

New Starter Pack

Information for new employees



■ Transform Harlow's Housing ■ Renew our Neighbourhoods ■ Rebuild our Town
■ Secure Investment for Harlow's Future ■ Protect our Communities ■ Deliver High-Performing Council Services



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Introduction

Welcome to Harlow District Council.

We hope you are looking forward to working with us and we will do all we can to ensure that you settle quickly into your new post and enjoy your time at work. This pack includes useful information to help you understand how we work and to get you started in your new role.

Before your first day

Your manager will provide you with the following forms. These will need to be completed and returned to your manager before your first day in order for you to be added onto the payroll system and receive a contract of employment:

- New Starter Form
- Bank Details Form
- New starter checklist (HMRC)

On your first day

Your manager will introduce you to your colleagues and show you around your work station and facilities e.g. toilets, kitchens, photocopier rooms, designated smoking areas etc. They will also go over items such as agreeing your working pattern and explaining the Flexi Scheme (if applicable).

Employee Induction

During your first week at Harlow Council, your manager will provide you with an Employee Induction Checklist which they will read and complete with you. This covers items such as:

- Security Arrangements
- Internal/External Telephone Procedures
- Dress Code
- Fire Evacuation Procedure

We are currently developing an e-learning induction on our i-Learn system, this will include topics such as:

- Harlow Council Values
- Health & Safety
- The Political Structure
- Equality Awareness
- Introduction to CoCo (Govt. Code of Connection) and information security
- Corporate regulations affecting all staff
- The Council structure
- IT Security

Background of Harlow

Harlow is a compact town of around 93,000 people, set in the Essex & Hertfordshire countryside on the bank of the River Stort. It has fantastic road and rail connections to London, Cambridge, and Stansted Airport. One of the original post-war new towns, Harlow was designed as a series of neighbourhoods with every home within walking distance of shops and services. The town's founding father, Sir Frederick Gibberd, designed the town to closely follow the landscape with neighbourhoods separated by a series of 'green wedges' bringing the countryside right into the centre of the town. Gibberd also believed that sculpture was "the most important form of street furniture" and left the town with an unrivalled legacy of public art including pieces by Rodin, Henry Moore, and Barbara Hepworth. He insisted on making excellent provision for arts, sports, culture and community activities and the town still has a thriving arts and cultural scene.

Harlow was home to Britain's first leisure centre and has maintained this tradition of excellence with the brand new 'Leisurezone' incorporating a swimming pool and a range of other sporting facilities. The 450 seat Playhouse theatre offers a range of drama, music and dance productions by professional touring companies and local community groups.

Educational attainment in Harlow has improved markedly in recent years with 68%* of young people now achieving 5 + A*-C grades at GCSE. There are seven secondary schools in the town (including one private) specializing in technology, science, performing arts, sport (with a newly built competitive standard athletics track), and business & enterprise.

Harlow's new town status means it has a high proportion of competitively priced two and three bedroom terraced housing. New housing development therefore includes an emphasis on larger family homes. For those that enjoy contemporary design, the architect designed homes at New Hall offer the very best of modern living.

Harlow is adjacent to Junctions 7 and 7a of the M11, and just six miles from the M25. It has two train stations (Harlow Town and Harlow Mill) on the West Anglia Mainline, with frequent services to London (Liverpool Street 31 minutes, Tottenham Hale for Victoria Line 18 minutes), Cambridge (42 minutes), and Stansted Airport (18 minutes). There are regular buses to Chelmsford and to the Central Line station at Epping, just four miles away.

Harlow is bounded on three sides by Epping Forest District and to the north by East Hertfordshire. Both Districts offer a range of attractive market towns including Epping, Bishop's Stortford, and small villages. Further to the north is the Uttlesford District best known as the home of Stansted Airport. It is regularly identified as one of the top ten districts in England for quality of life. Nearby is Hatfield Forest which is a National Trust owned medieval hunting ground. To the south lie Epping Forest (almost 6000 acres of ancient woodland) and the 10,000 acre Lee Valley Regional Park.



*Figure pending update.

Please visit www.harlow.gov.uk to view the current corporate structure.

Council Values

The Council strives to be an organisation where people make things happen and promote excellence, good customer service and continuous improvement. We want to ensure that all staff are consistently aware of how their role contributes to the achievement of corporate priorities, are clear about what is expected, and share the Council's values. The Council is committed to promoting equality, challenging discrimination and developing community cohesion.

The Council's values are:

Integrity	Clear, meaningful and honest two way communication with staff, customers and partners.
Value People	Treating everyone fairly, equally and with mutual respect. Investing in staff, recognising individual and team contributions to achieve success.
Inspirational	Support and encourage accountability, creativity and innovation amongst our staff, key stakeholders and partners.

Briefing

The Council has a weekly briefing, sent by email, updating staff on various items including:

- Council news articles
- Training courses
- Staff congratulations
- Local news articles
- Events

Staff without access to email should be provided with a hard copy of the briefing by their manager.

Kaonet, 8x8 and Microsoft Teams

[Kaonet](#), the Council's intranet site, provides internal departmental information with quick links to useful pieces of information and forms. The front page is regularly updated with links to staff news and events, and useful links like the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which is part of the employee benefits scheme. You will be automatically signed up to the service, and will receive a registration email once you are registered.

Staff can use the "[Ask CLT a question](#)" to ask the Corporate Leadership Team a question which is then answered in a briefing.

Kaonet has a searchable staff directory and includes photos to enable us to put names to faces. Please check your details thoroughly and if you wish to add or amend any information such as alternative contacts please get in touch with the communications team.

Staff without access to the Kaonet can ask their manager to provide any information they require.

The Council use 8 x 8 and Teams for external telephone calls, and Microsoft Teams for meetings and channels for sharing information across teams. When accessing remotely please use these outside of your remote session to enable the headset to work.

iTrent Self Service System (ESS and MSS)

You can use the Employee Self Service (ESS) to do things like view your payslip, update personal details apply for annual leave or make claims such as mileage or overtime.

If you are a line manager, you can also use the Manager Self Service (MSS) to manage absences, authorise annual leave and approve claims.

Both the ESS and MSS systems are provided by MHR iTrent.

You can access both ESS and MSS from work, home and any smart device.

Staff can use the ESS to:

- access their personal details
- view payslips
- log flexi
- log absences
- book annual leave
- Log in to ESS
- Apply for vacancies

ESS works best in Google Chrome - use this browser to log in to ESS.

Follow this link for the guide to setting up your ESS/MSS account using an authenticator app
<https://www.harlow.gov.uk/kaonet/news/multifactor-authentication-ess-and-mss-accounts>

Policies and Procedures

There are many policies and procedures that guide the work we do. All employees need to read and understand these policies.

Policies included with this pack:

- Harlow Council Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (**see pages 21 - 27**)

Policies available on Infonet, can be found by using the search facility.

- Access to Information Policy
- Adoption Leave & Pay
- Age Discrimination Guidelines
- Capability Policy
- Child Protection Procedures
- Children & Young People - Missing/Runaway Protocol
- Equality, diversity and inclusivity policy 2021 to 2022
- Data Protection Act
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Discretionary Compensation & Redundancy Payments
- Disclosing Employee Information under FOIA
- Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy
- Flexible Retirement Policy
- Flexi Scheme Policy
- GDPR
- Grievance Procedure
- Hybrid working policy
- Honoraria Payment Procedure
- Information Security Management Policy
- IT Security Policy
- Job Share Policy
- Maternity Policy
- Officers Code of Conduct
- Organisational Change Procedure
- Paternity Leave and Pay Policy
- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Weather – Severe Conditions Policy Statement
- Whistleblowing Procedure
- Training and Development Strategy
- Use of Temporary Agency Workers, Interims and Consultants

If you do not have access to Kaonet, your manager will be able to provide you with hard copies. Alternatively you can contact HR on **01279 446070**.

Sickness Absence Management Policy Notes

This section provides basic details about the Sickness Absence Management policy. A full copy of the policy is available on Kaonet under Human Resources in [HR Policies and Procedures](#). If you do not have access to Kaonet your manager will be able to provide you with a copy. Alternatively you can contact HR on 01279 446070.

Key principles behind the policy:

- If you believe that your work is affecting your health, please discuss this with your manager.
- The initial approach to the management of sickness absence will always be positive and preventative rather than punitive; the ongoing approach will be sensitive and supportive.
- Production of self certification forms or Statement of Fitness for Work forms does not prevent action being taken under the policy.
- Abuse of the sickness absence procedures or sick pay scheme may result in loss of sick pay or other disciplinary action.

Notification

If you are unable to work because you are sick, you (or someone acting on your behalf) must notify your line manager by telephone that you will not be at work as soon as possible, but in any event within one hour of your normal or rostered start time or in line with local reporting procedure. In the absence of the manager, the employee taking the call from the employee will pass the information to HR for entry on to iTrent (as appropriate).

Certification and return to work

Your manager will record your absence on i-Trent, and on your return you will be prompted to complete a return to work form. You must complete this form on your return to work. If your absence continues for more than seven consecutive days, consult your GP and obtain a Fit Note (if you have not already done so). Send the Fit Note(s) to your line manager until you are fit to return to work.

After every sickness absence your manager/supervisor will meet with you privately, ideally during the first day back or at least within three days of your return to work. The purpose of the discussion is to welcome you back to work, ensure that there is an accurate record of the absence and appropriate certification as well as and updating you on any work issues. If you wish to return to work before the end date on the Fit Note, please contact your Manager in the first instance.

Sickness Absence Management Policy Notes – Continued

Short Term Absence

If your absence levels meet one of the following trigger points the manager/supervisor will review the absence levels with the employee:

- three or more separate instances of sickness absence in the previous rolling six month period.
- OR two separate periods of sickness absence totalling 10 working days or more, within the previous rolling six month period.
- OR Any other recurring recognisable patterns, such as frequent absenteeism on a Friday or Monday, or before or after a period of annual leave.

The above triggers are not exhaustive and other sickness absence trends may occur.

An informal review meeting will be held with you to discuss the absence record. Advice may be sought from Occupational Health or other support mechanisms such as training and counselling may be considered.

Long Term Absence

Absences of four weeks or more are considered long-term. You will normally be referred to Occupational Health. This is to seek an indication of the likely duration of your absence and whether any steps can be taken to help your return to work. The manager/supervisor should arrange to meet with you on a regular basis, at home if necessary, in order to keep up to date with progress, identify areas for support, and determine whether any other actions should be taken.

Phased Return to Work

A phased return may be appropriate if you return to work from long term sickness absence. This may involve adjustments to the workload, work practice or work pattern. Where the phased return involves a reduction in working hours, the balance of time will be made up from the employee's contractual sickness entitlement. A phased return would normally last for no more than one month. If the phased return is longer than this period and involves a reduction in hours, a temporary variation to contract will be considered, which may include a pro rata reduction in pay.

Case Review Meetings

Most employees will return to work from sickness absence in due course. However, where there has not been improvement after the issue of a final written warning for unsatisfactory attendance and performance/where a long-term period of absence is continuing and options that would enable the employee to remain in employment have been unsuccessful, you will be required to attend a Case Review meeting. The purpose of the Case Review meeting will be to consider whether, in line with legislation, there are any further actions that the Council and employee can take to assist the employee in continuing their employment or whether the employment should be terminated due the employee's unsatisfactory attendance and performance, effectively because of ill health.

Time off for Medical/Dental Appointments/Authorised Absence

Appointments should normally be made outside of core time as specified in the Flexi-Time Scheme. Where it is not possible to make an appointment outside of core hours or you are not covered by the Flexi-Time Scheme, permission should be sought from the relevant line manager. Normally time will be made up later in the working week, alternatively the Authorised Absence Request form will be completed and passed to the line manager to be recorded as an “absence” on iTrent.

Sickness and Annual Leave

If an employee becomes ill whilst on annual leave, annual leave will not be reimbursed unless a Statement of Fitness is obtained and produced to cover the period of sickness to enable occupational sick pay to be paid.

Occupational Sick Pay

The policy includes details on occupational sick pay entitlements. Please note entitlements are pro-rata for part time employees.

Tax-Free Childcare

You can get up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each of your children to help with the costs of childcare. This goes up to £1,000 every 3 months if a child is disabled (up to £4,000 a year).

If you’ve already registered, you can [sign in to your childcare account](#).

If you get Tax-Free Childcare, you’ll set up an online childcare account for your child. For every £8 you pay into this account, the government will pay in £2 to use to pay your provider.

You can get Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as 30 hours free childcare if you’re eligible for both.

You can use it to pay for [approved childcare](#), for example:

- childminders, nurseries and nannies
- after school clubs and play schemes

Your childcare provider must be signed up to the scheme before you can pay them and benefit from Tax-Free Childcare.

Check with your provider to see if they’re signed up.

If your child is disabled

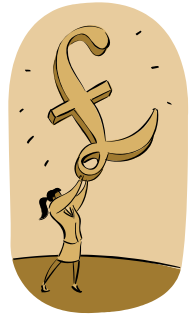
You can use the extra Tax-Free Childcare money you get to help pay for extra hours of childcare. You can also use it to help pay your childcare provider so they can get specialist

equipment for your child such as mobility aids. Talk to them about what equipment your child can get.

Harlow Council Employee Benefits Scheme incorporating an Employee Assistance Programme

Harlow Council has an [Employee Benefits Scheme](#) for its staff. The scheme has over 1,800 offers from 1,200 retailers - such as M&S, Sainsbury's and B&Q.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offers employees and councillors access to help and support if they are going through difficult times.



The EAP provides free, confidential information and support by telephone and online.

This service is available to all employees and councillors.

You will be automatically registered to the EAP when you join the council and will receive a registration email containing a password to log in. If you forget your password you can use the automatic password reset function, and there is an online chat facility for further support.

The service offers advice and support on a huge range of topics, including:

- stress and anxiety
- work advice
- relationship advice
- bereavement
- counselling
- financial wellbeing
- legal information
- alcohol and drug issues
- family issues
- childcare support
- medical information
- consumer issues
- For 24 hour confidential telephone support, call 0800 756 0834.
- When you phone the helpline you'll need to confirm the company name: **Harlow Council**. On some occasions you may be asked for a second verification, if this happens then reference: **Reward Gateway**.
- This service is provided by independent organisation Health Assured and calls are answered by qualified counsellors.

You will be automatically registered to the benefits scheme when you join the council and will receive a registration email containing a password to log in. If you forget your password you can

use the automatic password reset function, and there is an online chat facility for further support.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Every employee (new and current) is enrolled onto the Essex Pension Fund unless the employee opts out of the scheme. More Information about Auto Enrolment and contribution pay bands is available on Kaonet under Human Resources on [Pensions](#) .



Harlow Council Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is based on the Council's responsibilities under Sections 27 and 47 of the Children Act 1989 and Sections 10, 11 and 13 of the Children Act 2004 which place a duty on public bodies, including District Councils, to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority and its partners in respect of Safeguarding matters; ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to Safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people; and to participate in the work of local Safeguarding Children Boards.
- 1.2 The policy also incorporates guidance from the Essex Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults.
- 1.3 This policy commits all Harlow Council staff, elected Members and volunteers, regardless of their role, to report and refer any concerns they may develop regarding the safety of any young person or vulnerable adult, following the current procedure - see Scope 4.1:
<https://www.harlow.gov.uk/kaonet/safeguarding>

2. Harlow Council's policy commitment

- 2.1 Harlow Council believes that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse and exploitation. The Council is committed to safeguarding from harm all children, young people and vulnerable adults in receipt of any of its services and involved in any of its activities, and to treat them with respect during their dealings with the Council.

3. Aim of the policy

- 3.1 The aims of the policy are to:
 - Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties within scope of the policy
 - Support the promotion of a safe working environment and a culture of care in which the rights of all children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and respected
 - Promote and embed clear guidance and procedures for those employees working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and ensure through training and support that they are aware of these and able to implement them – see Appendix 1
 - Provide a framework for developing partnerships with appropriate external bodies e.g. Essex Safeguarding Children Board and Essex Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board, to ensure that the policy continues to reflect legal and best practice requirements in respect of the responsibility and care of children, young people and vulnerable adults

4. Scope of the policy

- 4.1 The policy is in respect of the Council's responsibility towards:
 - Children and young people legally defined as any person under the age of 18, or up to the age of 25 where the young person has a disability. From this point on, the terms 'child' or 'children' will be used to refer to this group.

- A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 or over who (1) is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness; and who (2) is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation
- This policy and any related procedures and guidance applies to all Harlow Council employees (including agency workers, interims and consultants), elected Members and volunteers who have contact with children, or vulnerable adults. It also applies to people working on behalf of the Council where they are not bound to comply with their own organisation's Child Protection Policy i.e. sports coaches or alternative partner providers

The policy covers all the functions and services of the Council, its elected Members, staff and contractors.

- 4.2 The policy does not cover health and safety issues related to safeguarding children such as use of play equipment or provision of food at events
- 4.4 The policy should also be used in conjunction with:
- SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection) Procedures
 - Disciplinary Procedure, Grievance Procedure and Whistle Blowing Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - IT Acceptable Use
 - Equalities Framework
 - Corporate Complaints procedure
 - Dignity at Work Policy
 - Health & Safety at Work guidance
 - Officers' Code of Conduct

Harlow Council takes its responsibilities in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation, Honour Based Abuse and Domestic Abuse very seriously and shall introduce policies and/or procedures and guidance to assist staff and those working for and on behalf of the Council to take appropriate action where there are concerns of this nature. These documents will be made available via the Council's website and Infonet.

5. Review

- 5.1 The policy will be reviewed annually and whenever there is a change in the related legislation. This will help ensure that these documents are up to date and fit for purpose.

6. Definition of Abuse

A person may abuse a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, by people working with them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or vulnerable adult's emotional development or self-esteem. It may involve conveying to the child or vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, causing the child or vulnerable adult frequently to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. It may involve deprivation of contact, control, coercion, intimidation or harassment.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include involving the child or vulnerable adult looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to basic emotional needs.

In vulnerable adults this may appear to be as a result of self-neglect but still requires action.

Financial abuse is particularly relevant to vulnerable adults and may include theft, fraud, exploitation and pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions. It may include the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits by someone who has been trusted to handle their finances or who has assumed control of their finances by default.

6.1 Responsibility for protecting children and vulnerable adults

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with **all staff at all levels** of the Council.

Council Members are responsible for ensuring that the Council has a Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and for working within its remit at all times and that there is a Designated Safeguarding Officer in place at all times.

Heads of Service in conjunction with Service Managers and Human Resources are responsible for:

- 6.1.1 Identifying those services and posts that are likely to have an involvement with children and/or vulnerable adults
- 6.1.2 Ensuring that those people appointed by them to the Council, whose normal duties involve caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults are screened via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process at the appropriate level prior to appointment (as required by Statute) and are appropriately qualified and/or trained in working with these groups
- 6.1.3 Ensuring that all necessary procedures and practices are in place to provide adequate protection both for the individuals in these groups but also protection for the employees involved with them. Safer Recruitment policies and procedures will be maintained by the Council

- 6.1.4 Ensuring that employees, volunteers and other workers dealing with these groups maintain adequate training and awareness of their responsibilities in this area
- 6.1.5 Ensuring that external contractors and other bodies delivering Council Services are aware of the Council's expectation that workers are aware of Harlow Council Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy and abide by the standards of behaviour expected of Council employees
- 6.1.6 Ensuring that carers and/or parents of the children and vulnerable adults are aware that in providing services Council employees are not acting in loco parentis
- 6.1.7 Ensuring that this policy is made available to carers and/or parents of the children and vulnerable adults to whom the Council is providing services
- 6.1.8 Ensuring that employees and others do not undertake direct work with children or vulnerable adults without an enhanced DBS check except under skilled supervision where approval has been given by the Head of Service or nominated officer prior to commencement of the role
- 6.1.9 Ensuring that proper records are kept of any incidents occurring within their service and that these are held securely and/or passed on to Human Resources if the incident involves a member of staff. The Harlow Council Safeguarding Process Flow Chart and the Reporting a Concern Record form can be found on the Infonet.
- 6.1.10 Working with other associated agencies to ensure the proper transfer of information relating to dealings with children and vulnerable adults, where necessary
- 6.1.11 Where appropriate Council officers will endeavour to support vulnerable adults, particularly those living in Council sheltered accommodation schemes, to make positive and informed choices about whom they might invite into their homes to provide direct support services such as domestic help and/or personal care. This support could include recommending that residents request references in writing and/or a DBS check.

6.2 Human Resources Service is responsible for:

Working with Heads of Service in maintaining a record of those posts that are likely to work with children and vulnerable adults and identifying the level of involvement and the appropriate level of screening required.

- 6.2.1 Ensuring that Safer Recruitment procedures are maintained and followed for all roles identified as potentially having contact with children or vulnerable adults and that they are robust and that information pertinent to working with these groups is obtained during the recruitment procedure. This procedure will include agency workers and volunteers. Agencies, if used, are responsible for the safer recruitment and selection of their own staff but must comply with Harlow Council and legislative requirements.
- 6.2.2 The Council's policy is that it is the Manager's responsibility to ensure DBS checks are carried out at the appropriate level. HR will monitor all appointments to ensure this has been completed.
- 6.2.3 In conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Officer, support Heads of Service in dealing with allegations of abuse or exploitation by staff

- 6.2.4 In conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Officer, to refer information to the DBS or LADO or other relevant agencies regarding individuals who pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults

6.3 Employees:

All employees and particularly those working with children and vulnerable adults are responsible for:

- 6.3.1 Ensuring that they are familiar with and understand the policies and procedures relating to their work with or in the vicinity of children and vulnerable adults
- 6.3.2 Ensuring that they feel confident in working within this environment and working with their managers to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to carry out their tasks in this context
- 6.3.3 Working within the Equality Act 2010 and related legislation, and treating children and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact with, while carrying out their work equally and with respect
- 6.3.4 Reporting to their line manager any concerns they may have about abuse or a lack of care of children and vulnerable adults either from other staff, from carers, parents or those in loco parentis or any other person

6.4 Volunteers, contractors and other workers are responsible for:

- 6.4.1 Working with employees of the Council to the same standards and within the remit of this Policy, in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults with whom they may come into contact
- 6.4.2 Participating in any training or development opportunities offered to them to improve their knowledge of skills in this area, or to meet mandatory requirements

6.5 Procedure where there is a concern that a child or vulnerable adult is in danger?

Where there is concern that any person is in immediate danger or a crime has been committed, the worker should always contact the police on 999. Actions should be reported following Harlow Council procedures. The Harlow Council Safeguarding Process Flow Chart and the Reporting a Concern Record form can be found on the Infonet.

The Essex County Council Emergency Duty Team offers out of hours assistance on 0845 6061212 where there are concerns about the immediate welfare or safety of a child or vulnerable adult.

If a Head of Service or the Designated Safeguarding Officer is not in agreement that anything further needs to be done, but there are still strong concerns that a child or vulnerable adult is in danger, Social Care should still be contacted.

Harlow Council believes that all children and vulnerable adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse and will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports a concern about abuse either by this procedure or by our Whistle Blowing Procedure (on www.harlow.gov.uk)

Sources of further information

Essex Safeguarding Children Board <http://microsites.essexcc.gov.uk/microsites/ESCB/refer.htm>

Essex Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board

<http://microsites.essexcc.gov.uk/microsites/ESAB/>

<http://microsites.essexcc.gov.uk/microsites/ESAB/> can provide broad advice. It doesn't have to be related to a particular case.

<http://microsites.essexcc.gov.uk/microsites/ESCB/refer.htm> .

The NSPCC website provides advice on keeping children safe: www.nspcc.org.uk.

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk is the Government website that provides information on the legislation and the wider issues of child welfare.

The Department of Health website has information on vulnerable adults

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/SocialCare/POVA/fs/en>

age uk - ring the advice line on 0800 169 6565

www.ageuk.org.uk

Ask Sal – call the helpline 08452 66 66 63

www.asksal.org.uk

Appendix 1

Employee Good Practice

When in contact with or providing a direct service to children or vulnerable adults, employees should be clear about what is expected of them and what is unacceptable behaviour on their part. Adhering to strict guidelines helps staff to protect themselves from false allegations against them and helps to create a positive culture around children and vulnerable adults.

Employees should:-

- Always work in an open environment and aim to avoid private or unobserved situations whenever possible
- Notify a colleague or Manager when, to work effectively with the child or vulnerable adult the above point cannot be observed and ensure a risk assessment is undertaken
- Always listen to what children and vulnerable adults have to say as they are more likely to discuss issues of concern if they know that they will be listened to and taken seriously
- Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult first and foremost
- Ensure that assistance with any form of manual or physical support required is provided openly and appropriately - this applies particularly to children and adults with a disability
- Aim to establish a good working relationship and communication with parents/carers wherever possible and appropriate
- Always set a good example – be a good role model for children and act in a professional, responsible and trustworthy manner at all times
- Always be prepared to act upon information which may indicate that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or is at risk of being abused and always report concerns to their line Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible
- Know how to record, store and share information appropriately regarding concerns they have about a child or vulnerable adult

Employees should not:-

- Divulge their personal details to a child or vulnerable adult - including home address, personal telephone number and email address or accept them as 'friends' on social networking sites
- Make arrangements to meet a child or vulnerable adult socially outside of the working environment without their line manager's knowledge and agreement

- Take a child or vulnerable adult to their home unsupervised; without parental consent or without the line managers knowledge and agreement
- Use inappropriate language in the company of a child or vulnerable adult
- Allow access to inappropriate literature or images via, books, magazines, television, video, DVD or IT
- Use physical chastisement under any circumstances
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games with children or make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult even if it is thought to be in fun
- Administer medication unless professionally trained to do so
- Take a child or vulnerable adult to the toilet unsupervised or do things of a personal nature for them when s/he is capable of doing it for themselves
- Transport children or vulnerable adults without an escort. Where it is appropriate to provide transport, a risk assessment must be undertaken
- Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unrecorded or not acted upon
- Take photographs of children or vulnerable adults without consent from the parent/carer
- Divulge confidential or other information about a child or vulnerable adult to unauthorised personnel

The above guidance regarding good practice is not exhaustive and staff should always consult their line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Officer if they have any doubt about the appropriateness of their own actions or that of their colleagues.

Harlow Council

Staff process for dealing with Safeguarding concerns for children, young people and vulnerable adults



Step 1 Initial action

Discuss your concerns with your line manager. If your line manager is unavailable contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) as soon as possible – see also Step 2 below for other sources of support/guidance.

If it is clear that the person is in immediate danger call the Police straight away on 999.

Be prepared to discuss whatever you know about the person you are concerned about i.e. **Who** are they? **Where** do they live? **Who** do they live with? **How** old are they? **Why** are you concerned? (be specific) **What** have you personally seen and/or heard that has led to you be concerned? Or **What** information has been passed to you that has led to you be concerned and **when** and from **who** did you receive the information?

Note: DSO for children and young people is Christine Selby Ext 6192. DSO for vulnerable adults is Viv Hales Ext 6317. Christine and Viv cover for each other if one is off or out of the office.



Step 2 Is further advice and guidance required?

No - Agree an appropriate course of action with your line manager and/or the DSO. Keep a record of your concern; any decisions reached and any action taken - see step 4 below.

Yes – Speak to the DSO who may be able to provide the guidance you need. If you are still unsure whether a referral should be made and your concern is for a child call the Initial response Team (IRT) on 0845 603 7627 and ask for a consultation with an Advisor who will provide you with appropriate guidance. If your concern is about an adult contact Adult Social Care on 0845 603 7630 for advice. Explain your concerns giving as much detail as possible (See Step 1 above).



Step 3 Is a referral required?

No – No further action need be taken but your concerns must be recorded on the Safeguarding Record form and a copy sent to the relevant DSO (See step 4 below)

Yes – Inform the DSO that you intend to make a referral. If the referral is for a child or young person call the IRT on 0845 603 7627 and say you want to make a referral. You may be asked to complete and submit form ECC999. If the referral is for an adult call 0845 603 7630. You will be asked to complete and submit form SET SAF1.

Referral forms are available to staff via the Infonet. Referral forms and additional accompanying information should be copied to the relevant DSO because the Council is required to keep a central record of all referrals. (See also step 4 below)

Remember: Whenever possible, referrals in respect of children and young people should be made with the knowledge and consent of the parent/carer unless there is evidence to suggest that seeking consent would place the child/young person at greater risk of harm.

Note: If you do not receive acknowledgement of your referral within 7 days you should follow this up with IRT/Adult Social Care and request written confirmation of your referral as well as notification of what action is going to be taken (if any). Update your line manager and the DSO.



Step 4 Recording concerns and keeping DSO updated

Always complete the Council's 'Safeguarding Record' form and send a copy to the relevant DSO regardless of whether you seek further advice and/or make a referral.

Note: The ECC999 Form, form SET SAF1 and Safeguarding Record form can be found on the Infonet along with the Council's Safeguarding Policy.