



BURY COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Author: Name and job title xx

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bury Council recognises that the welfare of at-risk children and adults is the most important consideration in all our work and decisions. Everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has an equal right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- 1.2 The Care Act 2014, Children Act 1989, and Children Act 2004 make it clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and professionals, organisations and local authorities must work in partnership when carrying out their duties under this legislation.
- 1.3 Bury is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of adults and children who live in a Bury property, who use, are engaged in, or are connected to our services.
- 1.4 It is the responsibility of all individuals working for, or on behalf of Bury Council, including colleagues, contractors, agency colleagues, managing agents, volunteers and involved customers, to understand, report and act in accordance with this policy and associated procedures to any concerns of actual or potential abuse of an adult, child, or young person.
- 1.5 Safeguarding is everyone's business. Making safeguarding personal means the safeguarding process should be person led, and outcome focused. It should engage the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing, and safety.

2. Related Documents

- 2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies, procedures, and documents:
 - Bury Housing Services Safeguarding Procedure
 - Bury Joint Working Protocol
 - Bury Domestic Abuse Policy
<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/consultations-publications-and-policy/additional-housing-policies/housing-and-social-investment-domestic-abuse-policy><https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/consultations-publications-and-policy/additional-housing-policies/housing-and-social-investment-domestic-abuse-policy>

- Bury Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy
- Bury Antisocial Behaviour Policy & Procedure
- Bury Housing Services Decants Procedure
- Multi Agency Risk Management (MARM)
- Bury Housing Service Hoarding Procedure
- Bury Neglect Policy

3. Policy Aims.

3.1 This policy supports and works alongside statutory safeguarding guidance. It reflects current legislation for protecting both children and adults at risk. It sets out the role of housing management in safeguarding and outlines our responsibilities in working with other agencies to keep people safe. It includes:

- Definitions of safeguarding and those who may be at risk.
- Types of abuse and neglect.
- How Bury Housing Services may be involved in the prevention of abuse.
- How we will respond and report.
- How we will share information and work with others.

4. Definitions of child at risk and adult at risk

4.1 Safeguarding Children

Government guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines a child as being anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. It indicates that providing early help is crucial in safeguarding children and requires all staff to understand their role in identifying emerging problems and sharing information with other professionals. We will ensure housing staff are alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- has special educational needs.
- is a young carer.
- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems and domestic violence or has returned home to their family from care
- is showing early signs of abuse or neglect.

4.2 Safeguarding Adults

An **adult at risk** is a person aged 18 years or over who has needs for care and support (whether the local authority is meeting any of those) and/or is at

risk of and unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect. These care and support needs may include for example a person who:

- is elderly or frail due to ill health.
- has a physical disability, sensory impairment, or a long-term illness/condition.
- has a mental health need including dementia or a personality disorder.
- has a learning disability.
- is unable to demonstrate capacity to make a decision and needs care and support.
- has a dependency on alcohol, illegal drugs, or medication.
- is unable to take care of themselves and safeguard themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

5. Safeguarding Children

5.1 In the Government's guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network, through a kinship care network, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the child(ren).
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

There are four main categories of child abuse: physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect. The signs of abuse are well illustrated by the NSPCC here:

www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse

5.2 How to raise a safeguarding concern for children

Safeguarding concerns can be reported online at:

[Report a child at risk - Bury Council](#)

The following contact details can be used to seek advice or to refer any cause for concern regarding a child or young person. You can telephone

- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on 0161 253 5678
- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub out of hours 0161 253 6606
- Or 999 in an emergency

6. Safeguarding Adults

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance

www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance identifies the following types of abuse that can be experienced by adults and the signs of abuse:

- **physical abuse** – including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, inappropriate sanctions.
- **domestic abuse or abuse** – including sexual, physical, financial, and emotional abuse.
- **sexual abuse** – including rape, sexual assault, sexual acts to which a person has not consented, could not consent, or was pressurised into consenting.
- **psychological/emotional abuse** – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **financial or material abuse** – including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- **modern slavery** – including human trafficking, forced labour, domestic exploitation.
- **neglect and acts of omission** – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.
- **self-neglect** – including lack of self-care, failure to seek help or access to services to meet health and social care needs.
- **discriminatory abuse** – including racism, sexism, based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **institutional abuse and poor professional practice** - this may take the form of isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice at one end of the spectrum, through to pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct at the other.

The Care Act 2014 defines safeguarding as protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect and promoting the adult's wellbeing. It is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and

at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The S42(1) criteria are applicable where there is **reasonable cause** to suspect:

- a) the adult has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs)
- b) the adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

The guidance also states that local authorities should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as they can take many forms, and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered.

Incidents of abuse may also be one-off or multiple and affect one person or more. Professionals and others should look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm.

6.1 Raising a safeguarding concern for an adult

Any concerns that an adult may be at risk of abuse, harm, or neglect from either themselves, an individual or an organisation, should be reported online at

- <http://www.bury.gov.uk/social-care-and-support>
- Phone: Care, Connect and direct office 0161 253 5151
- Email: adultcareservices@bury.gov.uk

7. Recognising signs of abuse

7.1 Bury Housing Services recognises that abuse, neglect, or harm can arise in a range of settings and may be perpetrated by a wide range of people including relatives and family members, professional staff, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends, associates, or strangers.

7.2 Bury Housing Services acknowledges the significance of professional curiosity and has formally adopted the “Eyes Wide Open” approach, assuming a leadership role in championing its implementation across wider Council Services.

Example of signs of abuse:

- children or adults at risk whose care needs appear to be neglected or who appear to be subject to deliberate mistreatment.
- children or adults who say they are being abused.
- signs of self-neglect in adults living alone such as hoarding, unsanitary conditions, or alcohol or substance misuse.

- neglect of a person's needs because those around them are unable to be responsible for their care, for example, if a carer has difficulties caused by debt, alcohol, or mental health problems.
- difficulties in maintaining a tenancy such as arrears or neighbour problems or harassment which may be linked to a learning difficulty or mental health problems and giving rise to exploitation, cuckooing, financial abuse, or harassment.
- Adults at risk of financial abuse which may be indicated by a lack of heating, clothing or food, inability to pay bills / unexplained shortage of money, unexplained withdrawals from an account, unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents, the recent addition of authorised account holders/signatories or unexplained changes in a will or other financial documents.
- Adults and families where damp and mould is present, the property requires extensive repairs, and the tenant is refusing to engage with housing services to allow the necessary work to be carried out.
- The tenant logs multiple emergency call outs which raising concerns for welfare.
- Where there is known or suspected domestic abuse.
- The child is a young carer/or an adult carer for a vulnerable adult.
- The tenant is a care leaver is being exploited, displaying challenging behaviour or struggling to sustain their tenancy.
- Multiple issues such as substance misuse and self-neglect within the home where children are present
- Repeated instances of poor health or neglectful care by health and social professionals or workers
- Properties that are overcrowded and have multiple support issues such as substance misuse and mental health concerns.
- Unsafe sleeping environments for children such as no bed or cot provision

7.3 Bury Housing Services will ensure that all **staff** are trained to identify the wide range of circumstances in which potential victims of neglect or abuse may present and how to respond to the same in accordance with this policy. See section 12 below.

Commented [GS1]: Do we just mean housing management staff or do we mean all staff?

8. Escalating and resolving professional differences

8.1 Principles:

- Disagreements are a normal and expected part of collaborative safeguarding work.
- Constructive and timely resolution is essential to ensure they do not become a barrier to positive outcomes.

- Multi-agency challenge, debate, and different perspectives should be encouraged in the best interests of children and adults.

8.2 Escalation Process:

- If resolution cannot be achieved through direct discussion or meetings within an acceptable timeframe,
 - Escalate to a more senior or experienced colleague for support.
- All staff should refer to the [Greater Manchester Procedure Manual](#) for detailed guidance on the escalation route and timeframe expectations.

9. Reporting and recording (staff and contractors)

9.1 All colleagues and third parties have the responsibility to report concerns of abuse or disclosures made to them promptly. **If, however, there is a risk of serious or imminent danger/harm to the individual, the person witnessing the event must dial 999 and ask for the appropriate emergency service.**

9.2 Bury Housing Services will also maximise available opportunities to provide, or signpost tenants and customers with information and advice regarding safeguarding and ensure people are supported to report any safeguarding concerns on line at <http://www.bury.gov.uk/social-care-and-support>

9.3 When managing any allegation of abuse, we encourage our staff to be 'professionally curious' in spotting the signs. Information must be recorded accurately and promptly. In addition, Housing Services colleagues or third parties may also be called upon to complete forms or requests for information from statutory agencies which include local authorities, the local Safeguarding Team, Police, or the NHS.

9.4 Safeguarding issues may be brought to the attention of staff directly by residents, neighbours, contractors, or other agencies in contact with residents or their families. In addition, housing services staff working with residents or entering residents' homes to carry out visits, repairs, inspections, or interviews may encounter situations causing concerns for someone's welfare.

9.5 The housing services safeguarding procedure provides details of where staff are required to log information relating to safeguarding concerns.

9.6 We will work with other providers and boroughs if the survivor does not feel that they can be safely accommodated within Bury.

10. The recruitment, induction and training of staff and contractors

- 10.1 Bury Housing Services will ensure the selection and recruitment of staff, contractors and agencies considers the need to promote the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.
- 10.2 Housing Services staff will receive safeguarding children and adults at risk training on the best practices in relation to safeguarding, how to identify signs of abuse and neglect, recognise harm and make appropriate referrals. This will be mandatory for all housing services staff and will be monitored by senior managers.
- 10.3 All staff will complete Prevent training and are expected to comply fully with the Bury Council Prevent approach <https://www.bury.gov.uk/my-neighbourhood/safety-in-the-community/prevent>. Housing Services will actively contribute to the delivery of Bury's Prevent duty and engage in multi-agency partnership work to support this important area of safeguarding.
- 10.3 Safeguarding will be discussed at contract meetings with contractors and suppliers. Bury Housing Services Safeguarding policy will be shared with contractors.
- 10.4 Guidance for front line staff working with adults is also set out in the Bury Safeguarding Partnership website <https://burysafeguardingpartnership.bury.gov.uk/> which describes what abuse is, the legal context and the responsibilities of front-line staff who may encounter possible cases of abuse and neglect in adults.
- 10.5 Guidance for staff working with children is set out in 'Neglect Matters' and Thresholds of Need Guide, which help staff to identify possible cases of neglect and officer guidance on how to respond.

11. Management and supervision

- 11.1 Bury Housing Services will provide direction about the service's responsibilities and the promotion of effective practice in relation to safeguarding through regular management and supervision of staff and contractors, the monitoring of performance, reporting, complaints and annual review of policy and notable practice.
- 11.2 Bury Housing Services managers will ensure through regular supervision that the policy is adhered to and that adequate arrangements with other parts of the Council and other agencies are in place to ensure effective safeguarding and communication.

11.3 Safeguarding will be a regular item on team meeting agendas.

11.4 Bury Housing Services will ensure all staff are enabled to challenge inappropriate behaviour in others and can access whistleblowing procedures.

12. Working in partnership with others

12.1 Organisations that Bury Housing Services contracts with to provide a service and work with children and adults at risk, will be asked to familiarise themselves with the Housing Services Safeguarding Policy.

12.2 Bury Housing Services holds monthly neighbourhood meetings and sits on the Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards and case reviews where any issues with partnership working is also discussed.

12.3 Bury Housing Services will co-operate with partner organisations to deliver effective safeguarding, both at a strategic level and in individual cases, where they may need to ask one another to take specific action in that case.

12.4 The Care Act 2014 identifies five areas of cooperation between partners which are relevant to an individual's care and support, although it should be noted that the purpose of cooperation is not limited to the following alone:

- Promoting the wellbeing of adults needing care and support and of carers
- Improving the quality of care and support for adults and support for carers (including the outcomes from such provision)
- Smoothing the transition from Children's to Adult services
- Protecting adults with care and support needs who are currently experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect

13. Suicide prevention

13.1 On 11 September 2023 the Department of Health and Social Care published

'Suicide prevention in England: 5-year cross-sector'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england-2023-to-2028/suicide-prevention-in-england-5-year-cross-sector-strategy>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england-2023-to-2028/suicide-prevention-in-england-5-year-cross-sector-strategy>

13.2 Suicide prevention is everyone's business. Every person, organisation, and service up and down the country has a role to play.

13.3 If someone is in immediate danger, the quickest way to get help is to call emergency services on **999**.

14. Legal context

14.1 The key principles of safeguarding are outlined in the below acts

Adults Care Act 2014 and include six principles:

- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.
- **Prevention** - It is better to act before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** - Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** - Accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

Children's Working Together Act 2023

The **main principles** of the *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* guidance reflect a renewed commitment to collaborative, child-centred safeguarding across all agencies. Here's a summary of the core principles:

- **Child-Centred and Whole-Family Approach**
Children's needs and voices must be at the heart of safeguarding, while also recognising the importance of working with and supporting their families.
- **Strong Multi-Agency Collaboration**
Effective safeguarding depends on clear roles, shared responsibility, and coordinated action between local authorities, health, education, police, and other partners.
- **National Multi-Agency Child Protection Standards**
These new standards set out consistent expectations for practice, behaviours, and decision-making to improve outcomes for children.
- **Early Help and Prevention**
Emphasis is placed on identifying and addressing issues early, with education and childcare settings playing a key role in spotting concerns and supporting families.

- **Positive, Trusting Relationships with Families**

Practitioners are encouraged to build cooperative relationships with parents and carers to deliver tailored support and reduce risk.

- **Clear Accountability and Governance**

The guidance strengthens expectations around leadership, information-sharing, scrutiny, and funding to ensure safeguarding arrangements are effective and transparent.

The **Mental Capacity Act 2005** (applies to young people 16 years old and over) provides a statutory framework to empower and protect people who may lack the capacity to make decisions for themselves and establishes a framework for making decisions on their behalf. This applies whether the decisions are life-changing events or everyday matters. All decisions taken in the adult safeguarding process must comply with the Act.

The Mental Capacity Act outlines five statutory principles that underpin the work with adults who may lack mental capacity:

- a) A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity.
- b) A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help them to do so have been taken without success.
- c) A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because they make an unwise decision.
- d) An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in their best interests.
- e) Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

The following are the key policies, procedures and codes of practice that will inform our practice:

- Adult Safeguarding Procedures
- Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Code of Practice
- Neglect Matters
- Threshold of Needs Guide
- Children Act 1989 / 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Child Protection Procedures
- Care Act 2014
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

15. Equalities statement

- 15.1 The Council is committed to promoting fair and equal access to services and equal opportunities in employment, the procurement of goods and as a community leader. The Council's policies, procedures and day to day practices have been established to promote an environment which is free from unlawful and unfair discrimination while valuing the diversity of all people.
- 15.2 Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, and age is not acceptable: Bury Housing Services will take action to ensure no person using the Council's premises or services receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by requirements or conditions that cannot be justified. Bury Housing Services will tackle inequality, treat all people with dignity and respect, and continue to work to improve services for all service users.
- 15.3 The legal framework for the Council's approach is provided by the Equality Act 2010 and specifically by the Public Sector Equality Duty, under which a public authority must work consciously to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with differing characteristics.

16. GDPR and data protection

Bury Housing Services is committed to ensure that all data is:

- processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.
- collected for a specific and legitimate purpose and not used for anything other than this stated purpose, or as provided for in our privacy and fair processing notices.
- relevant and limited to whatever the requirements are for which the data is processed.
- accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date. Any identified inaccuracies will be amended or removed without undue delay.
- stored for as long as required, as specified within Bury Housing Services Records Retention Policy.
- secured with appropriate solutions, which protect the data against unauthorised or unlawful processing and accidental loss, destruction, or damage.

For further information about the Council's commitment to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), visit the Council's website

17. Information sharing

- 17.1 All housing management staff working with tenants with care and support needs or who may be at risk must understand that information about suspected or actual abuse/neglect cannot be kept confidential. The needs of at-risk tenants and the potential risk to others require that information be shared as soon as possible with line manager.
- 17.2 When possible, at-risk tenants should be informed about whom the information will be shared with. Even if the at-risk tenant does not want you to share the information, it must be done. When possible, officers will try to engage with the adult at risk and try to gain consent before making a safeguarding referral. (It is unlikely that a safeguarding referral will be accepted unless the points in s.19.4 are articulated).
- 17.3 Consent to share information, including in relation to raising adult safeguarding concerns and making referrals to MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference) will always be sought from the adult at risk whenever possible in the first instance. A good practice is to seek the adult's views and what they would like to happen unless doing so is likely to increase the risk to the adult and/or put others at risk.
- 17.4 When making a safeguarding referral involving a child, obtaining consent from a parent or guardian is essential, unless doing so would place the child at further risk. It is considered good practice to involve the family throughout the referral process. This approach promotes transparency, builds trust, and ensures families are better equipped to participate in any ongoing assessments or support plans.
- 17.5 However, there are circumstances in which consent may need to be overridden, and information shared, on a need-to-know basis, to manage risks. This can be in situations in which:
- The adult lacks mental capacity and is unable to give consent
 - The adult and/or others are identified to be at risk of significant harm
 - The adult's decision appears to be affected by undue influence or coercion
 - When a criminal offence has taken place.

17.6 Any views or wishes expressed by at risk tenants should be recorded and reported/included in the safeguarding referral at the earliest possible opportunity. Ensuring the safety of at risk residents and any other people at risk is the primary responsibility of Bury Housing Services housing management staff.

17.7 Where safeguarding concerns relate to an adult with the mental capacity to make decisions in this area of their life and declines assistance, this may limit the intervention that can be made. However, this does not mean that the information cannot be shared.

18. Compliance, monitoring, and review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or when legislative or regulatory changes take place that could affect it. The next review will take place by: June 2028.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Document owner Kimberley Partridge	Job title Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services
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