



# Vulnerable Tenants Policy

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## 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the approach that Rugby Borough Council (RBC) will take to identify, support and safeguard vulnerable tenants within our Council homes.

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all RBC tenants, particularly those who are vulnerable. By recognising the unique needs of vulnerable individuals and providing appropriate interventions, we will work towards promoting independent living and ensuring the safety and dignity of our tenants.

For further information or if you are concerned about a vulnerable tenant, please contact us on 01788 533533 or at [housingervices@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:housingervices@rugby.gov.uk)

The policy aims to ensure that vulnerable tenants are treated with respect, provided with appropriate support and protected from harm. Vulnerability may stem from a range of factors, including age, health, disability, mental health conditions, financial hardship, domestic abuse, or other situations that impair a person's ability to live independently or safely.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable tenants.
- Provide clear guidelines for RBC staff on how to support vulnerable individuals.
- Ensure that vulnerable tenants receive timely and appropriate interventions.
- Prevent and respond to situations of risk, abuse, and neglect.
- Promote independence, dignity, and respect for vulnerable tenants.

## 2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all tenants living in properties owned and managed by RBC. It includes tenants, leaseholders, and those seeking housing assistance, whether permanent, temporary, or in emergency accommodation.

2.2 Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all RBC staff.

### **3. Relevant Legislation and Regulation**

- Housing Act 1996
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989/2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Housing Act 2004
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR

### **4. Terms and definitions**

4.1 For the purposes of this policy, we will use the following definition:

A vulnerable tenant is someone who is at risk of harm or difficulty due to factors such as (but not limited to):

- Age: Tenants who are elderly or frail and who may need assistance with daily living activities.
- Health Conditions: Individuals with physical or mental health conditions that affect their ability to care for themselves, manage their home, or engage with our services.
- Disability: Tenants with physical, sensory, learning, or other disabilities that limit their ability to live independently.
- Financial Hardship: Those struggling with severe financial difficulties, including poverty or debt, which may put their tenancy or wellbeing at risk.
- Mental Health: Individuals experiencing mental health crises or ongoing mental health challenges that impact their ability to function independently in their home and to manage their tenancy.
- Domestic Abuse: People experiencing domestic violence, abuse, or coercion.
- Substance Dependency: Individuals with substance misuse issues who may require additional support.
- Children and Families: Vulnerable families with young children or other dependent relatives, where safeguarding may be a concern.

### **5. Responsibilities**

5.1 RBC staff are responsible for:

- Recognising the signs of vulnerability and reporting concerns to the relevant team or service.
- Respecting the dignity, privacy, and wishes of vulnerable tenants where practical and in line with safeguarding duties.
- Maintaining clear, confidential, and accurate records regarding the vulnerability and support provided to each tenant.

- Acting promptly and appropriately to ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable tenants.

## 5.2 Vulnerable tenants are encouraged to:

- Maintain communication with RBC about their needs and circumstances.
- Cooperate with assessments and support plans to help maintain their tenancy and wellbeing.
- Seek early help if they feel at risk or their circumstances change.
- Tenants can be supported by a representative or advocate in interactions regarding any landlord service.

## 6. Policy Statement

### 6.1 We are committed to identifying vulnerable tenants through:

- Self-identification: Encouraging tenants to inform us of any vulnerability or support needs at the point of application or when circumstances change.
- Staff observations: Our staff will be trained to identify potential vulnerability indicators through regular contact with tenants, including during home visits, repair requests, and tenancy management interactions.
- Referrals: Receiving information from external agencies, health services, or social care professionals that may indicate a tenant is vulnerable.
- Data sharing: Working in collaboration with other departments (e.g., Social Services, Health, and Police) where consent allows, to identify those at risk.

### 6.2 We will ensure that appropriate support is offered once a vulnerable tenant is identified, including:

- We will identify tenants' additional needs through Settling In Visits and Tenancy Health Checks.
- Referral to specialist services: Where necessary, vulnerable tenants will be referred to appropriate external services, such as social services, mental health services, or domestic abuse helplines.
- Support plans: We will consider a referral to our Tenancy Support Officers if their support would assist a vulnerable tenant in maintaining their tenancy.
- Adaptations and adjustments: For tenants with disabilities or mobility issues, we may provide adaptations to their home or offer suitable alternative accommodation.
- Regular check-ins: For tenants with ongoing needs, regular monitoring and follow-ups will be arranged to ensure continued support and safety.

### 6.3 The safety and wellbeing of vulnerable tenants is a priority. To ensure safeguarding, we will utilise and deliver:

- Multi-agency collaboration: We will work closely with other agencies, such as social services, the police, and domestic violence organisations, to support vulnerable individuals and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- Referrals: We will make a safeguarding referral to the appropriate agencies where we deem a tenant is at risk with the consent of the tenant unless the tenant is in clear danger and needs to be referred.
- Safeguarding training: All staff will receive training and regular refresher training identified in staff 121's on safeguarding procedures and how to recognise signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Confidentiality and privacy: Information about vulnerable tenants will be shared only with consent or where necessary for their safety, following data protection guidelines.
- Risk management: When there is a suspicion of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, immediate action will be taken to assess and mitigate the risk to the tenant.

## **7. Monitoring and review**

7.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly cycle, unless there is a business need, or a change in legislation or regulation which prompts an earlier review.

7.2 We will review the following to ensure ongoing compliance with the policy

- Regular feedback from tenants and partner organisations.
- Audits of case files and support plans.
- Staff training and development reviews.

7.3 We will publish this document on our website and our intranet to ensure visibility and access for staff and tenants.

7.4 We will provide training to staff who have responsibility for implementing the policy to ensure that it is understood.

7.5 As this is a tenant facing policy, we will review the effectiveness of the policy with our involved tenants one year from the implementation of the policy.

## **8. Related documents**

- 8.1 Tenancy Agreement
- 8.2 Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy (HRA)
- 8.3 Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- 8.4 Hate Crime Policy
- 8.5 Domestic Abuse Policy
- 8.6 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- 8.7 Aids and Adaptations Policy

## **9. Governance**

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|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Effective from</b> | <b>1 October 2025</b>           | <b>Expires</b> | <b>30 September 2028</b> |
| <b>Policy Owner</b>   | <b>Housing Services Manager</b> |                |                          |

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|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Policy Author</b>   | <b>Communities and Projects Manager</b>                                                     |
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| <b>Approved by</b>     | <b>Chief Officer – Communities and Homes</b>                                                |
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