

**Rotherham Metropolitan Borough  
Council**

# Corporate Safeguarding Protocol

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**November 2022**

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## 1 Foreword

Rotherham Council believes that every child, young person and adult, regardless of their background, age, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ethnicity or religious belief, should be able to live and participate in a safe society without any fear, violence, abuse, bullying, discrimination or exploitation.

Safeguarding is everyone's business and everyone at the Council shares a responsibility, both corporately and individually, to ensure that every person is treated with dignity and respect and protected from others who may abuse them. All Council employees, elected members, contractors and volunteers, have a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of the most vulnerable people in Rotherham, young or old.

Procedures and good practice are in place to ensure that every service and employee can demonstrate that they understand their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults.

The Council continues to monitor progress, make improvements, and work closely with partners to ensure that safeguarding remains everyone's business.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Read". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Chris Read Leader of the Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Kemp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Sharon Kemp Chief Executive

## **2 Background and context**

The Council, as an organisation, has a duty to make appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults.

This corporate framework reflects that there are similarities in many of the actions needed to safeguard children, young people and adults. However, the Council recognises there are also distinct differences. Further detailed information is contained in the relevant specific policies and procedures within [Adult](#) and [Children and Young People's social care and the multi-agency safeguarding children procedures](#).

This Protocol should be read alongside Council policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents including Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment, Dignity at Work, Equality and Diversity and Whistleblowing.

### **2.1 Links to Rotherham Council Plan**

The Council Plan outlines the priorities and outcomes that the Council will focus on. As well as making clear the Council's duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children, young people and adults, the Corporate Safeguarding Protocol helps to contribute to achieving a number of the outcomes set out in the Council Plan, including:

- People have good mental health and physical wellbeing
- Children, families, and adults feel empowered, safe, and live independently for as long as possible
- Neighbourhoods are welcoming and safe

### **3 Corporate Safeguarding Protocol**

This Protocol operates as a framework for every service in the Council to carry out its statutory safeguarding duties towards children, young people and adults and defines the roles and responsibilities for all employees, managers, elected members and volunteers.

Rotherham Council will ensure that:

- Safeguarding is person-led and outcome-focused; respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of individuals.
- Safeguarding is promoted as everybody's business; ensuring all employees, managers, contractors, elected members and volunteers understand the different forms abuse can take and how to identify them, their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding and that they are supported to develop and maintain this understanding.
- Clear procedures and protocols are in place to meet its duties and obligations towards the safeguarding of children, young people and adults.
- Clear overall accountability for safeguarding exists for all services.
- Assurance is provided to members of the public, service users, elected members, employees, partners and people working on behalf of the Council that there are arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults.
- Services are planned and delivered in a way which seeks to safeguard children, young people and adults; and employees can conduct themselves safely.
- We work with the Rotherham NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and South Yorkshire Police to ensure collective accountability for safeguarding children, in line with the legislative changes from the Children and Social Work Act 2018.
- Local services work together where appropriate around the safeguarding needs of children, young people or adults, and that they are actively involved in developing and evaluating the services which are provided for them.
- Investment in preventative and early intervention services and endeavor to avoid situations where abuse or harm may occur.
- The Council and partner organisations, in relation to multi-agency working arrangements, have a shared understanding of the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults.
- Unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and adults with needs for care and support through its safer recruitment practices.

## 4 Abuse and neglect

This section considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect. The list is taken from examples in the Care Act (2014) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). It is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to safeguarding concerns.

Defining abuse can be complex but it can involve an intentional, reckless, deliberate or dishonest act by the alleged source of harm. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more.

There are four categories of abuse to children stated in Government Guidance document Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018:

- **Emotional** - the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development.
- **Sexual** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware what is happening or not.
- **Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- **Physical** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

The Care Act 2014 has ten categories of abuse relating to adults:

- **Discriminatory** - when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies mainstream opportunities to some groups or individuals.
- **Domestic Abuse** - incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family member regardless of gender or sexuality. Domestic abuse is not just about partners but all family relationships.
- **Emotional/ Psychological** - acts or behaviour which impinges on the emotional health of, or which causes distress or anguish to, individuals.
- **Financial** - unauthorised, fraudulent obtaining and improper use of funds, property or any resources of an adult at risk.
- **Modern Slavery** - encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

- **Neglect** - ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs which result in a situation or environment detrimental to individual(s).
- **Organisational** - where the culture of the organisations places the emphasis on the running of the establishment above the needs and care of the person.
- **Physical** - the non-accidental use of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication and restraint.
- **Self-Neglect** - this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.
- **Sexual** - Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on the Council to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the 'Prevent duty'). This statutory duty is about safeguarding and supporting children, young people or adults who may be vulnerable to becoming involved in terrorism or supporting terrorism.

Support is provided through [The Channel programme](#).

## **5 Safeguarding children and young people**

The Children Act 2004 places a statutory obligation on Borough/District Councils to ensure they have in place, suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (either directly or via their families) who may access or use Council services.

In summary, the Act requires the Council to ensure that:

(a) its functions are discharged with due regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and

(b) through working with others, arrangements are put in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Statutory guidance defines a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, is in Foster Care or is in an Adoptive placement does not change their entitlements to services or protection (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

### **5.1 Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership**

Children's welfare is of the utmost importance. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified.

The Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, requires that the three safeguarding partners (Local Authorities, NHS Integrated Care Boards and Chief Officers of Police), make arrangements to work in partnership together along with relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area.

This includes a shared accountability between the three key partners, and the key responsibilities are to:

- Ensure that there is a shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.
- Agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services.
- Act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others.
- Implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.
- Achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families ensuring they receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way.

The purpose of these local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where:

- Children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted.
- Partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively.
- There is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- Learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice.
- Information is shared effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for children and families.

The Council, with its partners work together to ensure shared visibility when concerns are held below the statutory threshold level. The Early Help Assessment is the common assessment tool that is in place to facilitate this and ensure that families only need to tell their story once.

The Council works in a way that promotes the participation of children and young people in the development and provision of services for them and achieves this through a range of activities including consulting with children and young people, seeking feedback, inclusion in decision making, and linking in with the Children in Care Council.

ALL children and Young People have:

- A right to feel and be safe
- A right to have a voice and be heard
- A right to dream and have aspirations
- A right to be happy and healthy
- A right to feel loved and valued
- A right to education and achievement
- A right to have fun, have hobbies and access to social activities
- A right to a bright future of their choosing

## **6 Safeguarding adults**

Section 42 of the Care Act (2014) places a duty on local authorities to safeguard adults. This duty applies where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there):

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- As a result of the care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

The local authority must make whatever enquiries it thinks necessary to enable it to decide whether any action should be taken in the adult's case and, if so, what and by whom.

Safeguarding adults is different from safeguarding children in many ways. A main difference is that adults with mental capacity have the right to make their own decisions and should be asked for consent, where it is safe to do so and prior to anyone raising a safeguarding concern.

### **6.1 Safeguarding Adults Board**

The Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is an inter-agency forum for agreeing how the different services and professional groups should cooperate to safeguard adults across Rotherham.

The SAB does this by assuring itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance, making sure that arrangements work effectively to identify abuse or inadequate care, help vulnerable people and plan and implement joint preventative strategies.

SABs have three core duties. They must:

- develop and publish a strategic plan setting out how they will meet their objectives and how their member and partner agencies will contribute
- publish an annual report detailing how effective their work has been
- commission safeguarding adults reviews (SARs) for any cases which meet the criteria for these.

The Council is committed to maintaining an effective working relationship with the SAB to help achieve its mutual aims in respect of adult safeguarding.

## **7 Safer Rotherham Partnership**

The Safer Rotherham Partnership is the borough's Community Safety Partnership, set up under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Council and other responsible authorities have a duty to work together to protect local communities and help people feel safer. They work out how to deal with crime and local issues like anti-social behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and reoffending. They assess local crime priorities annually, consulting with partners and the local community about their priorities and monitor progress in achieving them. There are five responsible authorities that make up the Safer Rotherham Partnership:

- National Probation Service
- Rotherham NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- South Yorkshire Police

Voluntary Action Rotherham and the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner are also represented at partnership meetings.

Each year the Safer Rotherham Partnership reviews its priorities towards its vision "*Working together to make Rotherham Safe, to keep Rotherham safe and to ensure the communities of Rotherham feel safe*". The current priorities are:

- Protecting vulnerable children
- Protecting vulnerable adults
- Safer and stronger communities
- Protecting people from violence and organised crime

The Council is committed to supporting the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board to carry out its duties effectively and efficiently and to strengthen the partnership for the benefit of everyone in Rotherham.

## **8 Corporate responsibilities for safeguarding**

Rotherham Council is committed to ensuring the highest standards of safe recruitment, supervision and management of staff, particularly, but not exclusively those working directly with children, young people or adults, or those who have access to information about them.

The Council is committed to supporting all staff to understand their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding, through appropriate training, information sharing and guidance on what to do if there are concerns.

Every service within the Council has a role to play and has to take full ownership of their safeguarding responsibilities. Particular employees have specific roles in relation to safeguarding; notwithstanding this, every employee has an obligation to safeguard and take action when required to ensure children, young people and adults are helped and protected. This section clarifies the various roles across the Council, at different levels.

**The Chief Executive** has responsibility to ensure all staff are aware of their roles in safeguarding. Through the two statutory officers, the Chief Executive ensures that effective safeguarding arrangements for children, young people and adults are in place.

**The Director of Children's Services** is the key point of professional accountability with responsibility for the effective safeguarding of children and young people.

**The Director of Adult Social Services**, as chief officer and lead for adult safeguarding, has a particularly important leadership and challenge role to play in adult safeguarding. They are responsible for promoting prevention, early intervention and partnership working, which is critical in the development of effective safeguarding.

**The Strategic Leadership Team**, encourage, embed and maintain the best safeguarding practice across all directorates and services to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with national and local policies.

**Elected members** have an important part to play to ensure that the Council is discharging its statutory responsibilities and its services to safeguard vulnerable children, young people and adults. All elected members receive training which includes how to identify and report safeguarding concerns within the appropriate levels of confidentiality.

**The lead member for Children's Services** is the only role for elected members defined in legislation and is responsible for taking a strategic view in setting priorities and budgets, supporting the Director of Children's Services and championing the voice of children and young people in decision making across all Council services and partnerships.

**The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health** also has a key role to play in overseeing safeguarding activity, retaining the oversight of all commissioning activities and provision of adult social care, public health functions and the interface with NHS.

**Principal Social Workers**, the Principal Social Worker provides a key role to champion the voice of frontline social work practitioners and managers to senior officers and political leaders as well as supporting and advising on the quality of practice on all safeguarding issue (child and adult protection).

**Safeguarding Champions**, each directorate within the Council has a dedicated safeguarding champion, the group is led by the Chief Executive and their agenda is set to drive awareness and to embed adult and Children safeguarding issues into all Council staff and functions.

**Human Resources (HR)** ensure the effective implementation of safer recruitment practices and induction and that all staff employed to work with children and adults with needs for care and support are subject to the appropriate external checks including Disclosure and Barring, and prior to appointment.

**Line Managers** ensure that appropriate checks are made for all job roles that involve working with children and adults at risk, carrying out the induction process for all new employees, ensuring they fully understand safeguarding and that all staff in their area receive appropriate safeguarding information and training commensurate with the responsibilities of their role.

**All staff (including volunteers and contractors)** must ensure they are fully aware of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, treat all safeguarding matters seriously and take responsibility for reporting disclosures, concerns, incidents or allegations as set out in safeguarding policies.

## **8.1 Working with partners**

Good inter-agency and multi-disciplinary working is promoted and maintained both within the Council and with other organisations. The Rotherham Together Partnership has a Safeguarding Partnership Statement in place, which sets out how strategic partnership bodies work in a coordinated manner, working collaboratively to avoid duplication and ensure consistency.

The signatories of this are:

- Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board
- Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board
- Rotherham Children and Young People's Partnership
- Safer Rotherham Partnership

## **8.2 Whistleblowing and Serious Misconduct Policy**

The Council is committed to ensuring that it, and the people working for it, comply with the highest standards of openness, honesty and accountability.

All employees have a duty of care to draw attention to bad or poor practice in the workplace and can come forward and express their concerns without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.

Safeguarding concerns about a child can be made by contacting 01709 336080 or MASH-Referral@rotherham.gov.uk

Safeguarding concerns about an adult can be made by contacting 01709 822330 or by completing an online form

Any person wishing to report any suspected serious wrongdoing (“a disclosure”) to the Council can do so by emailing whistleblowing@rotherham.gov.uk or calling the Whistleblowing Hotline on 01709 822400 and leaving a message. Alternatively, a disclosure can be made in writing and sent by post to:

Whistleblowing  
c/o the Head of Legal Services  
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council  
Riverside House  
Main Street  
ROTHERHAM S60 1AE

## **8.3 Commissioning and procurement**

Safeguarding is everyone’s business and does not only apply to Council employees but also to suppliers delivering services to, or on behalf of the Council. As part of all contracts, suppliers have a duty to report anything that raises any cause for concern to the Council.

In addition to this standard duty across all contracts, for commissioning activity that involves vulnerable children, young people or adults, the Council’s Commissioning teams also build additional safeguarding criteria into specifications that is specific to the needs and requirements of the individual service.

## **8.4 Review of this Protocol**

This Protocol will be reviewed in line with any changes in legislation and the periodical reviews of Safeguarding Policy, Protocols and Guidance to ensure the Council meets requirements to safeguard children, young people and adults.