

Safeguarding Policy

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1 Policy Information

Date of issue	April 2024
Replacing/Updating	Replacing
Review Date	April 2027
Drafted by	Community Service Manager
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Responsible Director	Executive Director of Neighbourhoods
Circulation List	Organisation wide

2 Policy statement

South Liverpool Homes (SLH) recognises that everyone has a key part to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults. We accept a shared responsibility to work with other agencies to get the best possible outcome and we will do this by working under the guidance of Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) and Liverpool Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB).

This policy will state our approach to Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk and the responsibilities of colleagues, contractors, volunteers and other third parties, while carrying out their duties if they have concerns, allegations or actual evidence concerning the abuse or neglect of children or adults at risk.

In line with our responsibilities to keep children and adults at risk safe we will share information about their health, development and exposure to neglect or possible significant harm, as well as information about parents or carers who may not be able to care adequately and safely for their children and adults at risk. We will also share information about individuals who may present a risk to children and adults at risk.

This policy applies to all SLH and our subsidiaries, including Avela Home Service and any other agents or contractors who work on our behalf. Colleagues will have distinct roles and responsibilities in reporting and investigating safeguarding concerns, this is outlined in the safeguarding procedures

3 Policy aims

This policy details the arrangements we have in place to safeguard and protect, which include a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and provision of services. We have a designated Safeguarding Lead, who is supported by colleagues in the Safeguarding Forum, together they will aim to:

- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements
- have robust safeguarding arrangements and systems in place
- be transparent with customers before making any referrals to the local authority and take their views into account unless in doing so this could create a further risk of harm.
- Work with partners and agencies to reduce the risk of harm for children and adults at risk
- Act in the best interests of the child or adult at risk
- Make safeguarding the responsibility of all

4 Policy

4.1 What is abuse?

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to the person subjected to it. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts, and it can be intentional or unintentional. There are many types of abuse – the categories recognised in Adult Safeguarding and in the Safeguarding of Children and Young People are listed below.

4.2 Adult safeguarding

This means protecting an adult's (anyone over the age of 18) right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's well-being is promoted including, where appropriate, making it personal to them having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action that is to be taken.

This policy and supporting procedures are based on the six key principles which underpin safeguarding.

- Prevention – it is always preferable to act before harm occurs
- Proportionality – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need
- Empowerment – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
- Partnership – local solutions through services working with communities who can have a key part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting of abuse and neglect
- Accountability – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

4.3 Adult at risk.

For the purpose of this policy a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years and an adult at risk is defined in the Care Act 2014 as

An adult who:

1. Has needs for care and support
2. Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse and neglect and
3. As a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect or the risk of it

An adult at risk may be a person who:

- Is elderly and frail due to ill health
- Has a learning disability or is neurodivergent
- Has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- Has mental health needs including dementia or personality disorder
- Has a long-term illness or condition
- Misuses substances or alcohol
- Is unable to make their own decisions (lacks the mental capacity to make certain decisions) and needs care and support
- Is a young adult, over the age of 18, who has care and support needs and is 'in transition' from children's' to adults' services
- Is a carer (looking after another person with care and support needs)

It is important to be clear that the above is not an exhaustive list, not everyone in the identified groups listed above will automatically be 'at risk,' similarly there will be people that do not fall into these groups that could be at risk.

The extent to which someone is at risk will be determined by a range of factors including personal characteristics (e.g. mental capacity, ability to communicate, degree of physical dependency) and factors associated with their situation (e.g. extent of support network, access to information).

Abusers may be relatives, friends, care workers, neighbours, or any other person with a legitimate reason to have contact with the person, equally they may be a stranger who intentionally seeks out vulnerable people. Abuse can happen anywhere.

4.4 Types of abuse

The Care Act 2014 encourages local authorities not to limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, and to consider each case individually. The Act lists the following types of abuse, but this is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Physical abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Self – Neglect
- Exploitation
- Radicalisation/ Extremism

4.5 Mental Capacity

Capacity and consent are central themes in safeguarding. Every adult has the right to make their own decisions and a person is considered to have capacity

to do so unless it is proved that they do not. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 sets out a clear test for whether a person lacks capacity to take decisions at a time. If there are concerns that a person being abused lacks mental capacity, a referral must be made via Care Line to adult social care team so a mental capacity assessment can be undertaken.

4.6 Child Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best of life chances

4.7 Types of Child abuse

- Physical
- Emotional
- Domestic
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Bullying and Cyber bullying
- Child trafficking & Modern slaver

The list is not exhaustive and definitions of the types of child abuse is detailed [Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership \(LSCP\) - \(liverpoolscp.org.uk\)](http://liverpoolscp.org.uk)

4.8 Our responsibilities

Child Safeguarding

Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004, places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are delivered having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Whilst we do not fall under the list of organisations that have this duty we adopt, in principle, the arrangements that are recommended under this act.

The Working Together Document 2018, highlights part (1) of the Housing Act 2004, where authorities must take account of the impact of health and safety hazards in housing on vulnerable occupants, including children when deciding on action to be taken by landlords to improve conditions. Housing associations also have a significant role to play in safeguarding vulnerable young people, including young people who are pregnant, leaving care or a secure establishment.

Adult Safeguarding

Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 requires the local authority and other agencies to make enquiries, if it believes an adult has care and support needs, and

believes the adult is experiencing or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and , as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

We have arrangements in place that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk which include:

- A clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- A Director to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements
- A designated Safeguarding Lead and forum responsible for safeguarding
- A culture of listening to children and adults at risk and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services
- Appropriate supervision, training, and support for colleagues
- Safe recruitment practices
- Clear procedures for dealing with allegations against people who work with children
- Processes to share information with other agencies and safeguarding partners
- Regular reviews of procedures to ensure colleagues have the skills, knowledge, and expertise to improve over time
- A whistleblowing policy
- A modern slavery statement
- An induction for all new colleagues to ensure they are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities
- Ensuring mechanisms are in place for effective information sharing between appropriate agencies including Children Services, Adult Services, Merseyside Police, Health, and educational institutions

We will aim wherever possible to identify universal support needs of children at an early stage to prevent an escalation into the social care arena. Likewise, we will endeavour to identify the support needs of adults at risk and engage with the appropriate agencies to reduce the risk of abuse.

5 Consent and Confidentiality

Wherever possible we will aim to forge relationships, based on honesty and respect, with adults at risk and parents and will always be open and upfront about our concerns and will ask for their consent wherever possible before making a referral to Careline or in the case of some children the Early Help Hub.

If the Adult at risk or Parent refuse consent and we feel an adult or child is at risk of immediate or significant harm a referral will be completed and the parents or adult at risk will be informed prior to this taking place. Information can be shared without consent if it is to prevent a crime or when the enquiry is

urgent and seeking consent could cause delay which will lead to significant harm.

We will keep accurate records of all safeguarding concerns on our safeguarding register. If referrals have been made or information shared without parental or adult at risk consent the reasons for doing so will be clearly recorded.

We will not assume that someone else will pass on information which we think may be critical to keeping a child or adult at risk safe.

6. Standards & Performance Monitoring

Where colleagues have concerns, with the support of the safeguarding team, we will make enquires through the Adult and Child Social care team within the local authority, Liverpool's Early Help Hub, local schools, nurseries, General Practitioners and other agencies and services.

- Where there is significant risk of harm to a child or where disclosures have been made, contact with Liverpool Care Services will be made immediately.
- We will contact Merseyside Police immediately where there is an immediate risk of harm.
- All contacts and referrals will be logged onto the safeguarding register.
- Accurate information will be kept and recorded on our Orchard housing management system to support any serious case/ domestic homicide reviews and multi- agency sharing of information
- Training awareness sessions will be completed as part of our induction process
- Safeguarding comes under the remit of the Safeguarding Forum. The Forum meets quarterly and discuss safeguarding performance, emerging issues, campaigns, training, and reviews cases. Any change to working practises will come from the Forum. Members of the forum represent each customer facing team within SLH and Avela and will cascade feedback to their teams through team meetings, training, and internal communication channels
- Human Resources are responsible for ensuring compulsory safeguarding training is completed for all colleagues at the appropriate level
- Cases will not be closed until a formal case review has been completed with a member of the Safeguarding Team
- The Safeguarding Forum lead for their team will aim to complete a monthly case review meeting with their staff member every month for all open cases
- Compliance checks are completed on a sample of open safeguarding cases each month
- An annual safeguarding report is completed for SLH Board
- A quarterly safeguarding report is completed for ELT/SLT

- A quarterly safeguarding report is completed for Audit & Risk
- After each safeguarding forum an assurance report is completed for ELT

7 Policy Considerations

7.1 Equality Analysis

An Equality Analysis was completed when developing this policy to ensure any barriers to the policy are identified and actions put in place to either remove or reduce the impact of any barriers

7.2 Statutory and Legislative Framework

We have developed this policy in line with the regulatory framework and legislative framework

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (and supporting Code of Practice 2016) Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Care Act 2014
- Children Act (1989 and 2004) – legislation regarding the safeguarding of children.
- Section 11 of the Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the Housing Act 1996)
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Equality Act 2010
- The Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

7.3 Associated Policies and Procedures.

- This policy should be read and will be supported by the following documents:
- Safeguarding Adult Procedure
- Safeguarding Children Procedure
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and procedure
- Employee Code of conduct
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

Safeguarding Policy



- Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Hate crime Policy and Procedure
- Information security Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy and Procedure