

# Safeguarding Policy 2019 – 2022

## Document control

<b>Policy approval</b>	EDT OFR, May 2019
<b>Replacing</b>	Children Safeguarding Policy 2016 - 2019 & Adult Safeguarding Policy 2016 - 2019
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<b>Responsible Executive Director</b>	Executive Director – Customer Insight
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Version	Date	Author(s)	Notes on Revisions
1	Feb 2016	GD Customer Services	Original document. Introduces new safeguarding policy statement. Includes Care Act 2014 and reference to child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.
2	April 2016	GD Customer Services	Revised following feedback from KMBC to separate and have separate documents for adult and children's safeguarding policies.
3	April 2019	Business Manager – Neighbourhoods & Income Business Manager – Independent Living	Combined Adult Safeguarding Policy and Children Safeguarding Policy into a single overarching Safeguarding Policy. Incorporated recommendations from Internal Audit Review of Safeguarding, December 2017.

## 1. Purpose & Scope

- 1.1 This policy establishes the approach that we will take to safeguarding children and adults at risk. The policy applies to all Livv Housing Group and Livv Maintenance employees, agency staff, contractors and volunteers. It sets out what we will do and our role in partnership with the Knowsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Merseyside Safeguarding Adults Board to protect children and adults at risk from abuse.

## 2. Policy objectives/principles

- 2.1 We believe that everyone should at all times be treated with dignity and respect. Livv Housing Group, Livv Maintenance and our contractors will ensure that when we are delivering services, the welfare of children and adults at risk is of primary concern. To achieve this, our key policy objectives are:

- To demonstrate a clear commitment to keeping children and adults whose lives we touch safe from harm
- To raise awareness of safeguarding responsibilities throughout Livv Housing Group, Livv Maintenance and with agency staff, contractors and volunteers who work with us
- To promote and implement working practices to safeguard the wellbeing of children and adults at risk
- To comply with the objectives of the Knowsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Merseyside Safeguarding Adults Board.
- To establish recruitment procedures that support and promote our safeguarding objectives.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Definition of a child** – any person who has not attained the age of 18, regardless of the setting they are in or the service they receive (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).

- 3.2 **Definition of an adult at risk** – an adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their need for care and support (Department of Health).

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who, for example:

- is an older person who is frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- has a learning disability
- has a physical disability, sensory impairment or both
- has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
- has a long-term illness or condition
- misuses substances or alcohol
- is a carer such as a family member or friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse
- lacks the mental capacity to make particular decisions and is in need of care and support.

For the purposes of the policy, reference to an adult includes tenants, clients or any customers.

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- 3.3 **Definition of abuse** – Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons (Department of Health Report 2000 – No Secrets).

Abuse can take many forms and can include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse including child sexual exploitation
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect or acts of omissions
- Institutional abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Radicalisation of children and young people by political and religious extremists
- Domestic abuse
- Modern slavery

#### 4. **Service standards**

We aim to provide high quality services to our customers that are effective and culturally sensitive. When we identify concerns regarding the welfare of children and adults at risk we will:

- Maintain strict confidentiality whilst dealing with cases where abuse occurs or is suspected
- Inform victims that some personal information may need to be shared even without the consent of the individual
- Make the safety and wellbeing of the person considered at risk our first priority
- Pass on our concerns swiftly to Children’s or Adults Services at Knowsley Council (or other relevant Local Authority) through established referral arrangements, where the appropriate thresholds are met
- Involve other agencies such as the police where this would be appropriate
- Engage with key partners to facilitate effective responses to instances of abuse.

#### 5. **Our approach to safeguarding children and adults at risk**

##### 5.1 **General principles**

We aim to provide the highest possible standard of service to our customers. In doing so we recognise that we must do all that we can to protect children and adults at risk from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or delivered by us. We want to ensure that we have working practices in place that will help us identify abuse and enable us to take action to prevent abuse from happening.

Our approach to adults at risk is underpinned by the six key principles set out in the Care Act 2014:

**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.

**Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

## 5.2 Responsibility and training

All staff, agency workers, contractors and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and adults who may be at risk. This includes sharing information and raising alerts where abuse is suspected.

We will do this by:

- Employing recruitment and induction arrangements for new staff that have regard to our approach to safeguarding\*
- Ensuring all staff, agency workers contractors and volunteers, are made aware of how to access and implement our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Using training and supervision sessions to raise awareness about safeguarding.
- Identifying and training internal Safeguarding Specialists who can advise staff and managers within the organisation.
- Ensuring all contractors and external partners understand our approach to safeguarding.

*\* We are committed to ensuring the safeguarding of our vulnerable customers; both adult and children. In order to help achieve the appropriate levels of safeguarding, all new job roles will be reviewed by the recruiting manager at the time of vacancy authorisation. The review will determine if the role requires the job holder to work in close contact with vulnerable adults or children and where it is identified that this is the case the necessary checks will be put into practice. The check currently undertaken is a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check, but the checks used will be whatever is deemed appropriate for the role at the time of review.*

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the Executive Director – Customer Insight, at an operational level the Head of Neighbourhoods will take the lead as Safeguarding Champion.

### 5.3 Reporting

Where abuse occurs or is suspected our principle concern will be the safety and wellbeing of the person considered at risk. All incidents of misconduct or abuse will be reported to the relevant service manager and be recorded as soon as possible after the event. All staff and contractors have responsibility for raising safeguarding concerns.

We will adopt appropriate practices to ensure that information is passed swiftly to Children's or Adults Services at Knowsley Council in accordance with established referral arrangements. In most cases this will be through the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), using the MARF (Multi Agency Referral Form). Where it is considered appropriate we will report concerns to the police or other relevant agencies.

Where allegations are made against staff or contractors, concerns should be reported to the manager responsible for the service area or the head of service immediately. Human resources will be involved from the outset and reports will be investigated thoroughly in accordance with our safeguarding procedures.

### 5.4 Sharing information and confidentiality

We will share information where it is necessary to do so in the best interests of an individual to protect them from harm or abuse. We will normally seek consent before sharing information but if this is not possible or refused we will share information with other agencies if in our opinion it is in the best interests of the child or adult at risk. There are also times when legally we must also share such information.

We will maintain strict confidentiality whilst dealing with cases where abuse occurs, or is alleged or suspected. Where it is necessary to share information with Children's or Adults Services we will do so accurately and distinguish between facts, opinion and hearsay.

### 5.5 Partnership working

We will maintain close links with Knowsley Council Children's and Adults Services and other local agencies. The Executive Director - Customer Insight and teams will take the lead to develop effective partnerships that will enable us to:

- Maintain working relationships with all key agencies to facilitate effective responses to instances of abuse
- Establish and maintain good practice with regard to safeguarding procedures and adopt joint working and information sharing protocols
- Participate in joint training
- Monitor the appropriateness of referrals
- Participate in relevant safeguarding partnership groups
- Engage in serious case reviews, safeguarding adult reviews and multi-agency reviews.

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## **6. Consultation**

6.1 We recognise the importance of working in partnership with our customers to develop and continuously improve our services. We will consult regularly with customers and key partners from voluntary and statutory agencies within Knowsley on the content and operation of this policy and any revisions.

## **7. Complaints**

7.1 We will seek to resolve any complaint from customers or partners over the operation of this policy at the first point of contact. If this cannot be done complaints will be dealt with through our formal complaints procedure or through the appropriate adults or Children's safeguarding escalation procedures.

## **8. Monitoring and performance**

8.1 We will record all safeguarding alerts and referrals on the CAS module of Orchard. This will be used to monitor the number of alerts and referrals and the response from Knowsley Council and the effectiveness of our partnering arrangements.

8.2 We will carry out an annual S11 audit as part of its commitment to Knowsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership. This audit is reviewed by the partnership and feedback is given.

8.3 We will write a contribution to the Annual Report of the Knowsley Safeguarding Children's Board to highlight our Safeguarding activities and commitments.

8.4 The Board recognises safeguarding as a key strategic risk and in order to monitor that we are taking our safeguarding responsibilities seriously the Executive Director – Customer Insight will provide the Board and Executive Management Team with updates as appropriate:

8.5 There are no specific Business Plan objectives relating to this policy statement.

8.6 We have developed a suite of Performance Indicators to monitor safeguarding incidents and performance. These PIs will be further developed and refined through the life of this Policy.

## **9. Legislation and regulation**

9.1 The processes for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk are covered by extensive legislation. This policy has been developed so that it complies with the legal framework and is compatible with the work of the Knowsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Merseyside Safeguarding Adults Board.

9.2 There are no specific regulatory standards with regards to this policy area; however, indirectly this policy statement supports the following RoSH Consumer Standards:

- Tenancy Standard – develop and provide services that will support tenants to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions.

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- Neighbourhood and Community Standard – keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with our homes clean and safe and co-operate with our partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where we own properties.

## **10. Equality and Diversity**

10.1 We acknowledge that customers from marginalised groups may face additional difficulties and may be the most likely to experience some form of abuse. We will work with our customers to identify and respond effectively in circumstances where children and adults may be at risk. We will have regard to our Equality and Diversity Policy and take into account the language, translation and other personal needs of our customers.

## **11. Associated documents**

11.1 This safeguarding policy is not intended to operate in isolation. We have a strong commitment to supporting vulnerable customers. Staff, agency workers, contractors and volunteers are required to consider our approach to safeguarding in the delivery of all customer services.

11.2 This policy statement is related to the following documents:

- Safeguarding procedures
- Anti-social behaviour policy and procedure
- Domestic abuse procedure
- Whistleblowing policy
- Complaints policy and procedure