

Child protection policy

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All policies are the responsibility of the leadership team to own, deliver, disseminate, monitor and review

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the protection of children and young people and the promotion of their welfare, where they come into contact with us as a result of the provision of our services.

Underpinning principles

We work to improve the homes and communities of our residents, and child protection is an essential factor in helping us to achieve this objective.

The main legislative provisions that support this policy are contained in the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004.

We also have an obligation to comply with the Regulator of Social Housing regulatory standards.

Policy detail

This policy applies to all staff within the Group and provides them with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

We believe that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind, they should have the right to protection from any type of abuse, and they should expect adults in positions of responsibility will do everything in their power to foster those rights, keep them safe and protect them from harm.

We have a responsibility to work in a way that protects children and young persons, and all staff have a duty to ensure the children they come into contact with are protected from actual or potential abuse.

We recognise:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. We are therefore committed to anti-discriminatory practice
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues such as coming from a minority ethnic group
- working in partnership with the parents of children and young people, carers and other agencies (multi-agency working) is essential in promoting young people's welfare, protecting children and keeping them safe.
- all allegations of abuse must be taken seriously.

Definition of a Child

The legal definition of a child is a person under the age of 18 years, but this also includes young persons between the ages of 16-25 with special educational needs or who are disabled. A child therefore means 'children and young people'.

Definition of Abuse

There are 4 main types of abuse that a child may suffer and these are:

1. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

2. Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

3. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

4. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Keeping children and young people safe

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people
- adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through adherence to our child protection procedure and other related policies and procedures
- providing effective management of staff through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing information professionally and securely
- using our child protection procedure to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that, where relevant, we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people and staff by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery is a serious crime which encompasses slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. We have a zero tolerance to

modern slavery and all forms of corruption and bribery directly and indirectly associated with these criminal acts.

Responsibility

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) in our organisation is the group head of health, safety and facilities. In their absence the group safeguarding lead (the group people director) will assume responsibility for making referrals to the appropriate local authority. Further operational responsibilities are contained within the child protection procedure which supports this document.

Signpost

- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990

- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers
HM Government July 2018
- Working together to safeguarding children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
HM Government July 2018
- Child protection procedure
- Code of conduct
- Complaints policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Data sharing guidance document
- Disclosure and barring service policy
- Recruitment and selection policy
- Whistleblowing for tenants policy
- Whistleblowing policy

Policy Review Date – 8 January 2020

Decision-making Record

Date	Meeting / Minute Reference	Version / Amendment
22 Mar 2004	Policy Committee	1
22 Oct 2009	Executive	2
12 May 2015	Adrian Walshe	3
16 February 2017	Ria Bristow	4
26 May 2017	Ria Bristow	5
19 September 2017	Fee Nunn	6
24 January 2018	Fee Nunn	7
18 May 2018	Fee Nunn	8
8 January 2019	Executive	9