Purpose of the Policy:

Local authorities have an overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and adults with care and support needs in their area. Whilst local authorities play a lead role, safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children vulnerable adults and families has a role to play.

In terms of the hire of facilities by any individual or group, to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are properly safeguarded, it is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure that the individual or group who intend to use the facilities are safe to do so. This means that as part of any hire agreement evidence is required to demonstrate that the hirer has had appropriate regard to their safeguarding responsibilities, including those duties that fall under the counter terrorism and security act 2015. This new duty places an additional responsibility on local authorities and others to work together to prevent terrorism and support those at risk of radicalisation. This means that the local authority has a duty not only to make sure that the hirer of a facility/building have regard to the general safeguarding responsibilities but that this includes ensuring that facilities and buildings are not being used to disseminate extremist views.

This policy and community hire agreement replaces all previous versions of this form.

Who needs to be aware?

This Policy guidance document should be used in all occasions by all staff who are involved in and/or approve the hire of any OCC accommodation for the use by the general public.

Where OCC occupy a building where it has the potential for hiring any part or whole of the building on an ad hoc basis to the general public then the local premises manager/main service occupier (responsible officer) will be responsible for ensuring that any application for the hire of accommodation complies with the policy guidance document.

Responsibilities and process:

The responsible officer will ensure that any party applying to hire OCC managed accommodation on an ad hoc basis completes in the first instance the Community Hire Agreement form and provides at least one form of identification which the responsible officer will be required to check as part of the application.
For OCC staff, The Community Hire Agreement form can be found on the intranet. See Link: Hiring of Oxfordshire County Council Accommodation | Oxfordshire County Council Intranet

On completion of the form the responsible officer must satisfy themselves that they are clear on the purpose of use for which the applicant has requested and if in doubt to request further clarity prior to approving the hire request and signing the form.

Only after the form has been completed to the satisfaction of the responsible officer and the identification checked that the hire can be approved.

If after carrying out the above the responsible officer is still in doubt or has uncertainty about the applicant or applicant’s proposed use then support can be provided by contacting the Council’s single point of contact for Prevent within the Fire and Rescue (FRS) safeguarding team fire.safeguarding@oxfordshire.gov.uk or calling either tel: 07766 443644 or 07771 941664

This team will also provide the final decision on whether a hire agreement can be approved where the responsible officer has escalated their concerns.

If the responsible officer or any other OCC member of staff are concerned that the actual use doesn’t reflect the hiring purpose e.g. room booked for a youth programme but used by a group of adults only, then this must be reported to the FRS safeguarding office via the same contact details as above. i.e. fire.safeguarding@oxfordshire.gov.uk or phone 07766 443644 or 07771 941664.

Once a hiring application form has been approved, the responsible officer is responsible keeping a record on the premises (hard or electronic copy). A copy of the hiring forms to be e-mailed to fire.safeguarding@oxfordshire.gov.uk as a corporate record of the hire.