



# Refugees Welcome North Somerset Safeguarding Policy

May 2026

## Context

RWNS is a community-based charity working alongside North Somerset Council and other partners to meet the needs of those arriving in local communities. RWNS has evolved since its inception in 2016, responding to needs as they arise.

Specific projects and activities considered within the scope of this policy include:

- 'Pop up' Welcome centres in Weston super Mare, Worle and Nailsea and in asylum accommodation.
- Enhanced case work model for particularly vulnerable families and individuals in North Somerset whose housing, employment, health or wellbeing are at risk or there are safeguarding concerns around children or vulnerable adults.
- Outreach to Home Office initial accommodation
- Links with schools and education providers
- Youth provision for 16-25 year olds
- Religious festivals and other celebrations
- Skills exchange workshops
- Social events and trips
- Welcome Homes project, collecting and redistribution of furniture and household goods and readying homes for people settling in the area.

## Introduction

Safeguarding is the process of protecting adults with care and support needs, or children under the age of 18, from abuse or neglect.

RWNS is committed to ensuring that those who use our services are not exploited or abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse. Furthermore, RWNS recognises that, because of the nature of its activities, it is well-placed to identify abuse or neglect of its service users.

This policy outlines the steps that should be taken if RWNS staff or volunteers recognise, or receive a report of abuse.

## Legal Framework

### *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 defines, in Parts 1 and 2 of Schedule 4, regulated activities relating to children and adults (respectively).

RWNS does not, in the normal course of its activities, carry out regulated activities with respect to adults. It does offer activities tailored to children and provides a youth service as part of its activity. For safeguarding purposes, RWNS assumes that such employees and volunteers will be alone with children; RWNS adopts safe recruitment practices for staff and volunteers, asks for 2 references and checks their DBS status, specific to their role.

### *The Care Act 2014*

The Care Act 2014 places duties on local authorities to make enquiries, or cause enquiries, if they believe an adult is, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected. This means that local authorities must cooperate with each of their relevant partners and those partners must also cooperate with the local authority in the exercise of their functions relevant to care and support including those to protect adults. RWNS partners with the local authority in some of its undertakings, and so has a duty to ensure that it is able to support the local authority in the discharge of its responsibilities under the Care Act 2014.

### *Children's Act 1989 and 2004*

The Children's Act 1989 provides a comprehensive framework for the care and protection of children. It defines parental responsibility and encourages partnership working with parents. Interagency co-operation is encouraged. The Children's Act 2004 supplements the 1989 Act and reinforces the message that all organisations working with children have a duty in helping safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 provides statutory guidance to organisations with safeguarding responsibilities, and focuses on ensuring that the organisations co-operate in an effective way to deliver safeguarding outcomes. It recognises that charitable organisations such as RWNS play an important role in safeguarding children through the services they deliver and particularly mentions those that work with different races and faith communities.

## Key Definitions

Below are the types of abuse recognised in legislation and guidance. Although both adults and children can suffer from all the types of abuse below, some are more prevalent among one or the other; this is indicated in brackets in the title. Although staff and volunteers should be on the lookout for all types of abuse, they should be particularly sensitive to the indicated types applicable to the age group they are working with.

### *Physical abuse (adults and children)*

Includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

### *Domestic abuse (adults)*

Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence and coercive control. This is abuse that occurs in a domestic setting, within a marriage, civil partnership or cohabitation. It can also occur between family members, i.e. inter-generational.

### *Sexual abuse (adults and children)*

Includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the individual has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

### *Emotional or psychological abuse (children)*

Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child's emotional health and development. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them.

### *Financial or material abuse (adults)*

Includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

### *Modern slavery (adults)*

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

### *Discriminatory abuse (adults)*

Includes forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender, and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

### *Organisational abuse (adults)*

Includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect of poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

### *Neglect and acts of omission (adults and children)*

Includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

### *Self-neglect (adults)*

Covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

## Roles

### *Chief Executive Officer*

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and offering advice on safeguarding matters. The Chief Executive Officer is also responsible for investigating allegations against staff or volunteers.

Although RWNS, by the nature of its activities, has limited statutory obligations with respect to safeguarding, it recognises that it may encounter situations or plan to undertake activities where unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults is a possibility. The Chief Executive Officer is therefore responsible for ensuring that RNWS retains the ability to make informed safeguarding decisions and for reviewing activity on an ongoing basis with a view to ensuring that this policy remains relevant.

### *Safeguarding Lead*

The Chief Executive provides safeguarding advice to staff and volunteers and is responsible for ensuring staff and volunteers have adequate training in the identification and reporting of abuse.

### *Volunteers*

Where considered appropriate to the role by Trustees and the Volunteer Coordinator, volunteers will be trained to recognise signs of abuse and will be responsible for reporting concerns about abuse.

## Procedures

### *Confidentiality*

In cases of disclosure of abuse by adults at risk, children, young people, parents or carers, RWNS is obliged to share the information and will refer its concerns to social care services and/or the police in an emergency. Staff and volunteers should not promise confidentiality.

### *Raising a Concern*

If an employee of, or volunteer for, RWNS has concerns that a children or vulnerable person is at risk of harm or abuse, they should notify the Chief Executive Officer (safeguarding lead) or Support Manager who is leading the current activity.

**If a child or vulnerable person is in immediate danger the police should be called by dialling 999.**

An employee or volunteer may become aware of suspected or likely abuse by:

- Their own observations and concerns.
- Being told by another person that they have concerns about a person at risk.
- The person at risk telling them.
- The abuser telling them.

Children in particular may use an indirect method to tell others about their abuse, for example by writing stories, drawing pictures or acting out the abuse.

In cases of concern, the following four steps should be followed:

- Do not delay; report the concern immediately.
- Do not investigate. The Local Authority will investigate if appropriate.
- Seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer or Support Manager

- Make a careful recording of anything observed or reported.

If the potential risk has been raised by someone else (whether the affected person or a third party), the employee or volunteer should reassure that person that they have done the right thing by talking to them. However, as described above they should NOT promise that they will keep the disclosure secret.

It is likely that any records will be passed on to the Local Authority (or other investigating authority) to serve as evidence and so records should be:

- factual
- made on the same day as the disclosure
- detailed with what action has already been taken, and what information has been shared and with who
- timed and dated
- signed by the person making them (who should also include their name and role within RWNS).

Because the record may be submitted as evidence, it should not be made in a personal diary or notepaper.

### *Allegations*

Concerns about the behaviour of employees or volunteers in the organisation should be referred without delay to the Chief Executive Officer who will contact social care services, or the police, if a crime may have been committed. If the Chief Executive Officer is unavailable, then the report should be made to the Support Manager.

If the report is about either the Chief Executive Officer or the Support Manager, the report should be directed to a Trustee [trustees@rwns.org.uk](mailto:trustees@rwns.org.uk)

### *Training of Staff and Volunteers*

The Chief Executive Officer and the Support Manager with responsibility for safeguarding will be trained in safeguarding legislation appropriate to adults and children, up to and including Designated Safeguarding Lead training.

All staff and volunteers interacting with potentially vulnerable adults and children will be provided with a basic level of safeguarding training. This will allow them to identify potential signs of abuse and raise their concerns with the Chief Executive Officer or nominated Support Manager. This includes volunteers on the following programmes:

- Welcome Centre (when in operation)
- Welcome Hubs
- Outreach in Home Office provided hotels and dispersal accommodation
- Youth provision

Other programmes will be added to this list as considered appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with Support Managers.

### *Disclosure and Barring*

Where RWNS carries out regulated activities (for example, providing tuition to children) on a frequent basis, a DBS check will be sought. RWNS will still make every effort to ensure that

employees or volunteers are not left alone with children; however, it is recognised that this may be impractical to enforce. Thus, it will be assumed that employees or staff who volunteer with children in the Welcome hubs or in their homes may be left alone with those children.

### *Reporting*

In the first instance, please report to the Support Manager on shift with you or the Chief Executive Officer. They will take this forward on behalf of the organisation.

Outside of this, the following contacts may be useful. Please do notify Chief Executive Officer [donna@rwns.org.uk](mailto:donna@rwns.org.uk) if you report concerns yourself.

If you're concerned about the well-being of an adult, call Care Connect on 01275 888801 Monday to Friday 8am–6pm.

If you are concerned about a child who might be at risk of being ill-treated or neglected, contact the council's Child Protection team on 01275 888808.

In evenings or at weekends, call the Emergency Duty Team on 01454 615165.

If a child or adult is at immediate risk, contact the police on 999.

### *Regular Reviews*

This policy was introduced in August 2022.

The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that it is reviewed annually. In addition, it will be reviewed as needed if the legislative framework or the team or activities of RWNS change such that the validity of this policy is called into question.

Date of current review: 29 January 2026

Date of next review: 29 January 2027

### *Key Safeguarding Contacts*

Chief Executive Officer: [Donna@rwns.org.uk](mailto:Donna@rwns.org.uk) 07955278016