

VULNERABLE PERSON(S) POLICY



MONITORING INFORMATION:

POLICY/PROCEDURE/STRATEGY:	VULNERABLE PERSON(S) POLICY
DATE APPROVED:	NOVEMBER 2023
EXPIRY DATE:	NOVEMBER 2026
OWNER:	PSL & TENANCY SUSTAINMENT MANAGER
APPROVAL ROUTE:	EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Vulnerable Person(s) Policy

Policy Statement:

Teign Housing is committed to supporting its vulnerable residents and recognises the importance of doing what we can to ensure that vulnerable residents are able to live as independently as possible. Teign Housing tenants have an obligation to fulfil the conditions of their tenancy/licence agreement. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list this includes:

- Paying rent
- Keeping the property in good condition
- Being respectful to neighbours, Teign Housing members of staff and contractors

Being vulnerable does not mitigate a resident from these responsibilities and Teign Housing will act against those residents who choose to not fulfil the conditions of the tenancy/licence agreement. However, Teign Housing does recognise that some residents will require additional support in meeting their obligations and it is our aim to help residents within reason to sustain their tenancy/licence agreement.

It is the responsibility of all staff, managers, and board members to be aware of how vulnerability might act as a barrier to accessing and receiving services and are required to identify how their own area or function may be improved to meet the needs of vulnerable residents.

Definition of Vulnerability:

Teign Housing's definition of vulnerability is as follows:

“Anyone who experiences difficulties with everyday living and/or needs additional support to meet their obligations under the tenancy/licence agreement.”

Any person(s) can be vulnerable, and it does not only include those vulnerable for the purposes of receiving community care and/or support services or who have a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

It is important to understand that not all those falling within the protected groups will be vulnerable, and people may well be vulnerable for reasons other than those specifically covered by equality legislation. Our approach to vulnerable people recognises that vulnerability need not be a permanent state and that people may be vulnerable at different times for different reasons (e.g., following bereavement or relationship breakdown).

Appendix A contains some suggestions of people who *might* be vulnerable, though this is not intended to be an exhaustive list. A person can be vulnerable because of a single problem and/or condition or a combination of factors. Our approach does not assume that whole groups of people are vulnerable. For example, it is not correct to assume that all older people are vulnerable even though there may be evidence to suggest that many are.

Policy objectives:

- To ensure we comply with all legal and regulatory requirements and standards.
- To ensure that staff take this policy into account and apply its principles when developing strategies, policies, and procedures for their service areas.
- To ensure that we consider individual circumstances and do not apply blanket policies when decision-making.
- To ensure that we undertake an impact assessment for all services offered being mindful of accessibility, equality, and diversity.
- To identify vulnerability as early as possible, and to identify appropriate support mechanisms and/or ways we can adapt our service to meet the needs of our vulnerable residents.
- To ensure a performance management framework exists to support management and frontline staff in adapting service provisions to meet the needs of vulnerable residents.

Supporting Vulnerable Residents

By applying the following principles, we will support vulnerable residents:

- An approach based upon the “equality of outcome” not an “equality of service”, this might mean treating people differently to achieve an equal outcome.
- Promote and maintain inclusive services to ensure that our services are accessible to all by using impact assessments.
- We will use the principles of co-development/co-design as and where possible to update/amend policies and processes to be inclusive of our resident’s feedback and their views on how services should be delivered.
- Ensure that front-line staff are empowered to be flexible in the way that they provide services to support vulnerable residents in the most effective way possible.
- Ensure that staff members have the necessary skills, knowledge, and guidance to deal effectively with the many facets of vulnerability. This will include training/ refresher training including mental health awareness, the duty of care and safeguarding, multi-agency working, equalities legislation, handling difficult situations, and drug and alcohol awareness.
- Seek to identify potentially vulnerable people at an early stage to enable preventative action and timely, targeted support.
- Recognise the role of carers, care workers, advocates and other personal representatives and take their views into account when consulting vulnerable residents.
- Comply with relevant legislation, pre-action court protocols and recognised best practices.
- Work effectively with appropriate partner agencies to ensure support needs are met and to avoid duplication of service provision.
- Promote the principles of this policy to our staff, customers, and stakeholders.

Performance Management:

We will measure the effectiveness of this policy by:

- Achieving zero evictions, abandonments or otherwise failed/failing tenancies involving a vulnerable person or household.
- A reduction in the number of cases of anti-social behaviour or harassment involving a vulnerable person (either as victim or perpetrator).
- Zero complaints based on a failure to support vulnerable residents.
- Evidence of robust impact assessments and/or co-development/co-design being undertaken for all services.
- Reporting on the Key Performance Indicators as appended to the Tenancy Sustainment Strategy.
- Reporting every quarter on the safeguarding scorecard.

Related Documents:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy & Procedure
- Contact Management Procedure
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection & GDPR Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Tenancy Sustainability Strategy
- Vulnerable Person(s) Procedure

Appendix A: Examples of people who *might* be vulnerable:

(This is not intended to be an exhaustive list)

People with/who are:

- a physical, sensory, or learning disability
- mental health issues
- serious illness
- experiencing domestic abuse
- an older person
- pregnant
- unemployed
- ex-military
- leaving care
- ex-offenders
- financially excluded.
- substance abuse problems .unable to speak English/or English is not a first language.

During a resident's customer journey with Teign Housing, indicators of vulnerability might include:

- homelessness/repeat homelessness.
- hospitalisation
- periods of sustained illness at home
- bereavement
- transitioning from supported accommodation to general needs or independent living
- evidence of neighbour harassment or abuse toward the individual or household
- evidence of anti-social behaviour by the individual or household
- unemployment/reduction in hours
- divorce/relationship breakdown
- arrears of rent or other debt problems