance. With HR support, reasonable adjustments will be explored, which may include consultation with occupational health or medical advisers where appropriate.

If an adjustment is considered unreasonable, the reasons will be explained and alternative solutions explored.

The Town Council will regularly review the physical features of its premises to ensure they do not place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage and will take reasonable steps to improve access.

5. Accessibility

The Town Council will comply with its statutory duties in relation to accessibility under the Equality Act 2010.

In particular, the Town Council will:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage to disabled employees, applicants and service users caused by a provision, criterion or practice, physical feature.
- Make reasonable adjustments where required by law;
- Anticipate the needs of disabled people when designing policies, services and employment practices;
- Provide information in accessible formats where this is a reasonable adjustment.

Accessibility will be considered as part of policy development, service delivery and employment practices, and through the use of Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate.

6. Responsibilities of the Town Council

The Town Council is responsible for:

- Approving this policy;
- Ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently;
- Publishing equality information annually; and
- Reviewing equality objectives at least every two years.

The CEO/Town Clerk is responsible for:

- Overall implementation of this policy;
- Ensuring compliance across the organisation; and
- Ensuring that suspected breaches are investigated and managed fairly and consistently.

HR is responsible for:

- Communicating this policy to employees;
- Supporting managers with implementation;
- Monitoring workforce equality data in line with data protection legislation; and
- Supporting training and awareness activities.

Managers must:

- Apply this policy fairly and consistently;
- Seek advice where required; and
- Act promptly on concerns or complaints.

All employees and councillors must:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Treat others with dignity and respect; and
- Challenge and report discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

The Town Council will consider equality and inclusion in its decision-making processes and will use Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for significant policies and decisions.

7. Breaches of this policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Town Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Serious acts of discrimination or harassment may constitute gross misconduct and could result in dismissal.

Individuals who believe they have experienced discrimination may raise concerns through the Grievance Procedure or the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy. Complaints will be handled sensitively, confidentially and investigated as appropriate.

Victimisation of anyone raising a concern is prohibited. Malicious or deliberately false allegations may be treated as misconduct.

8. Equality impact statement

The Town Council will monitor and review this policy to ensure it does not unlawfully discriminate.

Equality Impact Assessments will be used to assess the potential impact of policies and decisions on protected groups, including (but not limited to): age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy/maternity

9. Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Town Council and updated where required to reflect changes in legislation, guidance or organisational practice

10. Appendix 1 – Equality Objectives 2023–2027

The Town Council has adopted the following equality objectives. Progress will be reported annually:

1. Promote staff health, wellbeing and mental health through appropriate support and interventions.
2. Ensure all staff receive regular training on equality, diversity and inclusion and understand the Town Council's legal responsibilities.
3. Promote equality and inclusion in recruitment, selection and promotion, including fair processes, flexible working and reducing bias.
4. Ensure the working environment is accessible as is reasonable practicable, as far as possible, and inclusive for all staff.
5. Reduce the incidence of sexualised language and behaviour among staff and volunteers.
6. Reduce gender bias and promote gender equality.
7. Increase support for LGBTQIA+ staff and foster a safe, inclusive workplace where people can be themselves.