

Rackheath Community Council

Safeguarding Policy

Adopted April 2020
Revision (4) 2024



Policy Statement

This policy relates to both children and vulnerable adults.

A 'child' is a person under the age of 18 (Children Act 1989).

A 'vulnerable adult' is a person "Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation" (Who Decides? 1997).

It applies to all staff (paid or unpaid, including volunteers), Community Councillors or anyone working on behalf of Rackheath Community Council (Council), be this on Council premises or elsewhere.

The purpose of this policy is:

To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive Council services. This includes the children of adults who use these services.

To provide staff and Councillors with the overarching principles that guide their approach to safeguarding.

To ensure that the Council ensures all personnel, having contact with vulnerable people, are subject to appropriate checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

To ensure the Council have a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

That all staff and Councillors understand their role and responsibilities regarding the safeguarding of vulnerable people in their community.

This Council believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. The Council has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and keep them safe. The Council is committed to practice in a way that protects the most vulnerable in our community.

This policy recognises that:

The most vulnerable in society, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Abuse can be emotional, physical, sexual and/or neglect of the child or vulnerable adult's needs.

Vulnerable adults can also be subjected to: financial and psychological abuse.

Abuse can include exposure to domestic abuse, modern slavery, organisational or discriminatory abuse.

Responding to abuse:

If staff or Councillors have had abuse disclosed to them, witnessed abuse or suspect that a vulnerable person has been abused, they should report this to the DSO, regardless of who the alleged perpetrator is.

If the vulnerable person is at immediate risk of significant harm you should contact the police immediately by telephoning 999.

If the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff or Councillor the person reporting the abuse MUST NOT discuss this with them before discussing the situation with the DSO. To be clear it may not be appropriate to have any dialogue with the alleged abuser as this may impact upon any subsequent investigation.

If a disclosure is made to a member of staff or Councillor they must be clear that this cannot be a 'secret' or an 'off the record' conversation and will be reported to the DSO. They should listen to the disclosure and avoid leading questions. It is advisable to let the person give their account without interruption. It is appropriate to ask if there is "anything else" the person wishes to disclose to you before you record what they

have told you. It is important to record this as soon as possible afterwards to ensure it is as accurate as possible.

The DSO should obtain a report and written record from staff or Councillors of the disclosure or abuse witnessed.

The DSO should contact Norfolk County Council (NCC) by telephoning 0344 8008020 to report the concerns without delay.

If any staff member or Councillor does not feel that the DSO has responded appropriately it is their responsibility to contact NCC.

If the allegation of abuse is regarding the DSO then staff or Councillors MUST report this to the Chair of RPC who will contact NCC.

If the allegation implicates a member of staff or Councillor (or someone who is known to work with children) the DSO or Chair should seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Disciplinary Policy should be followed to decide whether it is appropriate to suspend said person while there is an ongoing investigation.

Responsibilities and Procedures: Fran Whymark, Community Councillor, has been designated as Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and the responsibilities will include:

Ensuring that participants are appropriately briefed before any Community Council organised event with children or vulnerable people;

Ensuring that councillors are aware of the risk they may face in certain circumstances whilst carrying out their duties;

Ensuring that whilst councillors are unlikely to be involved with children during the performance of their duties they are mindful of the risk they face.

All new councillors are to be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and are required to acknowledge they will abide by it. Councillors will adhere to the 'List of Recommended Behaviours' namely:

- A minimum of two adults present when supervising children
- Not to play physical contact games
- Ensure that accidents are recorded in an accident book
- Never do anything of a personal nature for a young person
- Keep records in an incident book of any allegations a young person may make to any Community councillor or volunteer
- If there is a child abuse incident it should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer who will be responsible for ensuring the matter is handled in accordance with the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board procedures and also referred to the Community Council for further action as appropriate and future risk assessment
- Facilities offered by the Community Council are inspected on a regular basis. The play areas are inspected annually by a fully independent qualified inspector
- In the event of a contractor, working directly for the Community Council, being deemed to be working in any area where children or adults with care and support needs may be at risk, then that contractor will be asked to provide their Safeguarding Policy.

Any organisation which is engaged by the Community Council (for example the YMCA) to work with children or adults with care or support needs on their behalf shall be required to show proof of its own Safeguarding Policy before being contracted by the Community Council. The organisation's policy must, as a minimum, adhere to the standards set out within this policy. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will need to review such policies.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect the most vulnerable, namely:

Local Authority Social Services Act 1970
United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
General Data Protection Regulation 2018
Human Rights Act 1998
Sexual Offences Act 2003
Children Act 1989 and 2004
Mental Capacity Act 2005
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
Equality Act 2010
Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
Care Act 2014

Government guidance and consultation documents including but not limited to: No secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse No Secrets 2000; Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding 2013 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018.

Rackheath Community Council is committed to reviewing our safeguarding policy and good practice annually.

To be reviewed in: October 2025

Contacts

Childline - telephone: 0800 1111

LADO – telephone: 01603 223473

Norfolk County Council - telephone: 0344 8008020 (to report abuse of a child or adult)

Norfolk Police - telephone: 101 or 999 in an emergency

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board - telephone: 0344 8008020 or

email: nsabchair@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board - telephone: 01603 223409 or

email: nscb@norfolk.gov.uk

NSPCC - telephone: 0808 8005000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk