

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Title:	Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
Person Responsible:	Tenancy Manager
Customer consultation arrangement:	Tenants Committee
EIA required:	Yes
EIA Completed (date):	
Approved by:	Audit & Risk Committee
Business Strategy Objective	1. To provide good and cost-effective management of our properties
Approval Date:	April 2019
Links to other Policies:	Whistle Blowing Policy, Domestic Violence Policy, Hate Crimes Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Allocations Policy, Dignity at Work and Hoarding Policy
Review Date:	April 2022

Document management		
Version	Date amended	Amendments
1		

1. Purpose

South Lakes Housing (SLH) is committed to the wellbeing and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. This policy outlines what we will do if we suspect abuse, how we will share information and work with partner agencies. It applies to all our employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and tenant representatives who may come into contact with children and vulnerable adults.

2. Regulatory and Legislative Requirements

This policy complies with the UK safeguarding, criminal and related legislation. This includes:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Children's Act 1989, 2004
- Children's and Families Act 2014
- Education Act 2002
- Children Leaving Care Act 2000
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- Care Act 2014 – outlines the key principles for supporting adults who are or have been at risk of abuse, neglect
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Mental Capacity Act Code of practice 2007 provides a framework to empower people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves
- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Data Protection Act 2018 – governs the protection of personal data and complements the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Human Rights Act 1998 – includes a duty on public bodies to intervene proportionately to protect the rights of citizens
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996, 2004
- Health Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 – established the Disclosure and Barring Service

3. General Principles

3.1 What is safeguarding?

3.1.1 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

This is the process of protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse or neglect. This may include empowering and enabling people to protect themselves. A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The six key principles for safeguarding adults, as defined by the Care Act 2014 are:

Empowerment:

Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent. *“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”*

Prevention:

It is better to take action before harm occurs. *“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”*

Proportionality:

Proportionate and least intrusive responses appropriate to the risk presented. *“I am sure that the professionals will work for my best interests as I see them and will only get involved as much as needed.” “I understand the role of everyone involved in my life.”*

Protection:

Support and representation for those in greatest need. *“I get help and support to report abuse. I get help to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want and to which I am able”*

Partnership

Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. *“I know that staff will treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together to get the best result for me.”*

Accountability

Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. *“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life.”*

3.1.2 Safeguarding Children

A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. We have a responsibility to safeguard children when we become aware of, or identify, a child at risk of harm.

This includes:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

3.1.2 What is Abuse?

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons and may result in significant harm to, or the exploitation of the person subjected to it. Abuse may:

- consist of a single or repeated act
- be physical, verbal, psychological or emotional
- occur when a person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they had not consented or cannot consent
- be deliberate or unintentional or result from lack of knowledge.

Abuse can take place anywhere in any relationship. Anyone can be the perpetrator of abuse be it an individual, group or organisation.

Abuse can take many forms including:

- Physical
- Emotional

- Sexual
- Financial
- Neglect and Acts of Omission
- Domestic Abuse
- Professional Abuse
- Organisational abuse

Definitions and indicators of the above and other specific abuse for both children and young people and adults at risk can be found in the multi-agency guidelines via the links found in section 5 below.

3.1.4 Mental capacity, consent and best interests

Our staff will assume that anyone over 16 years of age (as defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005) has capacity to make their own decisions, and we will offer all practicable help before the person is considered not to be able to make their own decisions. Where a person's capacity to make a decision is in question our staff will adhere to the 5 key principles outlined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005:

- Every person has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to make them, unless it is proved otherwise.
- A person must be given all practicable help before anyone treats them as not being able to make their own decisions.
- Just because an individual makes what might be seen as an unwise decision, they should not be treated as lacking capacity to make that decision.
- Anything done, or any decision made on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done in their best interests.
- Anything done for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms.

3.1.5 Responsibility: As a provider of services we have a responsibility and duty to consider and follow the Cumbria County Council's Safeguarding Policies in respect of both adults and children/young persons. We are required to keep confidential and secure records of all safeguarding issues, with access and responsibility limited to the safeguarding leads and nominees.

4. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults – Our Approach

4.1 Raising concerns: In the first instance all concerns should be reported to your Line Manager, in their absence another available Manger or one of the Safeguarding Leads listed below at 6.0 of this policy. If none of these are available a Director or HR team member should be approached.

4.2 Joint Working Safeguarding is a multi-agency approach which depends on effective joint working. We recognise our own role in alerting Children's and Adult's services of any concerns regarding safety and we will ensure that Managers know when they should alert the Police if they think a serious crime has been committed.

4.3 Service standards: We will appoint Safeguarding Leads with appropriate knowledge, experience and skills, to provide help and advice to staff and to act as lead on safeguarding issues.

4.4 Whistleblowing: We will take seriously any matters raised in good faith by employees. The SLH Whistle Blowing Policy will support and protect any employee who has volunteered information from reprisals or victimisation.

4.5 Awareness: We will ensure that staff are aware of the Safeguarding policy and procedure and that they understand their roles and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding. We will ensure that staff are appropriately trained, which will include Safeguarding awareness at induction of new employees, regular awareness training for all existing staff and in-depth training for front line staff and awareness raising at tool box talks for trades staff and at all team meetings. We will maintain a register of safeguarding training and targets for all front-line staff to be trained.

4.6 Appropriate information sharing: between organisations is essential to safeguard people and where possible we will seek a person's consent to share information.

4.7 Guidance:

Guidance for safeguarding for adults can be found at:

<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/adultsafeguarding/>

Guidance for safeguarding of a child or young person can be found at:

<http://www.cumbrialscb.com/>

4.8 Contacts: SLH Safeguarding Leads are; Health & Safety Manager, 01539 769987, Tenancy Manager, 01539 717704, Sheltered Housing Manager, 01539 769962, HR Manager, 01539 717702

4.9 Cumbria County Councils Adult Social Care: department in Kendal telephone number is 0300 303 2704. Option 1 is for Safeguarding Adults. Their web address is:

<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/adultsafeguarding/>

4.10 Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board (Cumbria LSCB): Concerns that a child or young person is in an emergency situation you should contact the police urgently on 999, however in cases where there is significant concerns about a child please contact the Cumbria Safeguarding Hub, phone **0333 240 1727** or complete a **single contact form** <http://cumbrialscb.com/parents/default.asp>

5. Monitoring & Review

SLH will use an electronic case management system which will enable reporting of safeguarding cases.

The operational Safeguarding Leads are responsible for reviewing this policy and its related procedure every three years, or more frequently if required in response to changes in legislation or best practice. The Safeguarding Leads will monitor referrals and track outcomes. Monitoring reports will be provided to the Board as part of the Customers & Communities Directorate Annual Report.