



GUILDFORD
BOROUGH

Vulnerable Residents Policy

Document Information

Version Control: Version 1.0

Policy Service Owner: Housing Services

This document replaces: Draft Version 1.0

Document creation date: December 2024

Next review date: December 2027

Governance route: Approval by Portfolio holder for housing

Contents

1. Introduction & Purpose	3
2. Policy Objectives	3
3. Legal & Regulatory Framework	3
4. Defining Vulnerability.....	4
4.1 Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010).....	4
4.2 Life Events Impacting Tenancy Management	4
5. Identifying & Supporting Vulnerable Residents	4
6. Reasonable Adjustments for Vulnerable Residents	5
7. Residents Lacking Capacity.....	5
8. Implementation & Staff Training	5
9. Monitoring & Review	5
10. Reviews and Complaints	5
11. Equality and Diversity	6
12. Data Protection and Retention of Information.....	6
13. Related Policies & Procedures.....	6

1. Introduction & Purpose

Guildford Borough Council (GBC) is committed to ensuring that all residents, particularly those who are vulnerable, can access and sustain their housing and related services. This policy outlines our approach to identifying, supporting, and providing reasonable adjustments for vulnerable residents to promote their well-being and tenancy sustainability.

We recognise that vulnerability can be permanent or temporary, and that residents may require different levels of support at different times. Our goal is to provide a consistent, fair, and proactive approach to assisting vulnerable tenants while complying with statutory and regulatory obligations.

2. Policy Objectives

To support vulnerable residents, GBC aims to:

- **Identify and record vulnerability** to ensure appropriate service adjustments.
- **Ensure equal access** to services in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- **Provide additional support** where required, including referrals to specialist agencies.
- **Make safeguarding referrals** where necessary.
- **Ensure tenancy sustainability** through proactive engagement and adjustments to service delivery.
- **Embed a culture of awareness** within staff to recognise and respond effectively to vulnerable residents.

3. Legal & Regulatory Framework

This policy aligns with:

- Equality Act 2010 – Ensuring fairness and non-discrimination.
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards – Fair treatment and tailored service provision.
- Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code (2022) – Duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 – Guidance on decision-making for residents lacking capacity.
- Local Safeguarding Procedures – Referring cases to appropriate statutory services.

4. Defining Vulnerability

GBC defines vulnerability as a condition where a resident, due to personal characteristics or life circumstances, requires additional support to manage their tenancy effectively. Vulnerability may arise due to:

4.1 Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010)

- Age (particularly older residents and young care leavers)
- Disability (physical, learning, or sensory impairments) including mental health conditions
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

4.2 Life Events Impacting Tenancy Management

- Bereavement or family breakdown
- Domestic abuse or being a victim of crime
- Severe financial hardship
- Recent hospital discharge or move from supported housing
- Refugee or asylum-seeking status
- Substance or alcohol dependency

5. Identifying & Supporting Vulnerable Residents

Vulnerability may be identified by:

- Self-disclosure by the resident or their representative.
- Referrals from staff who identify potential vulnerabilities during interactions.
- External agencies such as health services, social care, or charities.
- Behavioural indicators, such as rent arrears, neglect, or repeated ASB complaints.

Once identified, the council will:

1. Record relevant vulnerability information on the housing management system.
2. Assess the level of support required and provide reasonable adjustments.
3. Refer to internal support officers or external agencies where further assistance is needed.
4. Take safeguarding action where necessary in line with council procedures.

6. Reasonable Adjustments for Vulnerable Residents

GBC will make reasonable adjustments to services based on individual needs, which may include:

- Flexible communication methods (e.g., alternative formats, trusted contacts, in-person visits).
- Priority response for repairs if delay would negatively impact health.
- Joint visits with support workers when attending the property.
- Support with managing rent payments to prevent arrears and enforcement action.
- Alternative enforcement measures before eviction, ensuring all support options have been explored.

7. Residents Lacking Capacity

Where a resident lacks mental capacity, GBC will liaise with authorised representatives, such as:

- Holders of **Lasting Power of Attorney**
- **Court-appointed deputies** under the Mental Capacity Act 2005
- **Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCAs)**
- **Appointees managing financial matters through the DWP**

8. Implementation & Staff Training

- Housing officers and frontline staff will be trained to identify and support vulnerable residents.
- Systems and procedures will be updated to ensure vulnerability is recorded and acted upon.
- Regular reviews will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the policy.

9. Monitoring & Review

- This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required due to regulatory changes.
- Data on vulnerable residents will be analysed to ensure effective service delivery.
- Feedback from tenants and stakeholders will inform policy updates.

10. Reviews and Complaints

Any individual who is dissatisfied with the service experienced should be encouraged to provide feedback. Complaints regarding the implementation of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's corporate Customer Complaints Policy and associated procedure.

11. Equality and Diversity

GBC is committed to equal and fair treatment of all sections of the community. Accordingly, no person will be discriminated against during the implementation of this policy on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

We are committed to helping customers to access information about their homes and services in a way that suits individual needs.

The council aims to provide homes and services that meet the diverse needs of customers. We believe that all customers should be able to access housing, support, and care services with the same ease and that the quality of our service is the same high standard for all.

In delivering this policy, GBC Housing's staff will comply fully with the requirements of the Council's Equalities and Human Rights Policy.

In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, an equality impact analysis (EIA) was completed as part of the policy review. The legal framework for the Council's approach is provided by the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 Equality Act 2010) under which a public authority must have regard to the need to try to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with differing characteristics.

12. Data Protection and Retention of Information

All information will be handled in accordance with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. The handling and storage of personal data will be managed and stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Record Retention Disposal Schedule.

13. Related Policies & Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [GBC Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [GBC Housing Allocations Scheme](#)
- [GBC Equality Policy](#)