



**co-operative
party**

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

Allegations of child sexual abuse linked to Westminster investigation report recommendations

The Inquiry's Allegations of child sexual abuse linked to Westminster investigation report was published on 25 February 2020. The investigation found political institutions to have significantly failed in their responses to allegations of child sexual abuse.

The Inquiry made the following recommendation based on the Panel's findings, which is relevant to the Co-operative Party.

*Recommendation 3: Government, **political parties** and other Westminster institutions must have whistleblowing policies and procedures which cover child sexual abuse and exploitation. Every employee must be aware that they can raise any concerns using these policies and that the policies are not limited to concerns specific to a person's employment.*

As stated in the Inquiry's report, the Inquiry expects that institutions to whom recommendations are addressed will act upon its recommendations and - in the interest of transparency and openness - asks that each institution publishes details of the steps they will take in response to the recommendation, including the timetable involved. The Inquiry expects that institutions will publish these details in the public domain, within six months of the investigation report being published.

This document outlines the steps taken by the Co-operative Party

1. The Party has a clear policy on safeguarding. This is in the Party's rules and published on the Party's website (see [here](#)) and below. (Timetable: in place)
2. The Party's policy on safeguarding is included in the Staff Handbook, together with the policy and process on whistleblowing policy. (Timetable: in place)

Promoted by Joe Fortune on behalf of the Co-operative Party, both at U13, 83 Crampton Street, London SE17 3BQ. Co-operative Party Limited is registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014. Registered number 30027R.



3. Elected representatives and lay officers will be reminded of the Party's safeguarding policy (timetable: by 31 July 2020)
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Safeguarding Policy

The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount and it is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers, members and elected representatives to behave with integrity, maturity and good judgement.

Abuse of a position of trust

Staff, members and volunteers, including elected representatives, should be aware that they may be seen as role models by children, young people and adults at risk and therefore they must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

They must not engage in sexual activity or allow a sexual relationship to develop with any member under the age of eighteen years old.

It is essential that staff, volunteers, members and elected representatives do not:

- Conduct a sexual relationship with a child or have any form of sexual contact with a child involved in Co-operative Party activity. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff, member, volunteer or elected representative and a child involved in Co-operative Party activity represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member, party member or volunteer.
- Physically, emotionally or sexually abuse, maltreat or exploit any child or an adult at risk or neglect their basic physical and psychological needs.
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse or the abuse of adults at risk.
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to, or in front of, children or discuss adult sexual relationships in front of them.
- Rely on their reputation or that of the Co-operative Party or any elected office that they hold to protect them.
- Give or receive gifts and/or substances such as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, e-cigarettes to or from a child.
- Encourage or appear to encourage children to drink alcohol or take drugs.
- Allow their judgment to be impaired by alcohol or any other substance when acting in a position of trust



Definitions

Child: A person under the age of eighteen years old. The fact that a young person has reached the age of sixteen, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or is in custody does not change their entitlement to protection.

Adult at risk: A person aged eighteen years old or over, who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him themselves, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Action

Anyone who believes themselves or another person to be at risk should contact Karen Wilkie, Deputy General Secretary by phone (020 7367 4178) or email (k.wilkie@party.coop) or another member of staff immediately.