

Safeguarding policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Wrekin Housing Group (the 'Group') is committed to ensuring that adults and children are safeguarded from abuse or neglect. This Safeguarding policy sets out how we will meet our statutory obligations and manage safeguarding appropriately, ensuring that staff can raise concerns about any adult or child who they think is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

1.2 This policy adopts the six safeguarding principles: Empowerment, Protection, Prevention, Proportionality, Partnership and Accountability. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding procedures.

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 The Safeguarding policy sets out the standards that the Group will adhere to and the approach we will take to ensure that all residents and customers are safeguarded from abuse or neglect.

2.2 This policy and associated procedure aims to safeguard all adults and children who live in our properties, receive a service from the Group or are employed by the Group.

3.0 Policy aims

3.1 This policy and the associated procedure aims to:

- provide guidance for staff to be able to recognise and identify the types and signs of abuse or neglect;
- provide guidance for staff to enable them to feel confident to act on and report suspected or actual incidents of abuse or neglect, including responding to any immediate safety needs;
- identify the reporting pathway for raising an alert and making a safeguarding referral;
- ensure that staff are able to record any concerns and the action taken;
- clarify the support and advice available to staff who are involved in a safeguarding situation;
- clarify the organisational structure and governance arrangements in relation to adult safeguarding.

4.0 The Principles of Safeguarding

4.1 The six safeguarding principles are:

- Empowerment – presumption of person led decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention – it is better to act before harm occurs.

- Proportionality – proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need
- Partnerships – local solutions through services working with their communities.
- Accountability – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

5.0 Policy Scope

5.1 This policy applies to all staff including volunteers and agency staff, apprentices, Board members, work placements, contractors, subcontractors and anybody working on behalf of the Group.

6.0 Definitions

6.1 Safeguarding – protecting a person’s rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

6.2 Child – an individual up to the age of 18.

6.3 Vulnerable adult – someone who may need care because of a physical, learning or other disability or because of their age or illness. This also applies to an adult who is unable to take care of themselves properly, or who is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Wrekin Housing Group Board are responsible for scrutiny, oversight and adherence to this policy.

7.2 All staff, volunteers, work placements, agency staff, Board members, contractors and subcontractors are responsible for understanding the different types of abuse. Everyone has a responsibility to report concerns of abuse or neglect.

7.3 All staff will receive safeguarding training which is tailored to their role and refresher training will be provided annually.

8.0 Categories of abuse

8.1 Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person/s and may result in harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts, be deliberate or unintentional or result from a lack of knowledge. There are different types of abuse:

8.2 Financial abuse – a type of abuse which includes having money or other property stolen, being defrauded, put under pressure in relation to money / property and having money or property misused. Financial abuse commonly means controlling a person’s ability to acquire, use and maintain their own money and financial resources.

- 8.3 Physical abuse – includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, restraint, inappropriate physical sanctions or misuse of medication.
- 8.4 Psychological and emotional abuse – abuse which has a harmful effect on the person’s emotional health and development. This includes but is not limited to:
- Mental distress;
 - The denial of basic human and civil rights such as self-expression, privacy and dignity;
 - Neglecting the right of the adult to make choices and undermining their self-esteem;
 - Isolation that has a harmful effect on the persons emotional health, development or wellbeing.
- 8.5 Sexual abuse – includes rape, sexual assault or sexual acts that a person has not consented to or was pressured into consenting.
- 8.6 Neglect – includes ignoring medical and physical care needs, failing to provide appropriate health, care, support or educational service and withholding necessities such as medication and nutrition.
- 8.7 Domestic abuse – defined as ‘any incident of threatening behaviours, violence, coercive control or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship together, or between family members, regardless of gender or sexuality’. Domestic abuse can also include emotional abuse or coercive control.
- 8.8 Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for an individual’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.
- 8.9 Organisational or institutional abuse – this includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting like a care home. This can range from isolated incidents to continuing ill-treatment.
- 8.10 Modern Slavery – is the illegal exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain. Modern Slavery includes:
- Criminal Exploitation, for example pickpocketing, shoplifting and drug trafficking such as use by county lines gangs;
 - Domestic Servitude, whereby victims are forced to work in private houses with restricted freedoms, long hours, or no pay;
 - Forced Labour involving long hours, no pay, poor conditions, and/or verbal and physical threats;
 - Sexual Exploitation such as prostitution and child abuse;
 - Organ removal, forced begging, forced marriage and illegal adoption.
- 8.11 Discriminatory abuse – includes discrimination on grounds of race, age, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or religion and other forms of harassment including hate crimes.

8.12 Other forms of abuse may include, but are not limited to:

- Domestic violence including controlling or coercive behaviour;
- Peer-on-peer abuse;
- Bullying and cyberbullying;
- Substance misuse;
- Teenage relationship abuse;
- Sexting;
- Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour;
- Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse;
- Gang activity or youth violence;
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Forced Marriage;
- Fabricated or induced illness;
- Poor parenting;
- Any other issues that pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults.

9.0 Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

9.1 The Group has a statutory obligation to report safeguarding issues to relevant local authorities. All staff must report safeguarding concerns so that appropriate action can be taken. Where the service is CQC registered, a CQC notification must also be submitted, detailing the allegations and immediate actions taken to remove further risk of harm or abuse.

9.2 The full details of how staff can report a safeguarding concern can be found in the safeguarding procedure.

9.3 All staff also have a duty to report concerns about colleagues who do not adhere to this policy and they should follow the Whistleblowing policy to raise their concerns.

10.0 Managing Safeguarding Concern

10.1 The Group's approach to managing safeguarding concerns is set out in the safeguarding procedure.

11.0 Governance

11.1 The Group Board hold responsibility for safeguarding with the Service Quality Committee (SQC) undertaking further scrutiny if areas for investigation are identified by the Group Board. The safeguarding metrics are presented to the Service Quality Committee on a quarterly basis.

12.0 Legal Framework

12.1 The following legislation has been considered in relation to this policy:

- Care Act 2014;
- Children's Act 1989 and 2004;

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998;
- Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Mental Capacity Act 2005;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (DBS);
- Mental Health Act 1983 amended 2007;
- Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The Wrekin Housing Group	Policy control sheet Safeguarding policy Policy reference number - 2021/016
Policy Author	Rebekah Newton Director of Care and Support
Direct Lead	David Wells Executive Director of Operational Services
Version	1. June 2021
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Consultation	Tenants Panel Executive Management Group
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Reporting	Executive Management Group Service Quality Committee (SQC) Audit & Assurance Committee The Wrekin Housing Group Board
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Policy location	Intranet Wrekin Housing Group website

Summary of changes table

Revision history			
Author	Summary of changes	Version	Authorised by & date
Rebekah Newton	Policy shortened and separated from procedure	1. June 2021	The Wrekin Housing Group Board – 20 th September 2021