

Labour Party

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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1. Introduction

The Labour Party believes that it is always unacceptable for anyone to experience abuse of any kind, in any circumstances including through social media and other online activity. Children and young people have a legal right to protection from all forms of abuse. We have a duty of care to ensure that this remains the case throughout children and young peoples' contact with us.

In particular, the Labour Party recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people and others, by a commitment to safeguarding practices and procedures which protect them and to provide a welcoming and safe environment in which to engage with the activities of the Labour Party.

2. Application

This policy applies to all staff, members and volunteers including the National Executive Committee and other elected representatives and any other person working on behalf of the Labour Party.

Where the Labour Party is working in partnership with other organisations, including affiliated organisations, they are expected to have their own safeguarding arrangements in place but where these do not exist then extracts of the Labour Party Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, related procedures and the Safeguarding Code of Conduct will apply to them and this will form part of any partnership or contractual arrangements at the outset.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- to demonstrate our commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are members of, or volunteer with, the Labour Party or otherwise engage with it. This includes the children of adults who are members, affiliated supporters and the general public where they interact with the Labour Party; and
- to provide staff, members and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection. The Labour Party believes that no child or young person should experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe from harm.

4. Key principles:

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991 and the current relevant legislations and associated statutory guidance in place in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- all children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, faith, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- some children and young people have additional vulnerabilities because of their previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;

- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting and protecting children and young people's welfare.
- it is not the responsibility of the Labour Party to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, it is the responsibility of staff, volunteers and members of the Party to act if there is cause for concern, in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any protective action as necessary.

5. Our commitment to safeguarding

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting robust child protection practices through related procedures, guidance and a safeguarding code of conduct for staff, members and volunteers;
- ensuring our safeguarding and child protection policy, procedures and code of conduct are disseminated and embedded throughout the Party and to all relevant stakeholders including children, their parents and carers;
- developing and implementing an e-safety policy and related procedures;
- providing effective management for staff and guidance for members and volunteers through supervision, support and training and ensuring HR policies reflect these principles;
- ensuring there is a safeguarding governance structure in place with assigned roles and responsibilities, including the identification of a designated safeguarding officer in each region and nation and within the Senior Management Team so that safeguarding runs as a thread throughout all our activities and at both strategic and operational levels of the Party;
- developing safer recruitment, selection and vetting processes where relevant for any posts (paid and unpaid) that involve engagement work with children and young people;
- ensuring a procedure is in place for when there are concerns about the behaviour of a member of the Party that might harm a child or young person or put them at risk of harm;
- referring child protection concerns to statutory agencies when appropriate, and involving parents/carers and children appropriately and when safe to do so;
- providing best practice guidance in respect of the planning and delivery of all engagement and campaigning activities in which children and young people participate;
- ensuring safeguarding requirements are considered and built into relationships with affiliated organisations and others with whom we contract as necessary and relevant to the activity and engagement of children and young people in it;
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our safeguarding and child protection policy and practice and incorporating key learning into policy and procedural updates.

¹ 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 in specified settings which include: children's homes, education settings, hospitals and those reporting for court proceedings.

6. Terminology¹

For the purposes of this policy and any and all other related procedural documents which are produced, the following terms are used:

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Child: This policy is in respect of all children. Legally, a child includes babies, children and young people from pre-birth up to 18 years (16 years is defined by some legislation in Scotland). The fact that a young person has reached the age of 16, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody does not change his/her entitlement to protection.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children: This means protecting children from maltreatment; preventing harm to children's health or development; ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection: This is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. Different types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect) may constitute significant harm.

Early intervention (also referred to as 'child in need'): Statutory guidance stresses the importance of children and young people having the opportunity of early help and support in order to avoid the need for child protection interventions at a later time. Early help or intervention may consist of one or more professionals supporting a family once an assessment of their needs has been completed or it may be about signposting children and their families them to relevant support services. All are aimed at the prevention of any impairment to future health or development.

7. Breaches

Breaches of the policy, safeguarding code of conduct and related procedures will be taken seriously by the Labour Party and may result in the initiation of performance measures and/or disciplinary procedures and/or a referral out to statutory agencies responsible for child protection.

8. Labour Party policies and procedures

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is a broad concept. There are related Labour Party policies and procedures which contribute to safeguarding and these should also be read by those to whom they apply:

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Labour Party Member's Pledge

Social Media Code of Conduct

9. Policy approval and review

The policy was approved and adopted by the NEC on 20 September 2016.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and the Safeguarding Code of Conduct will be reviewed on an annual basis by the NEC or sooner if an incident warrants it or if there is a change in legislation or guidance.

¹ HM Government (2015) Working Together To Safeguard Children. Equivalent guidance exist in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales

