

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

English Rural Housing Association aims to take all reasonable measures to provide safe and secure accommodation, promoting the welfare of adults and children. The Association will work closely with other agencies to ensure adults, children and families requiring early intervention are identified and any concerns for the wellbeing or incidents of abuse are reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

All frontline staff will be trained to identify tenants at risk and on local multi-agency safeguarding procedures to ensure prompt reporting, information sharing and co-operation between agencies. Staff have a joint, collective and individual responsibility to ensure every safeguarding concern is reported to the relevant statutory authorities, so far as they are reasonably able to in the course of undertaking their role.

2. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

- 2.1 Following the introduction of the Care Act 2014, housing providers have a duty to make enquiries, or to work with other agencies to do so, if they believe an adult is experiencing or at risk of neglect or abuse.
- 2.2 A vulnerable adult or adult at risk may be a person over the age of 18 years old with care and support needs and who is unable to protect themselves, including those with physical or mental disabilities, learning difficulties, reduced mental capacity or those dependant on drugs or alcohol.
- 2.3 Abuse can include physical, emotional, psychological, social, financial, neglect, sexual or institutional. The Association recognises that abuse can take many forms and can be from more than one person including family members, carers, neighbours or other service users.
- 2.4 The Association will ensure adult safeguarding is in place by “working with adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect and who may be in vulnerable circumstances” (Care Act 2014).

3 RESPONDING TO ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

- 3.1 With any adult safeguarding concerns, all staff will endeavour to work within the six key safeguarding principles of the Care Act 2014:

- **Empowerment** - Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent.
 - **Protection** - Support and representation for those in greatest need.
 - **Prevention** - It is better to take action before harm occurs
 - **Proportionality** – Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
 - **Partnership** - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
 - **Accountability** - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding
- 3.2 Staff must report any suspected or actual concerns of abuse or neglect immediately to their line manager or designated officer (this will be the Housing Services Manager or in their absence, the Operations Director).
- 3.3 All cases will be logged and a full written record of each case detailed within a sealed envelope held on the individual tenant file. Staff should advise the tenant that any information they disclose will be discussed internally with the designated office and it may be necessary to refer the case to external agencies.
- 3.4 Before making a referral to Adult Social Services consent must be given by the tenant if they have mental capacity to do so. Where an adult at risk has refused consent to refer to social services and other adults and children are also considered to be in danger a referral will be made even without consent.
- 3.5 All referrals will be discussed with the designated officer before any contact is made with Adult Social Services.
- 3.6 Each Local Authority Social Services have different referral processes in place. Given the number of Local Authority areas the Association works in it would not be feasible to include full referral procedures within this policy. Regional Housing Managers should however be familiar with the referral process for each Local Authority within their region

- 3.7 Safeguarding cases will be monitored on a monthly basis by the designated officer in consultation with the relevant Regional Housing Manager.

4. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

- 4.1 A child is anyone under the age of 18 years old and may be a dependant of one of the Associations residents or a family member or visitor to the home.
- 4.2 Child abuse can occur when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. By working in partnership with other agencies, the Association will ensure that risk of harm to children is minimised and appropriate action taken when identifying a child at risk of abuse.
- 4.3 It is not the responsibility of staff to determine if a child is being abused. However to protect the welfare of children within the Associations homes staff must take action to report any suspected or allegations of abuse to the relevant agencies.
- 4.4 Where photographs of children are taken by staff or representatives of the Association for publications and other official material, permission in writing must be sought from the parent or carer before doing so.

5. RESPONDING TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

- 5.1 If a member of staff has any concerns relating to the safety of a child within any of the Associations homes or areas it manages they must bring this to the immediate attention of the designated officer.
- 5.2 Staff are not required to disclose any child safeguarding concerns to the family or carers if they believe it will place the child at further risk. However in some cases where preventative intervention is required it is advisable to discuss any concerns with the family or carers and work together to determine a way forward to prevent further risk.
- 5.3 All safeguarding concerns should be referred to the relevant Local Authority and Police where necessary. Consent should be obtained where possible from the family or carer to share data with other agencies.

- 5.4 The Association will work with other agencies to help protect the child at risk and assist with ongoing tenancy support to prevent further safeguarding concerns.
- 5.5 All child safeguarding cases will be logged internally and reviewed by the designated officer in consultation with the Regional Housing Manager on a monthly basis.

6. CONTRACTORS AND OTHER ENGLISH RURAL REPRESENTATIVES

- 6.1 All external contractors and other representatives acting on behalf of the Association should be aware of safeguarding procedures.
- 6.2 Contractors regularly attend the homes of tenants and therefore have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns to the Association.
- 6.3 Further follow up visits to the home by Association staff may be necessary following a safeguarding concern raised by an external representative. However in some cases where the concern is serious or imminent a referral will be made to the relevant Local Authority (and Police where appropriate) immediately.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1 Confidentiality will be maintained where appropriate but in some safeguarding cases the need to protect the adult or child concerned may result in sharing data with external agencies without consent.
- 7.2 All information provided to the Association will be marked as private and confidential and held in a secure location. Information will only be accessed and used internally on a “need to know” basis and with the consent of the designated officer.

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