

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Executive Summary:
<p>Our Safeguarding Policy is designed to raise awareness about the abuse and neglect of children, young people, and adults at risk. It also seeks to develop a culture of reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns or disclosures. The policy details how we work with our partners and ensures all staff are trained with those working in more specialised customer facing roles receiving more in-depth training.</p>

Policy Grouping/Directorate(s)	Customer and Community	
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy relates to adults and children who are being, or at risk of being abused or neglected by other people. Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) believes that living a life free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person and that safeguarding those at risk of abuse is everyone's responsibility.

2 Context

- 2.1 RBH has legislative responsibilities to safeguard both children and adults at risk of abuse and harm.
- 2.2 RBH defines safeguarding as protecting a child's or adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It involves preventing and stopping the risks of abuse and neglect, whilst promoting the individual's wellbeing. Organisations and communities should work together to support people to make decisions about the risks they face in their own lives and protect those who lack the capacity to make these decisions. In deciding any action, time should be taken to ensure the person's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs are taken into account.

3 Aims & Objectives

- 3.1 This policy is an over-arching policy, applying across our business. It is important that all colleagues, managers, directors, board members and involved tenants are aware that safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility' and that we all have a responsibility to act on concerns of abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is not restricted to colleagues working in homelessness, support, care, or children's services.

Across RBH we can all play a part in preventing, being alert and responding appropriately to abuse and neglect. Specifically, we aim to:

- Raise awareness about the abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults at risk.
- Develop a culture that does not tolerate abuse and encourages people to raise concerns.
- Prevent abuse happening wherever possible.

This policy applies:

- to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse who live in or visit our properties and use our services.
- to colleagues, volunteers' contractors, sub-contractors and agents working for RBH.
- RBH is committed to making safeguarding personal. This means being person led and outcome focused.

RBH is committed to using a Think Family approach when delivering our services, so we recognise children and adults living in our properties. A Think Family approach refers to the steps taken by children's, young people's and adult's practitioners to identify wider family needs which extend beyond the individual they are supporting.

For example, in relation to safeguarding, if you work primarily with adults, you should still consider the safeguarding needs of children, and if you work mostly with children, you should still consider the needs of vulnerable adults.

3.2 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

Responsibility – Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Employees have a duty to understand their role in preventing harm to vulnerable people.

Equity – We strive to treat everyone fairly, promptly, effectively and sensitively. We are open minded and reflective. We will ask questions and be professionally curious to fully understand the situation.

Democracy – We embody the values of making safeguarding personal. We do this by ensuring those at risk from harm or abuse are involved in deciding outcomes that relate to themselves, so that tenant voice is fully heard and that we work together to empower and keep people safe who live in our communities.

Pioneering – We embrace change and we strive for continuous improvement to fully embed safeguarding when delivering all our services.

Collaboration – RBH understands that working together with our partners to safeguard our tenants is needed to ensure full accountability across our service and others

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

4.2 The key guidance for child protection is Working together to safeguard children (Department for Education 2018). **This states:**

- **everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe**
- **everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in sharing information and identifying concerns.**

4.3 RBH has responsibilities to safeguard children under the following legislation:

- (i) The Children’s Act 1989
- (ii) The Children’s Act 2004
- (ii) Children & Social Work Act 2017
- (iii) Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- (iv) The Care Act 2014 (where a child is transitioning from children’s services to adult’s services)
- (v) The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

4.4 RBH has responsibilities to safeguarding adults with care or support needs or whom are at risk of abuse or harm under the following legislation:

- (i) The Care Act 2014
- (ii) The Mental Capacity Act 2005
- (iii) The Mental Health Act 2007

- (iv) Act: Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- (v) The Housing Act 2004
- (vi) Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- (vii) The Harassment Act 1997
- (viii) The Equality Act 2010
- (ix) The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- 4.5 RBH defines safeguarding as protecting a child or adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It involves preventing and stopping the risks of abuse and neglect, whilst promoting an individual's wellbeing. Organisations and communities must work together to support people to make decisions about the risks they face in their own lives and protect those who lack the capacity to make these decisions. In deciding on any action, time should be taken to ensure the persons views, wishes, feelings and beliefs are considered.
- 4.6 Abuse is any behaviour that deliberately or unknowingly causes a person harm or endangers their life and is a violation of a person's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. The types of abuse and indicators are listed in the Safeguarding Procedure.
- 4.7 The Care Act 2014 states that safeguarding duties apply to an adult (over the age of 18 who)
- *Has care and support needs (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs)*
 - *Is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect and*
 - *As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk, or experience of abuse or neglect.*
- 4.8 The Care Act introduced 6 principles for working with adults with care and support needs and these will inform the way RBH approaches all safeguarding issues
- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
 - **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs
 - **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
 - **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need
 - **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
 - **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding
- 4.9 Safeguarding Children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment.
 - Preventing impairment of children's health and development.
 - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

4.10 The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 provides the legal framework for establishing if people can make a specific decision themselves. There are 5 principles of the MCA:

- A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity.
- A person must not be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help them have been taken without success.
- A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because they make an unwise decision
- Any act done or decision made for, or on behalf of, a person who lacks capacity must be in their best interests.
- Any act done or decision made for, or on behalf of, a person who lacks capacity should be the least restrictive of their rights and freedoms.

4.11 RBH colleagues, volunteers and contractors visiting our homes and delivering services in our neighbourhoods will:

- understand their role in reporting safeguarding concerns.
- recognise, respond, report, record and refer all concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect.

4.12 We are working to ensure all RBH teams are trained to identify and report safeguarding concerns. Customer facing teams who manage safeguarding cases will receive more in-depth and targeted training to support case management and prevention activity through referrals and partnership working. Our policy is to ensure colleagues are vetted, trained and supported in their role.

4.13 This policy ensures RBH is legally, regulatory and contractually compliant.

4.14 RBH will report concerns of abuse and neglect to partners that have statutory responsibility to investigate safeguarding referrals, the Local Authority and Police. In most cases this will be done with the consent of the adult or family, unless they lack capacity or there is an overriding risk to a child or an adult with care and support needs. Where someone is in immediate danger or discloses abuse that is a criminal offence, we will report this to the Police using 999.

4.15 RBH recognises that Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Adults Board (RBSAB) and Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership (RBSCP) has the lead responsibility for Safeguarding and will be responsible for establishing the facts in any case, identifying who needs to be involved and coordinating the response.

4.16 RBH will share information for the purposes of safeguarding and respond to requests for information from the Local Authority and Multi Safeguarding Agency Partnerships.

4.17 RBH will ensure colleagues understand that data protection does not prevent the sharing of information where it would safeguard children and adults with a care and support need.

- 4.18 RBH will assist any colleague who requires support following a safeguarding referral.
- 4.19 RBH's partnership working in the borough will support initiatives to promote awareness of safeguarding and prevention campaigns locally.

4.20 Learning & Improving Practise

- 4.21 We will fully participate with any Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) that involves a tenant or occupant. We will review our practices and identify what is helping and what is hindering us delivering safeguarding effectively, to tackle barriers to good practise and protect adults from harm.
- 4.22 We will fully participate with any Rapid Reviews or Child Safeguarding Practise Reviews that involves a tenant or occupant. We will identify and act upon any immediate learning and consider any additional wider learning where we need to make changes to our safeguarding processes.

5 Monitoring

- 5.1 RBH has a Strategic Safeguarding Group to oversee:

- colleague training and development.
- prevention initiatives.
- the adoption of a making safeguarding personal culture.

service development through the implementation of learning from relevant reports, serious case reviews and best practice.

- 5.2 All managers are responsible for ensuring safeguarding matters are reported correctly and that safeguarding is effectively managed within their area of responsibility.
- 5.3 'If In Doubt, Shout It Out' is RBH's internal safeguarding telephone line used to report safeguarding concerns. The initial triaging of concerns via the dedicated 'If In Doubt, Shout It Out' telephone line is provided by a team of trained colleagues including the Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Coordinator. All concerns received are immediately responded to and fully logged and recorded on our Customer Relation Management system (CRM.)
- 5.4 Safeguarding concerns that are reported outside of these operating hours are sent to the safeguarding@rbh.org.uk email address. Any urgent concerns are always immediately reported by colleagues to Greater Manchester Police, Adult Social Care or Children's Services.
- 5.5 Operational Safeguarding Champions exist within all RBH teams and help to embed a strong culture of safeguarding as 'Everyone's Responsibility' across the mutual. They attend 'Safeguarding Champion' meetings with the Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Lead at six weekly intervals.
- 5.7 Safeguarding is a standing agenda item of all departmental team meetings. The content is designed by the Safeguarding Lead & Safeguarding Coordinator and distributed out to all managers on a monthly basis to keep safeguarding a

priority for everyone when delivering our services.

- 5.8 RBH has a designated Safeguarding Lead at a Senior Manager level and a Safeguarding Coordinator at an operational level. The Safeguarding Lead will attend strategic safeguarding partnership meetings and forums. They are responsible for ensuring the organisation is kept up to date with legislative changes and learns from best practice. The Safeguarding Coordinator will represent RBH at multi agency meetings.
- 5.9 The Executive Director of Customer and Community is the Executive Leadership Team (EMT) lead who champions safeguarding within RBH and supports multi-agency partnership working.
- 5.10 RBH will complete self-assessments and carry out internal audits of its safeguarding practise and implement any recommendations.
- 5.11 Safeguarding is reviewed biannually by ELT and annually by the Board including:
- Volume and types of cases
 - Evaluation and outcome of investigated cases with lessons learnt
 - Compliance with policy and procedures

6 Review

- 6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 6.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

7 Links with Other RBH Documents

- 7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:
- RBH Recruitment, Selection and Induction Policy
 - RBH Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
 - RBH Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy
 - RBH Whistleblowing Policy
 - RBH Data Protection Policy

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing Limited is a charitable community benefit society.
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