

Safeguarding Adults

Multi-Agency Policy

To report an Adult Safeguarding concern please contact Adult Care on 0300 303 8886 Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.45pm, or 0300 303 8875 at all other times, or email adult.care@rochdale.gov.uk.

If there is immediate danger or someone needs urgent medical attention call the emergency services (999)

If you think a criminal offence has been committed inform the police on 101.

Further safeguarding information is available at www.rbsab.org

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1. Policy

The purpose of this document is to set out the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Adults Board (RBSAB) policy on Adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

It includes a statement of principles for use by Rochdale Borough Council Adult Care, NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care, Greater Manchester Police and other agencies for both developing and assessing the effectiveness of our local safeguarding arrangements.

1.1 Introduction

Adult safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. The Care Act 2014 requires that each local authority must:

- Make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an Adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. An enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom;
- Set up a Safeguarding Adults Board;
- Arrange, where appropriate, for an independent advocate to represent and support an Adult who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or Safeguarding Adult Review where the Adult has 'substantial difficulty' in being involved in the process and where there is no other suitable person to represent and support them;
- Co-operate with each of its relevant partners in order to protect the Adult. In their turn each relevant partner must also co-operate with the Local Authority.

The RBSAB's policy objective is to promote well-being, prevent and **reduce the risk of significant harm** to Adults with care and support needs whilst **supporting individuals in maintaining control over their lives** and in making informed choices without coercion.

We believe that **safeguarding is everybody's business** with communities playing a part in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. Measures need to be in place locally to protect those least able to protect themselves. Safeguards against poor practice, harm and abuse need to be an integral part of care and support. We will achieve this through partnerships between local organisations, communities and individuals. We will respond effectively when safeguarding concerns are raised.

Under the Care Act 2014 local authorities must cooperate with each of their relevant partners, and those partners must cooperate with the local authority, in order to protect Adults with care and support needs experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Care Act 2014 states that the following statutory partners which must be represented on the RBSAB:

- Rochdale Borough Council;
- NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care; and
- The Chief Officer of Police. This is delegated to a Detective Superintendent.

However the Act also encourages membership from a wider group of agencies such as other Health organisations, the Fire and Rescue Service, voluntary groups, service user representatives, the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch etc., and these are represented on the RBSAB. Full membership details and more information can be found on the Board's website www.rochdalesafeguarding.com

1.2 Principles

Six key principles underpin all adult safeguarding work

Empowerment – Personalisation and the presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.

“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”

Prevention – It is better to take action before harm occurs.

“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”

Proportionality – Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

“I am sure that the professionals will work for my best interests, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed.”

Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need.

“I get help and support to report abuse. I get help to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want and to which I am able.”

Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

“I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together to get the best result for me.”

Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life.”

The electronic version posted on the RBSAB website is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of this document are not controlled. As a controlled document, this document should not be saved onto local or network drives but should always be accessed from the RBSAB website

These six principles that underpin Adult Safeguarding apply to all sectors and settings including care and support services, social work, healthcare, welfare, housing providers and the police. The principles should inform the ways in which professionals and other staff work with people at risk of abuse or neglect. The principles can also help Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Adults Board and organisations more widely, by using them to examine and improve their local arrangements.

The work of the Safeguarding Adults Board is also underpinned by other general sets of principles, standards or legislation to which all agencies agree to follow:

- Caldicott guidelines
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018/UK GDPR

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

1.3 Commitment of all agencies working together and the role of the RBSAB

All agencies who are members of the RBSAB and other partner agencies who are signatories, have agreed to work to these policies and procedures, so that there is consistency in how adults at risk of abuse or neglect are safeguarded from harm.

Individual organisations may have their own guidance. However, those which provide services under contract to the partner agencies are required to comply with these policy & procedures. These procedures must also be used in conjunction with related procedures such as domestic abuse/violence, disciplinary procedures, health and safety and whistle-blowing etc.

Those who work as personal assistants to adults who may be at risk should make themselves familiar with these policy & procedures.

The Local Authority leads but other organisations have a role in assisting with safeguarding enquiries.

The Policy commits organisations to:

- Work together to prevent and protect adults at risk of harm.
- Empower and support people to make their own choices.
- Respect confidentiality except where there is risk of serious harm to self or others.
- Accept the right to self-determination can involve risk and ensure that such risk is assessed, recognised and understood by all concerned.
- Seek to minimise risks through open discussion between the individual and agencies about the risks involved and offer appropriate help.
- Investigate actual or suspected harm and neglect.
- Support Adults and provide a service to Adults who are experiencing harm, neglect and/or exploitation.

1.4 The responsibilities of organisations working together to safeguard Adults are:

Each partner agency of the RBSAB must cooperate with each other to prevent abuse and neglect of Adults. Observant professionals and other staff making early, positive interventions with individuals and families can make a huge difference to their lives, preventing the deterioration of a situation or breakdown of a support network. It is often when people become increasingly isolated and cut off from families and friends that they become extremely vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

Everyone to whom this document applies needs to be aware that doing nothing is not an option. Employees have a duty to report in a timely way any concerns or suspicions that an Adult is being or is at risk of being harmed.

Employees have a responsibility to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities in regard to these policy & procedures.

All organisations to which these procedures apply are responsible for ensuring their employees and volunteers are appropriately trained in this policy and procedure.

Actions taken under these procedures do not affect the obligations on partner organisations to comply with statutory responsibilities, such as notification to regulatory authorities under the Health & Social Care Act 2008 or to comply with employment legislation. Any allegation against a member of staff or a volunteer must follow the RBSAB Allegations Management Protocol available at www.rochdalesafeguarding.com

Organisations continue to have a duty of care to Adults regardless of contractual arrangements, or for those who purchase their own care independently or who have a personal budget.

Partner organisations are required to comply with the RBSAB over-arching Information Sharing Agreement.

All agencies and providers are required to co-operate with the prevention of abuse and neglect and in any enquiry relating to an Adult deemed to be at risk or where there are safeguarding concerns brought to the attention of the Local Authority or Police, regardless of whether the Local Authority or Health have a contract for the individual or individuals. All agencies must keep accurate records as appropriate.

1.5 Adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect

An Adult to whom these policy and procedures apply is someone who:

- Is 18 or over;
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- 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 of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

The Adult *may* be a person who:

- is elderly and frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a mental disorder such as anxiety
- has a long-term illness/condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- be self-neglecting
- is a carer such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to Adults and is subject to abuse
- is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support.

(This list is not exhaustive, and the Care Act wellbeing principle should be applied to determine whether a person has eligible care and support needs.)

Practitioners should never assume that just because a person is old, frail or has a disability that they are inevitably at risk of abuse or neglect. For example, a person with a disability who has mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety could be perfectly able to make informed choices and protect themselves from harm.

In the context of Safeguarding Adults, the vulnerability of the Adult is related to how able they are to make and exercise their own informed choices free from duress, pressure or undue influence of any sort, and to protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation. It is important to note that people with capacity can also be vulnerable. An Adult's vulnerability is determined by a range of interconnected

factors including personal characteristics, factors associated with their situation or environment and social factors.

1.6 Working with Adults at risk of abuse or neglect

Services provided should be appropriate to the Adult and not discriminate because of disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, 'race', religion or belief, culture or lifestyle.

The primary focus/ point of decision-making should be as close as possible to the Adult and individuals must be supported to make choices.

Arrangements should be made, where appropriate, for an independent advocate to represent and support an Adult who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) where the adult has 'substantial difficulty' in being involved in the process and where there is no other suitable person to represent and support them.

There is a presumption that adults have mental capacity to make informed decisions about their lives. If someone has been assessed as not having mental capacity, decisions will be made in their best interests, as set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice.

Adults should be given information, advice and support in a form that they can understand and have their views included in all forums that are making decisions about their lives. Leaflets explaining the safeguarding process are available at www.rochdalesafeguarding.com

All decisions taken by professionals about a person's life should be timely, reasonable, justified, proportionate and ethical.

Further Information

This document is based on Care and Support Statutory Guidance Issued under the Care Act 2014 by the Department of Health. See also "[Understanding what constitutes a safeguarding concern and how to support effective outcomes](#)", LGA, 2020.