

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

Adopted: 14th July 2026

Next Review Due: April 2027

1. Policy Statement

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council is committed to ensuring that children, young people, and adults at risk are protected and kept safe from harm while engaging in any services, activities, or facilities provided by the Council or on its behalf.

The Council recognises its duty of care and legal responsibilities under the Children Acts 1989 & 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children (Statutory Guidance), and the Care Act 2014.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Councillors and employees of the Council.
- Volunteers and contractors engaged in Council activities.
- Organisations or individuals using Council premises or facilities to deliver services.

It covers all Council-led or supported activities, events, and services where children, young people, or adults at risk may be present.

3. Definitions

- Child/Young Person – anyone under 18 years of age.
- Adult at Risk* – a person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of care/support and is unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

** Note: This policy uses the Care Act 2014 term “adult at risk.” The older term “vulnerable adult” may still appear in external documents but has been replaced in law.*

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- The **Clerk** is the Council’s Safeguarding Officer and first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- The **Chair of the Council** (or Mayor) will act as Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

- All councillors, staff, volunteers, and contractors have a responsibility to:
 - Recognise concerns,
 - Report them promptly,
 - Act in line with this policy.
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5. Safe Environment and Working Practices

To ensure a safe environment, the Council will:

- Carry out risk assessments for events and activities.
- Require appropriate DBS checks for staff, councillors, or volunteers in regulated activity.
- Ensure that children and vulnerable adults are supervised by parents/carers unless otherwise agreed.
- Maintain safe facilities (e.g. lighting, access, signage).
- Ensure hire agreements for Council facilities require compliance with safeguarding standards.

Good practice guidelines:

- Avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult where possible.
 - Keep a register of participants for activities.
 - Obtain parental/carer consent for photographs or media use.
 - Treat all individuals with dignity, respect, and fairness.
 - Act immediately on any bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour.
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6. Recognising Abuse

All councillors, staff, and volunteers should be aware of the main categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Neglect
 - Financial abuse (for adults at risk)
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7. Reporting Concerns

- Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the Clerk (Safeguarding Officer).
- The Clerk will assess and, if necessary, escalate as appropriate to:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
 - Children's Social Care
 - Adult Social Care
 - Police (non-emergency 101 / emergency 999)
- If the Clerk is unavailable, concerns should be reported to the Chair/Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- If the allegation involves the Clerk or Chair, report directly to the LADO or County Safeguarding Team.
- If there is an immediate danger, dial 999.

Reports should be factual, dated, and recorded in writing using the Council's safeguarding incident form (Appendix A).

Confidentiality must be respected, but safeguarding concerns must never be kept secret.

8. Allegations Against Council Representatives

- Any allegation against a councillor, employee, volunteer, or contractor will be reported immediately as above.
- The Clerk (or Chair if the allegation concerns the Clerk) will refer the matter to the LADO or relevant authority.
- Councillors or staff subject to investigation may be suspended from duties while enquiries are ongoing.

9. Training and Awareness

- All councillors and staff will complete basic safeguarding awareness training once per council term.
- The Clerk and any staff/volunteers in direct contact with children or adults at risk will complete Level 2 safeguarding training.
- Safeguarding will form part of induction for new councillors, staff, and volunteers.

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All safeguarding records will be held securely and retained for **[6 years]** in line with the Council's Retention Policy.
- Information will only be shared on a "need to know" basis with safeguarding authorities.
- Whistleblowers will be supported and protected from victimisation under the Council's **Whistleblowing Policy**.

11. Support

- The Council will signpost victims and families to appropriate support services.
 - Councillors and staff raising concerns (“whistleblowing”) will be protected under the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy.
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12. Cross-References

This policy should be read alongside the Council’s:

- Health & Safety Policy
 - Volunteer Policy
 - Complaints Policy (Unreasonable Behaviour section)
 - Media & Communications Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
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13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, or Council activities.

This Safeguarding Policy was adopted by [Council Name] at its meeting held on [Date].

Signed: _____

Chair of the Council

Signed: _____

Clerk / Safeguarding Officer

Date: _____

Review Due: April, 2027.

Appendix A: Safeguarding Incident Report Form (template)

- Name of person reporting:
- Date/time of concern:
- Name of child/adult at risk:
- Nature of concern (detailed factual description):
- Action taken:
- Signature:
- Date:

Disclaimer

In the absence of NALC model policies for all areas of core and recommended council governance,



GAPTC has prepared this policy by studying a cross-section of parish and town council policies available online, identifying their strengths, common pitfalls, and where scope might need to be broadened to be fully effective. Drafting has been assisted by AI tools, and the content has not been assessed by a legal expert. Councils are strongly encouraged to tailor and customise this policy to suit their individual circumstances, activities, and risk profile, and to seek independent legal or professional advice where necessary.