

Benefits Safeguarding Alert – FAQs for advisers

Royal Greenwich Welfare Rights Service has developed a Benefits Safeguarding Alert which allows borough residents to notify the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and certain departments within the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) if they have a condition which may mean that they find it difficult to claim or manage their benefit claims.

The Alert also enables the resident to provide details of a nominated health professional (such as a mental health professional) and/or a support worker who can be contacted if there is an issue with their benefit claim. Residents can also include details of a nominated third party, such as a family member, friend or professional).

The safeguarding alert will be shared with Jobcentre Plus, RBG's Advice & Benefits Service, RBG's Council Tax Section and RBG's Housing Income Team (if the resident is a council tenant). The alert should be returned to the Advice & Benefits Service (just email benefits@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) who will then pass it on to the other departments.

Who is the Safeguarding Alert appropriate for?

Residents with a mental health condition, learning disability, or condition affecting cognition (such as autism or addiction problems), complex needs or circumstances (for example, they may be homeless, experiencing domestic abuse or have literacy or communication difficulties).

What does the Benefits Safeguarding Alert do?

The Safeguarding Alert does two things:

1. It ensures that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and RBG's Advice & Benefits Service are aware that the resident has a vulnerability; and
2. enables the authorities to contact the nominated third parties in certain circumstances (if contained within their safeguarding procedures).

Who can promote the Benefits Safeguarding Alert?

The Alert can be promoted by anyone who is in contact with vulnerable residents.

Can someone else complete the Benefits Safeguarding Alert on their behalf, without them being aware?

No. The resident needs to sign the Benefits Safeguarding Alert so that they give permission for the details to be shared. It therefore isn't possible for someone else to complete the form without the person in question being aware of it.

Can the Alert be completed even if they do not have a health professional?

Yes. The resident can complete the form if they want to notify that they have a vulnerability or complex needs.

Who can be a health professional?

This can be any professional involved in the care/treatment of the individual.

Who can be a support worker?

This can be anyone who provides support either in a professional or other capacity. This could include a relative or family member if the resident would like them to be notified in the event of an interruption in their benefits.