

SAFEGUARDING POLICY



MONITORING INFORMATION:

POLICY/PROCEDURE/STRATEGY:

DATE APPROVED:

EXPIRY DATE:

OWNER:

APPROVAL ROUTE:

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

MAY 2024

MAY 2027

HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & ESTATES

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction:

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to co-operate with a range of organisations including ‘registered providers of social housing’ in the exercise of their functions which include safeguarding.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) emphasises that Housing staff are well placed to identify people with care and support needs, safeguarding and people at risk of abuse, share information and work with social care, health, local authorities, partnership agencies and the police. This policy is for all safeguarding partners and housing staff’s key role in keeping people safe. Furthermore it points out that: -

- housing staff are a vital component of local multi-agency safeguarding partnerships;
- social care staff should promote partnership working with housing staff;
- there is a need for clear understanding of the parameters of adult safeguarding for effective working between sectors;
- information sharing is essential – staff need clarity about when and how they can share safeguarding information;
- local partnerships should have strategies for promoting the wellbeing of people where safeguarding does not apply, including those without care and support needs, people who refuse support and those who self-neglect;
- housing staff should be kept informed and involved, as appropriate, with any safeguarding activity concerning tenants.

It is incumbent, therefore, on Teign Housing to play a key safeguarding role in conjunction with partner agencies including the Police, Social Services and the NHS. As a Registered Provider we are well placed to identify adults and children who may be victims of abuse or neglect. We are committed to dealing with safeguarding issues in a robust and proportionate manner. It is important that all frontline staff receive regular, training, advice and guidance to effectively respond to safeguarding concerns including sharing appropriate information with partner agencies and form part of, or co-ordinate a multi-agency approach.

We operate a policy of zero tolerance of abuse and are committed to preventing and reducing the risk of harm to vulnerable adults and children from abuse and to keep them safe, whilst supporting individuals in maintaining control of their lives.

We also recognise and encourage the need for diversity and are committed to promoting this objective. Everyone has the right to live free from abuse and neglect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation and we will not tolerate any form of abuse to anyone, not least a vulnerable person.

This policy has been developed with due regard to current legislation, statutory guidance and other good practice guidance. The Policy covers the responsibilities of Teign Housing Board Members and staff.

2. Definitions

SAFEGUARDING

The term vulnerable adult refers to people aged 18 years or over and who are or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental illness or other disabilities, age, and who are or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

Adult safeguarding means protecting an adult's 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 the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding upon any action. We will work closely with our partners (care providers and local authorities in particular) to identify those at risk and take steps to protect them.

Teign Housing recognises that it has a role to play working alongside partners by helping to also protect children from maltreatment and therefore: -

- prevent impairment of children's health or development;
- ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes;

In delivering effective safeguarding principles Teign Housing will ensure that:staff understand what is expected of them and others, particularly relating to consent and capacity and when information should be shared;

staff recognise our responsibilities to adults and children who are at risk from abuse, act upon our concerns and accept collective responsibility for safeguarding arrangements as part of a multi-agency team;

- staff work effectively with other agencies to prevent and respond effectively to incidents or concerns of abuse.

ABUSE

Abuse is 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 act or repeated acts.
- It may be physical, verbal, psychological or emotional and financial.
- It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act.
- It may occur when a person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they had not consented, or cannot consent.
- It may be deliberate or unintentional or result from lack of knowledge

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

The Care Act (2014) defines an adult at risk as being; an adult who has needs for care and support, is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The term 'child' or 'children' used in this policy means all children and young people under the age of 18 including an unborn child.

Safeguarding children is defined in the *Working together to safeguard children* (2013) document as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health and 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.

There are many different forms of abuse including:-

- online Abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- bullying and cyber bullying
- child sexual exploitation
- child trafficking
- criminal exploitation and gangs
- domestic abuse
- emotional abuse
- female genital mutilation
- grooming
- neglect

3. Policy:

Our policy is based on the six key principles which underpin safeguarding work :

- prevention – it is always preferable to take action 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 apply informed consent;
- partnership – local solutions through services working with communities, who can have a key part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting abuse and neglect;
- accountability – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

We will ensure that:

- there is a named senior manager who is the 'responsible individual' for overseeing safeguarding for adults and children;

- Teign Housing recognises that all our staff are well placed to identify people at risk of abuse and neglect and that regular and sustained joint working between Teign Housing and key partners including (but not limited to); Local Authorities, Police, NHS, and Education is essential to protect those who may be at risk;
- all relevant staff are able to recognise signs of abuse and significant harm and how to respond and report abuse and share information. Prompt action is always taken in response to any concerns, allegations or disclosure of abuse and individual adults or children receive appropriate support;
- we will have clear procedures in place to report suspected abuse and neglect to the relevant agencies in accordance with the guidelines of the Devon Safeguarding Children Board, and/or the Devon Safeguarding Adults Board;
- staff will be aware of referral pathways to appropriate agencies with the statutory duty (e.g. Devon County Council) to undertake safeguarding assessments and engage with the individual concerned. Staff will also be aware of voluntary agencies/charities operating in the locality that can provide support and intervention to individuals in need (e.g. Children's Centres/Volunteer health and befriending groups);
- we contribute towards formal safeguarding arrangements including Child Protection Conferences, Strategy Meetings, MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements), MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), as well as specific joint Police and Local Authority led operations;
- we are committed to listening to and acting upon any report or allegation of abuse in the communities where we work. This includes allegations made against members of staff, contractors and Board members;
- all relevant staff have sufficient knowledge of, and fully understand the key issues relating to safeguarding adults and children and receive appropriate induction and training to successfully implement safeguarding policy and procedures, including professional boundaries, lone working, mental capacity, information sharing and e-safety;
- through supervision staff are appropriately supported in dealing with abuse cases and are made aware of the potential impact on themselves and customers of being involved in abuse cases;
- all staff, irrespective of whether they have direct contact with our customers, act in ways which support the rights of all adults and children to lead a life free from abuse or neglect regardless of race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;
- the Director of Communities will have oversight of the recording and ongoing monitoring/risk management of safeguarding incidents;

- the Independence, Wellbeing & OT Services Manager will be responsible for the reporting and recording of incidents relating to adult safeguarding and will provide day to day guidance to staff. The Head of Communities and Estates will be responsible for the reporting and recording of incidents relating to children safeguarding and will provide day to day guidance to staff;
- safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures are in place. All staff working directly with in our communities have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services checks and are checked on the Adult's and/or Children's Barred List;
- this Policy links to our Whistleblowing Policy and staff will be aware that they can raise concerns directly with their line manager if they have any concerns about the application of this Policy. Such concerns will be addressed with regard to the Whistleblowing Policy as appropriate.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013, Mental Health Act 2007, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Human Rights Act 1998, Health and Social Care Act 2012, Safeguarding/Adult Safeguarding (Local Authorities own policies and procedures), Care Quality Commission Essential Standards 2010, The Equality Act 2010 and The Care Act 2014, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

5. Performance Standards:

- There will be an annual review of the effectiveness and implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures and that changes are made to improve service delivery as a result of review or following an incident.
- Details of cases, action taken and outcomes will be logged on the Housing Services Risk Register and reviewed monthly by the Director of Communities, Head of Communities and Estates, Independence, Wellbeing & OT Services Manager, Compliance Managers and the Private Sector Leasing and Tenancy Sustainment Manager.
- The Private Sector Leasing & Tenancy Sustainment Manager, the Compliance Managers and Independence, Wellbeing and OT Services Manager attend MARAC/MAPPA/Adult or child protection meetings and Early Help Forum meetings as appropriate.
- The Compliance Managers or other appropriate managers will attend the daily Triage meetings convened by Early Help colleagues.

- Teign Housing staff who require a DBS check will have these completed and reviewed every 3 years. HR will keep records of this.
- Teign Housing staff will have Safeguarding Adult and Safeguarding Children Refresher training appropriate to their role every 3 years.

Links to other Teign Housing strategies:

- Safeguarding Procedure
- Income Management Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Housing Strategy
- Living Well, Living Longer Strategy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Vulnerable Persons Policy