

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Executive Summary:
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 how we work with the local authority as a housing provider to enable them to discharge their statutory duty.

Policy Grouping / Directorate	Customer and Communities	
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Reviewed by Policy Team	Date: 20 th February 2025	Name: Sarah Wilson
EIA Completed	Yes ☒	No ☐
Publication	Intranet ☒	Website ☒
Notes:		

1 Introduction and aims

- 1.1 This policy relates to adults and children who are being or are at risk of being abused or neglected. RBH (Rochdale Boroughwide Housing) 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.
- 1.2 The aims of the policy are:
- To outline the role and responsibilities of RBH as a housing provider in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk
 - To raise awareness about abuse, neglect and exploitation, and the impact these can have on individuals, families and communities
 - To develop a culture that encourages people to raise concerns and report safeguarding issues
 - To prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation through early identification, intervention and partnership working
 - To respond promptly where abuse or neglect does occur, making appropriate referrals and engaging relevant agencies to reduce risk, prevent further harm and support positive outcomes for those affected
 - To ensure safeguarding is embedded across all areas of the organisation and recognised as everyone's responsibility

2 Context

- 2.1 This is an overarching policy that applies across all areas of our business. As a housing provider, RBH is uniquely placed to identify emerging safeguarding concerns through our day-to-day contact with customers, including tenancy management, repairs and maintenance services, estate management, anti-social behaviour investigations and other customer interactions. We have working practices in place that help us recognise the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and enable us to take action that is proportionate, focused on prevention and offers protection to those most at risk. Our approach is governed by the principles set out in the Care Act 2014 and reflects our role as a partner agency, working with others to deliver local safeguarding solutions and improve outcomes for children, young people and adults at risk.

2.2 Consumer Standards

[Neighbourhood & Community Standard](#)

Local co-operation

Registered providers must co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing.

Anti-social behaviour and hate incidents

Registered providers must work in partnership with appropriate local authority departments, the police and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.

Domestic abuse

Registered providers must work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice

[Safety & Quality Standard](#)

Health and safety

When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.

3 Values

3.1 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

Putting People First: We tailor our services to the needs of our customers. We do this by listening with empathy and responding with compassion. We make it easy for customers to access our services and have the knowledge and understanding to be able to access the support and assistance our customers may need to keep them safe.

Doing What We Say: We will be open and honest with customers and earn trust through honesty, integrity and keeping our promises.

Working As One: We will work with customers, partners and all RBH departments to look at mutually acceptable outcomes with to deliver positive outcomes for the people living in our homes.

Delivering Quality: We invest wisely in our people and make it easy for them to deliver services to keep our customers safe and ensure they can help them access the support they may need.

Open & Transparent: We are open and honest with our customers about what we can offer. We are curious, we embrace diverse ways of thinking and seek feedback to help us improve.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 RBH is required to co-operate with and provide information to the local authority in relation to the safeguarding of children and adults as outlined in legislation. These Acts set out arrangements that local authorities and their partners should have in place to reflect the importance of safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and adults.

4.2 RBH is not a statutory safeguarding authority. However, we have statutory duties to co-operate with safeguarding partners, provide information when requested and act upon safeguarding concerns identified through our service delivery. Our role as a housing provider means we are well placed to be proactive, identify people who have care and support needs and recognise where there is risk of harm. We may be the first to recognise when someone is developing care and support needs, including those who are not known to social services. We also hold valuable local knowledge about anti-social behaviour and crime patterns within our communities. We will share information and work in partnership to co-ordinate responses to keep people safe.

- 4.3 All employees, agency workers and contractors are responsible for safeguarding. This includes remaining alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation or hidden harm, exercising professional curiosity where concerns arise, and taking appropriate action by sharing information and raising safeguarding alerts. We will do this by:
- Ensuring everyone is aware of our safeguarding policy and know how to raise a concern. Case holders will manage cases and work with statutory services as appropriate.
 - All other colleagues will raise an alert via a monitored email inbox - safeguarding@rbh.org.uk.
 - All colleagues must report urgent concerns immediately to 999 and Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) Duty Desk on 0300 303 0440 for a child or 0300 303 8886 for adults.
 - Ensuring RBH has a Designated Safeguarding Lead. They are responsible for training and awareness of safeguarding across the business, acting as lead contact for external agencies such as RBC, representing the organisation on relevant boards, leading on quality assurance and monitoring as at section 5 below, holding a small number of complex cases and can offer specialist guidance to colleagues.
 - Safeguarding Champions exist within all RBH teams and help to embed a strong culture of safeguarding as 'Everyone's Responsibility' across the mutual. This includes a dedicated Board champion for Safeguarding.
 - Providing mandatory safeguarding training to all colleagues.
- 4.4 RBH will share information for the purposes of safeguarding and respond to requests for information from the local authority and multi-agency safeguarding partnerships. Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and in accordance with UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding legislation.
- 4.5 RBH will report concerns of abuse and neglect to the Local Authority. In most cases this will be done with consent unless they lack capacity or there is an overriding risk. Where someone is in immediate danger or discloses abuse that is a criminal offence, we will report this to the Police. Concerns relating to children may be referred without consent where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

5 Monitoring

- 5.1 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 us to deliver safeguarding effectively, tackle barriers to good practice and identify risks.
- 5.2 RBH will carry out internal audits of a minimum of 10% of cases per case holder every quarter. A minimum of 10% of these will be subject to a second-tier audit from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Following that any learning or improvements will be shared and implemented.
- 5.3 Performance in respect of Safeguarding will be reviewed by Customer Services Committee on an annual basis including:
- Volume and type of cases

- Evaluation and outcome of investigated cases with lessons learnt

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 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
 - RBH Domestic Abuse Policy
 - RBH Data Protection Policy
 - RBH Safeguarding Children Procedure
 - RBH Safeguarding Adults Procedure
 - RBH Hoarding Policy

8 Inclusivity statement

- 8.1 We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all. We ensure that everyone is valued and respected. Our policies aim to be inclusive, and will comply with UK laws, including the Equality Act 2010, to create a diverse and supportive environment for people to thrive.
- 8.2 We understand not everyone absorbs information the same way. If you have any difficulty understanding or interpreting this document, please email people@rbh.org.uk or call Freephone 0800 027 7769. We will work with you to ensure your individual needs are met.

APPENDIX 1 – RELEVANT LEGISLATION

RBH has responsibilities to safeguard children under the following legislation:

- i. The Children Act 1989 and 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

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. Modern Slavery Act 2015
- iv. The Mental Health Act 2007
- v. The Social Housing Regulation Bill 2023
- vi. Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- vii. Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- viii. The Harassment Act 1997
- ix. The Equality Act 2010
- x. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

APPENDIX 2 – DEFINITIONS

Child – any person who has not attained the age of 18

Adult at risk – An adult aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves (Care Act test).

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who, for example:

- is an older person who is frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability or sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long-term illness or condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is a carer such as a family member or friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse
- lacks the mental capacity to make decisions and need care and support.

Abuse –a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons (Department of Health)

Abuse can take many forms and can include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse including child sexual exploitation
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect or acts of omissions
- Institutional abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Radicalisation of children and young people by political and religious extremists
- Domestic abuse
- Modern slavery
- Cuckooing
- Criminal exploitation
- County Lines exploitation
- Online abuse
- Forced marriage