Safeguarding Adults Policy

Department: Corporate

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1 INTRODUCTION
All One Housing Group staff have a duty to ensure that action is taken if they have any concerns that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect. This document sets out One Housing Group’s approach to Safeguarding Adults and the procedure for reporting and investigating allegations of abuse.

This policy must be read in conjunction with:
- The One Support Safeguarding Adults Procedure – for One Support staff
- The Group Safeguarding Adults and Children Procedure – for all other One Housing Group staff

In meeting the standards that our regulators, commissioners and customers expect, this policy is developed in line with the:
- Quality Assessment Framework (QAF)
- CQC Essential Standards of Quality and Safety (2010), particularly Outcome 7: Safeguarding People who use Services from Abuse.
- Adult safeguarding for housing staff (SCIE 2014)
- The Care Act 2014

The Human Rights Act (1998) imposes a positive duty on the state to protect individuals from serious breaches of their personal integrity such as violence and abuse. It is therefore necessary that all agencies working with adults at risk of abuse or neglect have mechanisms in place to minimise the risks of harm and abuse occurring and, where concerns exist, to ensure appropriate action is taken to address them. Working in partnership with other agencies is also integral to Safeguarding, and a multi-agency approach must be adopted in response to all instances of abuse or suspected abuse.

Safeguarding adults is defined in the Care Act 2014, Care and Support Statutory Guidance as:

“...protecting a person’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.”

The Guidance states the aims of adult safeguarding are:
- To prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs.
- To safeguard individuals in a way that supports them in making choices and having control in how they choose to live their lives.
- To promote an outcomes approach in safeguarding that works for people resulting in the best experience possible.
- To raise awareness around safeguarding so that staff and the wider community play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.

Our services will provide a safe and secure setting for all adults. We will also enable and support customers to self protect, reducing the opportunities for people to abuse by:

- Encouraging our customers to develop independence
- Working with customers to build positively on their esteem
- Assisting them in building and maintaining satisfying relationships with peers
- Providing information on what constitutes abuse and how to report it
- Involving customers in decisions made in response to allegations of abuse

One Housing Group staff are likely to be involved in safeguarding in 3 main ways:
- We may have concerns about an adult’s safety and report these to Adult Safeguarding Teams and/or the police.
Adult Safeguarding Teams may ask us to provide them with information about an adult in relation to an assessment or investigation.

We may be asked to provide specific support to the adult, family or carer as part of an agreed plan and contribute to the ongoing reviewing of the adult’s needs.

All One Housing Group staff working with adults will be trained to:

- recognise the signs of abuse and behaviours which should give cause for concern
- assess the risk of abuse to customers and ensure measures are in place to minimise this as part of assessment and support planning
- respond to abuse in accordance with this policy
- refer cases of abuse to the local authority Adult Safeguarding Team

RELATED POLICIES:

This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with the following:

- OHG Code of Conduct
- OHG Complaints and Compliments Policy
- OHG Data Protection Policy
- OHG Disciplinary Policy
- OHG Employee Screening Policy & Procedure
- OHG IT and Email Policy
- OHG Recruitment and Selection Policy
- OHG Whistleblowing Policy
- Incident Policy – OS
- Assessment and Support Planning Policy – OS
- Code of Conduct - OS
- Confidentiality and Access to Records Policy – OS
- Customer Money and valuables Policy – OS
- Delivery of Personal Care Policy – OS
- Incident Policy – OS
- Lone Working Policy – OS
- Management on Call Policy - OS
- Safeguarding Children Policy – OS
- Service Risk Assessment Policy – OS
- Supervision Policy – OS

2 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY

PRINCIPLES

One Housing Group will not tolerate or collude with any form of neglect or abuse. We aim to promote and safeguard the welfare of all our customers and will be proactive in responding to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. We also empower our customers by ensuring they are fully aware of what constitutes abuse and how to report it.

The government has identified six key principles and their individual outcomes, underpinning all safeguarding work:

Empowerment: Personalisation and the presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent. Outcome: I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.
Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs. Outcome: I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.

Proportionality: Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. Outcome: I am sure that the professionals will work for my best interests, as I see them and will only get involved as much as needed.

Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need. Outcome: I get help and support to report abuse. I get help to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want and to which I am able.

Partnership: Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. Outcome: I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together to get the best result for me.

Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. Outcome: I understand the role of everyone involved in my life.

Furthermore, One Housing Group’s Safeguarding Adults Policy is based on the following principles:

- ensuring suitable and appropriate staff are recruited
- ensuring effective management of staff through regular supervision, support and training
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, including care-coordinators and the safeguarding authority
- involving and supporting victims appropriately and, wherever possible, respecting their choice in the range of agencies they may wish to work with.
- where the perpetrator, or alleged perpetrator, is another One Housing Group customer, providing them with appropriate support to enable them to engage with the investigation and to understand and comply with the outcome and any subsequent action plan
- sharing information about adult safeguarding and good practice with customers, staff, partner organisations and carers.
- ensuring that partner organisations (e.g. suppliers of agency staff, voluntary organisations) apply adult safeguarding practice when operating from One Housing Group premises

ensuring action is sensitive to and takes account of the victim’s gender, age, disability, stage of development, religion, culture and race

3 WHO IS COVERED BY THIS POLICY?
This policy applies to all individuals aged 18 years and above. It applies to One Housing Group customers, and also to members of the public who staff suspect may be being abused.

Throughout this policy, the term ‘customer’ or ‘victim’ refers to adults. The Safeguarding Children Policy sets out our approach to safeguarding those aged 17 and below.
The Care Act refers to 'people with care and support needs' in relation to safeguarding. One Housing Group provides services to adults with a wide range of care and support needs including those arising from mental health problems, drug and alcohol use, learning disabilities, poverty and marginalisation, offending, old age, disabilities and ill health. For the purposes of this policy all instances of adult abuse or suspected abuse towards customers will be managed in accordance with this policy’s framework.

4 ABUSE AND NEGLECT
“Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons.”
No Secrets (DH 2000)

Adults can suffer abuse by a range of possible perpetrators including relatives, carers, friends, acquaintances, ‘trusted adults’ (for example a professional who works with them), neighbours, other customers, and strangers.

The abuse may be the result of a direct act, or omission of an act, or both. Abuse can take a number of forms, and it may be the case that two or more types of abuse are occurring simultaneously. Furthermore, staff should not be constrained in their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, and should always consider the circumstances of the individual case.

Types of abuse include:

- **Physical Abuse** may involve hitting, slapping, pushing, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to someone.

- **Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the victim is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include involving victims in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of someone as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional state or development. It may involve conveying to the victim that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or only valued insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may also involve acts induced to frighten, exploit or corrupt adults.

- **Exploitation** involves unfairly manipulating someone for profit or personal gain, either opportunistically or premeditated.

- **Neglect and acts of omission** is the persistent failure to meet the victim’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. This may take the form of failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing. It may also take the form of neglect of, or unresponsiveness to the victim’s basic emotional needs.

- **Financial or Material Abuse** includes having money or other property stolen, being defrauded, being put under pressure in relation to money or other property, and having money or other property misused.

- **Discriminatory Abuse** including discrimination on grounds of race, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
Complex (organised or multiple abuse) may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related victims. The abusers concerned may be acting together to abuse, sometimes acting in isolation or using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit victims for abuse. This includes neglect and poor care practice within specific care settings, and may range from isolated incidents to continuing ill-treatment.

Patterns of abuse vary and include:
- **Serial abusing** in which the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' individuals. Sexual abuse sometimes falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse.
- **Long-term abuse** in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic violence between spouses or generations or persistent psychological abuse.
- **Opportunistic abuse** such as theft occurring because money or jewellery has been left lying around.

### 5 RECOGNISING ABUSE

Whilst allegations of abuse may be raised directly by the victim through them disclosing abuse to a staff member, there may be occasions where the victim is unwilling or unable to disclose. All staff must be aware and mindful of possible indicators of abuse, such as:
- unexplained changes in mood or behaviour
- nervousness or watchfulness
- inappropriate relationships with peers
- inappropriate sexual language
- attention-seeking behaviour
- changes in appearance or hygiene
- scavenging or compulsive stealing
- persistent fatigue
- running away
- injuries inconsistent with an explanation given.

Further information on recognising signs and symptoms of abuse is available in the Associated Documents.

### 6 CODE OF CONDUCT

One Housing Group expects all its staff to abide by the Code of Conduct in order to avoid situations where their actions could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to allegations of abuse. In addition, housing, care and support staff must also abide by the One Support Code of Conduct. Good practice will reduce the possibility of anyone using their position to gain access to children in order to abuse them. Staff must also ensure their actions are sensitive to customer needs.

One Housing Group staff will always:
- listen to children
- value and respect children as individuals, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity
- as appropriate, involve children in decision-making processes
- empower customers with the necessary information to make informed decisions.
7 SAFE WORKING
When working with customers, One Housing Group staff must avoid placing themselves in positions that may cause customers to feel uncomfortable and which could lead to questions and/or false accusations of abuse. While this policy cannot cover every eventuality, staff must not:

- meet with customers outside of work or work related activities
- discipline customers
- restrain customers
- make unnecessary physical contact with customers. In cases where physical contact is unavoidable (for instance providing comfort/reassurance for a distressed customer, physical support or contact in sports) this should only take place with the consent of the customer
- engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games
- do things of a personal nature for customers that they can do themselves, and if the customer does require help (for instance because of a disability) then only with their consent and his or her understanding of what is happening
- engage in or tolerate any bullying
- allow customers to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- engage in favouritism or in singling out of "trouble-makers"
- make sexually suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments about or to customers, even in jest
- trivialise abuse
- let allegations made by a customer go unrecorded or unaddressed, including any made against themselves

8 WHISTLE-BLOWING
If a member of staff suspects that a customer is being abused by another member of One Housing Group staff, they should immediately speak to their line manager, the Head of Service or the Human Resources Department.

Where there is a failure to respond appropriately to allegations of abuse, or where staff have concerns that a colleague or superior is responsible for the abuse, staff must follow the OHG Whistleblowing Policy. The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) protects workers from detrimental treatment or victimisation from their employer if they blow the whistle on wrongdoing, such as the abuse of customers. Staff who whistleblow can remain anonymous. However, this cannot necessarily be guaranteed if it results in a criminal investigation.

9 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK
When an allegation of abuse is made the Team Manager or Head of Service must notify the appropriate commissioning body as contractually obliged. This will usually be either the local authority, CQC or the local NHS Foundation Trust.

In services where care is provided, staff must work in compliance with the Health and Social Care Act (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010 and the CQC (Registration) Regulations 2009 and notify CQC as soon as possible of any of the following in accordance with Regulation 18 (Outcome 20):

- If any serious injury occurs to a customer
- Any applications made to deprive a person of their liberty
- Abuse or allegations of abuse
- Events that stop or threaten to stop the service from carrying out a regulated activity safely and to the appropriate standard
- Incidents reported to or investigated by the police.

All staff must ensure that they respond in accordance with the relevant regulations of the commissioning and governing bodies in all cases of abuse. Details of who to contact must be readily available in all services.

10 CONFIDENTIALITY AND CAPACITY
Due attention must always be paid to confidentiality when working with customers. All staff must be familiar with the OHG Data Protection Policy. Staff working in One Support services must also ensure familiarity with the One Support Confidentiality and Access to Records Policy including the limits to confidentiality and the circumstances under which confidentiality may be breached.

In accordance with the Children Act, staff should always try to discuss the raising of a Safeguarding Alert with the child or young person, and their parent(s)/guardian(s) as long as doing so will not place the child or young person in further danger. The reasons for their concerns should be discussed, and agreement sought from the parties involved for raising the alert.

However, there may be instances where the child or young person, their parent(s) or guardian(s) do not want an alert to be raised. In these circumstances staff must be mindful of the capacity of the child or young person to make decisions on their own behalf.

- Where a child is less than 16 years of age, if staff become aware of abuse, or the possibility that abuse may be occurring, an alert must be raised regardless of the child’s wishes.
- For young people aged 16 or 17, if it is believed that they are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm an alert should be raised whether they consent to it or not and whether or not they have the capacity to make informed decisions. This should be explained to them and the local authority must be informed of the child’s wishes when the safeguarding alert is raised with them.

Mental Capacity
Due attention must always be paid to confidentiality when working with customers. All staff must be familiar with the OHG Data Protection Policy. One Support staff must also ensure familiarity with the One Support Confidentiality and Access to Records Policy including the limits to confidentiality and the circumstances under which confidentiality may be breached.

Furthermore, staff must also be aware of the customer’s capacity to make decisions, as governed by the Mental Capacity Act (2005). In all cases it is assumed that adults have the capacity to make informed choices and decisions, unless they have been deemed to lack capacity by a qualified health or social care professional.

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) was created to enable people receiving support to make their own decisions, and to offer protection for those individuals charged with making decisions on the behalf of those lacking capacity.

The Act has 5 main principles:
- Every individual has the right to make their own decisions unless it can be shown they are incapable of doing so.
Individuals should be supported to make their own decisions where possible.

A person has the right to make decisions even if others regard the decisions made as being inappropriate or ‘unwise’. A decision deemed as inappropriate does not in itself mean the client should be deemed incapable.

A person making decisions on behalf of someone lacking capacity must do so in their best interests.

Decisions made by a third party on behalf of someone lacking capacity should always be the option which is least restrictive on their basic rights and freedoms.

Where staff have concerns about a customer’s ability to make an informed decision that relates to an abuse allegation or concerns around abuse, they must request that social services, the local CMHT or NHS Trust arrange for an assessment to take place. Where the customer has an allocated social worker or care coordinator they should be contacted in the first instance. This assessment will consider:

- The individual’s views
- Their past and present wishes, feelings, beliefs and values
- Any written statement they’ve produced
- Anyone they have requested be consulted
- The views of family, friends or support staff who have an interest in their welfare

All staff must ensure they provide appropriate support to the customer during this process, and contribute to the assessment as required.

More information on the Mental Capacity Act is available in: *Making Decisions. A Guide For Advice Workers. The Mental Capacity Act* which can be found in the Associated Documents.

### 11 INFORMATION SHARING

Working in partnership with statutory and other relevant agencies is a key element of investigations into suspected abuse. The wishes of the customer in relation to what information should be shared, and with whom, should be respected where possible. However, where there is a concern that the customer may be suffering or is at risk of abuse or neglect, their safety must be the over-riding priority. Information must be shared with statutory authorities where there is any indication of abuse or neglect. The following points must be considered as part of this process:

- It should be explained openly and honestly to the customer what information will have to be divulged to statutory authorities and any other third parties, how it will be divulged and to whom.
- Information should not be shared with other non-statutory third parties where it would increase the risk to the victim or undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime.

Information shared must be accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, and shared only with those who need to know.

### 12 RECORDING AND REPORTING

Full details on recording and reporting allegations of abuse are provided in the following Safeguarding Procedures:

- The One Support Safeguarding Adults Procedure – for One Support staff
- The Housing Services Safeguarding Adults and Children Procedure – for all other Housing staff
When managing any allegation of abuse it is essential that information is recorded accurately and in a timely manner. In addition staff may also be called upon to complete relevant forms for the local authority, the local Safeguarding Team or the police.

13 DISINCENTIVES TO REPORTING
One Housing Group recognises that it is often difficult for victims of abuse to disclose or report instances of abuse. This may be for a number of possible reasons, such as:

- fear
- stigma
- not realising it is abuse
- not knowing how to report it
- thinking they won’t be taken seriously
- Learned Helplessness
- not being able to see any solutions
- feeling ashamed
- not wanting to get someone else into trouble
- lacking capacity or experiencing poor mental health

Overcoming these barriers is key to ensuring that no abuse goes unnoticed or unaddressed, and One Housing Group aims to achieve this by:

- regularly exploring barriers to reporting abuse with customers during House Meetings, Come and Go Days and Keyworking sessions. This includes discussing example cases.
- using Team Meetings, training and supervision to ensure staff are aware of how to recognise and respond to abuse, and how to empower and encourage customers to report it.
- encouraging services to learn from each Safeguarding Alert by including the need for service improvements, including overcoming barriers, to be recorded as part of every safeguarding investigation.

14 POLICY REVIEW
This policy will be reviewed annually, in accordance with broader guidance and legislation, and taking into account feedback from staff and customers. The Group Director of Housing, Care and Support will ultimately be responsible for ensuring that the policy is reviewed, although they may wish to delegate the review process.

The Director, or other individual to whom this function is delegated, will be responsible for monitoring developments in relation to legislation, regulation, or good practice with regards to data protection. They will further be responsible for ensuring that these developments are incorporated in to this policy and are communicated with all staff.

Any changes to the policy will need the authorisation of the Director. Until such authorisation is given the existing policy will continue to apply unless the existing policy contradicts any new legal requirements or responsibilities. The Director may wish to delegate the authorisation of changes to this policy.
Policy Summary  | Safeguarding Adults Policy
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Date Created  | 31/03/07
Date of Last Review  | 01/10/14
Date of Next Review  | 01/10/15
EIA Completion Date  | 

15 LIST OF ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

The below documents should be used in conjunction with this policy, and can be found on the Hub at the location indicated:

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<tr>
<th>Safeguarding Adults Policy Documents</th>
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<tr>
<td>The documents listed below can be found on the Safeguarding Section of the Hub</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Services Safeguarding Adults and Children Procedure</td>
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<td><em>Making Decisions. A Guide For Advice Workers. The Mental Capacity Act</em></td>
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