

## Safeguarding: A Brief Overview

### What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the process of protecting children and young people from abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding may refer to a case in which a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm.

Safeguarding may refer to a case in which it is indicated that a person may be unsuitable to work with children or young people in some or any capacity.

Safeguarding may also relate to issues in which a criminal offence that relates to children and young people has been committed.

### How and why should these issues affect us a council and you as individuals?

There are two key events that acted as a catalyst for statutory change. This was the Lord Laming report into the death of 8 year old Victoria Climbié in 2000 and the Bichard enquiry into the deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in 2004. Both cases highlighted severe system failures which led to radical changes and new legislation.

As a Borough Council we fall into one of those categories that is affected by the 2004 Children's Act which came about as a result of these two enquiries. The Act places a statutory duty – that's a legally binding duty that as a council make arrangements that ensure that our services are discharged with regard to safeguarding children.

By law as a council we have to have a clear senior management commitment to safeguarding.

By law as a council we have to reflect new legislation in our policies – notably the Safeguarding Policy itself, the Recruitment and Selection Policy and our CRB Policy.

By law we as a council and as individuals have a duty to make enquiries if we have reason to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm,

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if we have reason to suspect that a person is unsuitable to work with children or if we have reason to believe a criminal offence that relates to children and young people has been committed.

And by law we have a duty to ensure that we have appropriate processes and procedures in place in order for that to happen and that staff are aware of not only their responsibility but also who to go to and where to go to make that allegation, suspicion or concern.

What is very important however, for you to understand and to know is that it is not your responsibility to make any judgements, decisions or decide if there is a case to pursue but what you do need to understand and do need to know is that it is your duty to report any allegation, suspicion or concern you may have with any issue that relates to a safeguarding matter.

**How do we fulfil those duties?**

To fulfil our statutory duties as a council RBC has a Safeguarding Lead Officer. Our Named Senior Officer for Safeguarding is Ken Watkins.

We have a duty to report our concerns. How do we do that? Contact Ken Watkins and use the reporting form **SG7** to record as much information as you can using actual conversation if you are able.

Within 24 hours of receiving your referral Ken will make contact with the Access Centre and County Safeguarding Officer (referred to here as the Local Authority Designated Officer). Together they will discuss the case, measuring it against a threshold for action and make a decision on the course of action to take. Worst case scenario this would be an immediate removal of a child from harm, or it may be that a criminal investigation is evoked or it may be that the case is referred back to us as a Borough Council for us to deal with in house following our own disciplinary procedures.

You will see from the Flow Diagram **SG4** that there is a backup plan and if you are unable to reach Ken Watkins your referral should be made to your line manager who is well briefed with this process and will make the call to the Access Centre in Kens absence.