



Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy

01.05.2024

Next review due: September 2027

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Contents

1. Overview	3
2. Safeguarding Adults	3
3. Safeguarding Children	4
4. Definitions and Indicators of Abuse	4
5. Where Does Abuse Take Place?	5
6. Perpetrators of Abuse	6
7. Adults and Mental Capacity	6
8. Confidentiality	6
9. Responsibility	6
10. Whistleblowing	7
11. Service Standards	7
12. Performance Measures	7
13. Reviewing and Monitoring	7
14. Legislation and Guidance	8
15. Linked policies	8

1. Overview

At Funding Affordable Homes Housing Association (FAHHA), we are committed to working with a wide range of vulnerable service users, and throughout our services, staff could, from time to time, become aware of or suspect situations where abuse of a vulnerable person or child may be taking place. We will not knowingly ignore or allow such incidents to continue unchallenged and will require our staff to take action in all cases where it is suspected that abuse of a vulnerable person is occurring, no matter who the perpetrator is or who the victim is. We will respect and support anyone who whistle-blowers because they think someone is being abused and have a Whistleblowing Policy to support this.

The purpose of this policy is to protect those adults and children who are subject to or at the risk of abuse and neglect.

We have developed this policy using the Care and Support Statutory Guidance updated January 2023, issued under the Care Act 2014 and in accordance with the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

This policy recognises the diverse nature of safeguarding cases and that FAHHA would not usually be the primary reporter or manager of most safeguarding cases that come to our attention. This would normally be the relevant managing agent and/or care provider and local authority. FAHHA will fully support and assist such partners in ensuring that all safeguarding cases are effectively investigated and managed.

Where FAHHA is the primary manager of a particular safeguarding case, FAHHA will set clear and specific timescales and actions for the effective investigation and management of the case. Where a managing agent has been contracted to undertake the housing management function on behalf of FAHHA as the landlord of the accommodation, FAHHA will monitor working arrangements to ensure compliance with this policy.

2. Safeguarding Adults

The Care Act 2014 sets out six key principles that underpin all adult safeguarding work:

- **Empowerment** – Personalisation and the presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent;
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs;
- **Proportionality** – Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented;
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need;
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse; and
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Under the Care Act, housing providers have a duty to co-operate with local authorities implementing their statutory duties around adult safeguarding. This may include: carrying out 'enquiries' into incidents, information sharing, participating in the new statutory local Safeguarding Adults Board. Housing providers are expected to make staff familiar with the principles of safeguarding so they can be vigilant, recognise signs of abuse and know what to do if they see those signs.

The Care Act defines a vulnerable adult as a person who is:

- aged 18 years or over; and who
- may be vulnerable and already be in receipt of/or need of community care services by reason of mental or other disabilities, age or illness; and who
- may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to safeguard themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Client groups could include:

- People with learning disabilities;
- People with mental health problems;
- Older people;
- People with physical disabilities;
- People with visual and sensory impairment; and
- People who rely on others for care and/or support.

This can also include people who are vulnerable themselves because of their role as a carer for such a person. They may need additional support to protect themselves, for example, in situations such as domestic violence, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drugs or alcohol problems.

3. Safeguarding Children

Under the Children's Acts and 2023 Guidance, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. There are no specific criteria for a child at risk of or being abused. Any child who is suspected of being abused or at risk of abuse should be reported to the local authority.

4. Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

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

The main categories of abuse of adults are:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial or material;

- Neglect and acts of omission;
- Discriminatory;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Institutional/organisational Abuse;
- Modern Slavery; and
- Self-neglect.

There are a number of indicators that could be a result of adult abuse including:

- Low self-esteem;
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not;
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones;
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others;
- Fear of outside intervention;
- Damage to home or property; and
- Isolation – not seeing friends and family.

Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or an abusive service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

For Child Abuse the main categories are:

- Physical;
- Sexual or emotional;
- Neglect: Lack of love care or attention;
- Radicalisation;
- Child trafficking;
- Cyber bullying; and
- Genital mutilation.

There are a number of underlying causes that may result in child abuse including, adults' history of child abuse, mental illness, substance misuse, domestic violence. It is not always easy to detect child abuse however there are a number of indicators that may mean that a child is being abused including becoming withdrawn, seemingly over anxious, becoming uncharacteristically aggressive. Where a member of staff has concerns these should be raised with the relevant Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH). Guidance can also be sought from the NSPCC Helpline by calling 0808 800 5000 and/or emailing help@NSPCC.org.uk.

5. Where Does Abuse Take Place?

Abuse can take place anywhere, including:

- In a person's own home;
- In the homes of family and friends;
- In public places/the community;

- Place of work; and
- Colleges of further education.

Abuse may result from a deliberate intention to cause harm but may also occur where a provider of a service lacks the necessary knowledge or skills to respond to an individual's needs appropriately. Abusive behaviour between a member of staff and a vulnerable service user will always be investigated.

6. Perpetrators of Abuse

Anyone can be the perpetrator of abuse. Abuse can occur in any relationship. An individual, a group, or an organisation may perpetrate abuse.

An abusive relationship often includes the misuse of power by one person over another and is most likely to take place in situations where one person has power over another. For example, where one person is dependent on another for their physical care, or due to power relationships in society e.g. between a professional worker and a service user, a man and a woman or a person belonging to the dominant race/culture and a person belonging to an ethnic minority.

7. Adults and Mental Capacity

We recognise that capacity and consent are central themes in safeguarding adult work and that every adult has the right to make their own decisions, a person is assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved that they do not.

A referral will be made to the local Social Care Team where there are concerns that a person being abused lacks mental capacity so a Mental Capacity Assessment can be made and that person will be informed of this referral.

Best interests:

- Everything that is done for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be in that person's best interests.
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a checklist of factors that decision-makers must work through in deciding what is in a person's best interests.

For further guidance please refer to The Mental Capacity Act 2005.

8. Confidentiality

Our staff will respect confidentiality at all times and will not share any information given in confidence unless justified by the assessed risk to the vulnerable person or required by law.

Confidentiality will be discussed with the customer where there are safeguarding concerns or alerts and an explanation will be given that this information may need to be shared with other people for the situation to be resolved.

9. Responsibility

As a provider of services to vulnerable adults and children we have a responsibility and duty to consider and follow the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Practice Guidance. The Care Act 2014 and Children's Acts reinforce this responsibility which is further defined in the Department of Health publication Care and Support Statutory Guidance.

We not only have a responsibility to all vulnerable adults who have been abused or who are at risk of abuse, but also recognise responsibilities in relation to some perpetrators of abuse.

To keep confidential and secure records of all safeguarding issues, with access and responsibility limited to the safeguarding champion and nominees.

10. Whistleblowing

We will take seriously any matters raised in good faith by employees. The Whistleblowing Policy will support and protect any employee who has volunteered information from reprisals or victimisation.

11. Service Standards

We agree:

- To appoint a "Safeguarding Lead", with appropriate knowledge, experience and skills, to provide help and advice to staff and to act as lead on safeguarding issues;
- To ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of the Safeguarding policy and procedure;
- To ensure that staff are appropriately trained;
- To ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and required actions;
- To set clear actions and timescales when FAHHA is the primary manager of a case;
- To ensure that managers know when they should alert the Police if they think a serious crime has been committed;
- To notify the Local Authority Safeguarding Team or MASH if Adult or Child abuse is identified or suspected;
- To support and where possible safeguard customers and staff by ensuring that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability;
- To DBS check Board Members and also employees who are likely to work alone with vulnerable adults or children;
- To ensure that staff and customers have access to information through in house publications and other media, and awareness raising initiatives;
- To conduct regular reviews of the Safeguarding policy and maintain a record of any incidents.

12. Performance Measures

- Number of Safeguarding Adult referrals;
- Annual review of Safeguarding Policy;
- Evaluation of investigated cases, alerts and lessons learned.

13. Reviewing and Monitoring

We will monitor this policy and our working arrangements with all managing agencies carrying out housing management on our behalf to ensure they remain effective, highlighting any disincentives to reporting abuse.

We will review this policy every 3 years to ensure they remain effective, highlighting any disincentives to reporting abuse. In the event of a serious case review or any legislative changes the policy and our procedures will be reviewed as priority.

14.Legislation and Guidance

The Police Act 1997

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

The Care Act 2014 (re: Definition of a vulnerable adult)

Children Acts 1989, 2004

15.Linked policies

Equality and Diversity Policy

Data Protection

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