

EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Safeguarding Policy	Jill Moody

A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity? Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?
<p>A life that is free from harm, abuse, and neglect is a basic right of every person. The objective of safeguarding is to prevent and reduce the risk of harm to adults and children from abuse or other types of exploitation and impairment of development, while supporting individuals to maintain control over their lives and enabling them to make informed decisions without coercion.</p> <p>Although safeguarding is recognised as a key responsibility of local authorities, safeguarding is everybody’s business, with neighbours, citizens, and community members needing to be alert to neglect and abuse and be committed to reporting our concerns.</p> <p>Runnymede Borough Council has a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care for children and vulnerable adults.</p> <p>The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) along with the statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, provide the legal framework for safeguarding children.</p> <p>The Care Act 2014 sets out the legal framework for protecting adults with care and support needs who are at risk of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>The Runnymede Borough Council Safeguarding Policy sets out how the Council will meet its obligations to safeguard children and adults at risk. It applies to staff, agency workers, volunteers and contractors employed by the Council. It is also applicable to Councillors undertaking official duties on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Policy has recently been updated in line with best practice guidelines and the proposed amendments will be presented to community services committee in November to request approval from members.</p> <p>It is a key message that Safeguarding is Everybody’s Business and the new policy aims to put this into action by providing a more robust, structured approach to the management of safeguarding and putting safeguarding firmly at the heart of everything we do.</p> <p>The key actions proposed to implement and embed the new structure and processes within The Council are as follows: Appointment of Senior Safeguarding Leads Appointment of Safeguarding Champion from within each business unit</p>

Creation of meeting structures to coordinate safeguarding internally
Creation of centralised storage systems for Safeguarding reports made by the Council and against officers and Councillors
Implementation of simplified Safeguarding reporting process
Implementation of training plan as set out across business units

The Policy intends to support those working within the council who have a safeguarding complaint as well supporting officers to raise a concern that they may come across when in contact with service users or other residents during their normal duties. So this policy affects those within the council, service users and the wider community.

B. . Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality? Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential on the basis of adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination. The Protected Characteristics are; Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.

The Safeguarding Policy is relevant to equality in terms of the specific groups of people that it aims to protect i.e. children and adults at risk.

Children are defined by their age as any person under 18 years of age.

Adults at risk are defined by the Care Act (2014) as a person 18 years of age or over who:

- Has needs for care and support
- Is experiencing, or is 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.

Therefore, the policy aims to protect those that may be at risk of neglect or abuse due to the protected characteristics of age and/or disability (physical and/or mental). The protected characteristics of race and religion may also be engaged with regard to honour based and abuse based on discrimination.

If the policy, function or activity is considered to be relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not engage any protected characteristics then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.

C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion? Alternatively, if there it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected Characteristics but that measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

The purpose of the Safeguarding Policy is to provide best practice guidelines to prevent the abuse and neglect of those who may be vulnerable due to the protected characteristics of age and disability.

Prior to updating their safeguarding policy, the Council consulted with other local authorities as well as the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board. The safeguarding policy has been updated with recommendations that aim to ensure that there is a clear structure and processes in place so that the council actively promotes safeguarding as well as for fulfilling its safeguarding obligations. The following measures are proposed to ensure that this happens:

Safeguarding staffing structure – to provide accountability at all levels throughout the council, by identifying key safeguarding roles and providing training in line with their responsibilities; to ensure processes are followed, staff are supported, there is appropriate representation at safeguarding meetings both internally and externally and the sharing of best practice with council colleagues and partner organisations.

Training plan – to develop a highly trained, vigilant workforce who clearly understand the importance and principles of safeguarding and not only know how to report a concern but feel confident and properly supported by safeguarding leads/managers to do so.

Safeguarding process – To create a simplified and streamlined process for all safeguarding reports, presented in a user-friendly format. This is intended to be useful to all staff in all scenarios from dealing with an emergency to getting advice about a concern as well as how to report a concern. In combination with the training plan and the safeguarding lead roles, this will help to support those who have a concern but are unsure what to do next.

Record keeping/case management system - To consolidate all external safeguarding reports across the council in one place, enabling cross departmental/multi-agency awareness and referrals as well as the sharing of best practice. A central record for all internal safeguarding concerns to be held and managed by HR.

Representation – To create a Runnymede Borough Council Designated Safeguarding Leads Committee so that regular case and policy reviews can be undertaken, and important safeguarding updates rolled out and cascaded to all officers. It is proposed that this committee will formally review the Safeguarding Policy annually, in line with external audits from the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership and Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board. Nominated Safeguarding Leads will attend and actively participate in the 'Surrey District and Boroughs Safeguarding Forum' and 'District & Borough Lead Members and Officers for Children's Services Quarterly Meetings' to benefit from shared learning, partner updates and to be actively involved in the shaping of Safeguarding policy with partner organisations across Surrey.

This screening assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge before sign-off. Please submit this form to Emmanuel Alozie and Clare Pinnock via email.

Date completed: 17/10/2022

Sign-off by senior manager: