



## **POLICY: SAFEGUARDING**

### **Sections**

1. Purpose and aim of the Policy
2. Under the Care Act 2014 – What is abuse?
3. If abuse is reported or suspected
4. Children visiting our schemes
5. Monitoring, compliance and review
6. Equality impact assessment
7. Consultation arrangements

Copies of this Policy are available in alternative formats.

Previous BHSE Policy No:	RM 3.5
Last agreed and approved by the Board:	20 November 2013/19 February 2014
Amended to Sandbourne Housing Association:	November 2015
Format changes/review (no substantive changes):	10 November 2016

Next review date:	November 2019
-------------------	---------------

Published on website:	Yes
-----------------------	-----





## **POLICY: SAFEGUARDING**

All reference to 'we', 'our' or 'us' in this Policy should be read as meaning Sandbourne Housing Association.

### **1. Purpose and aim of the Policy**

- 1.1 We recognise the serious effect of abuse upon vulnerable people. We have a duty to protect our tenants and visiting children from any form of abuse and to ensure that all allegations of abuse are properly recorded and investigated.
- 1.2 The aim of this Policy is to keep vulnerable people safe from abuse while they are our tenants or otherwise in receipt of our services. We also recognise the need to protect children from abuse when visiting our schemes. We will keep in place appropriate procedures for preventing, recognising, and reporting abuse where it occurs, or is suspected.

### **2. Under the Care Act 2014 – What is abuse?**

- 2.1 Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse is regarded as "a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress". Abuse can also take the form of financial exploitation or intentional or unintentional neglect by a support provider. Abusers might be relatives, friends, neighbours, care workers, volunteers, or staff of any organisation that might have a legitimate reason to have contact with our tenants as well as strangers and people who deliberately seek to abuse vulnerable people.
- 2.2 For staff to prevent and respond to abuse they need to understand the particular types of possible abuse and the associated risks that can arise.
- 2.3 Abuse and the risks of abuse can include:
  - 2.3.1 physical injury, whether accidental, self-inflicted or caused by the violence of others;
  - 2.3.2 self-neglect or neglect by others leading to the impairment of health – either acute or long-term;
  - 2.3.3 excessive and/or unwarranted restriction of freedom;
  - 2.3.4 danger to health resulting from a very poor living environment;
  - 2.3.5 sexual abuse;

- 2.3.6 financial and material exploitation;
- 2.3.7 risk arising from living in close contact with a person charged with or convicted of an offence involving the abuse of a vulnerable adult or child;
- 2.3.8 risk arising from the misuse of drugs and alcohol;
- 2.3.9 racial abuse;
- 2.3.10 domestic violence.
  
- 2.4 We have a corporate commitment to deal with all forms of abuse and are committed to applying the principle of equality to all vulnerable adults and young people visiting our schemes. Protection from abuse forms an integral part of our risk management process.
  
- 2.5 We will:
  - 2.5.1 give high priority to situations of alleged abuse and respond promptly to allegations of abuse and for requests for assistance from other agencies
  - 2.5.2 meet the needs of individuals while recognising the rights of privacy, dignity, cultural differences, choice and independence
  - 2.5.3 act in a way that helps vulnerable people make their own decisions based on an awareness of the choices available
  - 2.5.4 be committed to extend support to, as well as seek assistance from, other organisations working with vulnerable people
  - 2.5.5 ensure that there are procedures in place to prevent staff from personal benefit when working with vulnerable people
  - 2.5.6 ensure that staff understand their professional boundaries
  - 2.5.7 train our staff to recognise the ways in which abuse can occur and how to respond to it.
  
- 2.6 All staff members and volunteers will be required to uphold the safety and protection of the tenants with whom they work. We will ensure that our staff receive full support when dealing with cases of suspected or actual abuse.
  
- 2.7 Our contractual arrangements with providers of services to our tenants will include a requirement to work within the intents of our policy and procedures and to report concerns about abuse or mistreatment. The Policy will also be reflected in our Code of Conduct for maintenance contractors.
  
- 2.8 We will ensure that our recruitment and selection procedures take account of the need to protect vulnerable adults and young people. All permanent and temporary staff appointments are made subject to satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks [formerly Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks]. These are updated, at a minimum, triennially.

We will work with statutory agencies when dealing with cases of suspected or actual abuse and, where requested, will contribute to the development and implementation of local protocols.

### **3. If abuse is reported or suspected**

- 3.1 We will maintain and review procedures for the prevention of abuse and for protection and procedures to be followed when it is suspected that abuse has taken place.
- 3.2 If we become aware of abuse, or a suspicion of abuse, we will support the people affected. In each case, we will always respect the rights and wishes of the individual. Depending on how serious the issue is, we may involve other agencies such as Social Services or the Police.
- 3.3 We are aware that the seriousness or extent of abuse is often not clear when anxiety is first expressed. It is important, therefore, when considering the appropriateness of intervention that our staff approach reports of incidents or allegations with an open mind. In determining how serious or extensive abuse must be to justify intervention we will take care to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development of the victim.
- 3.4 In making any assessment of seriousness we will consider the following factors:
  - 3.4.1 the vulnerability of the individual;
  - 3.4.2 the nature and extent of the abuse;
  - 3.4.3 the length of time it has been occurring;
  - 3.4.4 the impact on the individual; and
  - 3.4.5 the risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts.
- 3.5 Our procedures will therefore require staff to evaluate:
  - 3.5.1 if the person is suffering harm or exploitation
  - 3.5.2 if intervention will be in the best interests of the vulnerable adult or child
  - 3.5.3 if the assessment accounts for the depth and conviction of the feelings of the person alleging the abuse
  - 3.5.4 what the initial response to an allegation or suspicion of abuse should be.

### **4. Children visiting our schemes**

- 4.1 We treat seriously the issue of protecting children from abuse, however rare or unlikely it is to occur. Children do visit relatives in our housing schemes and may also take part in organised social events, paper rounds or, as part of a school group, carol singing. We wish to encourage tenants to have visitors including children, and in applying this policy the following principles will be applied:
  - 4.1.1 the welfare of children visiting our schemes is paramount
  - 4.1.2 all children have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

- 4.2 Our procedures will provide step-by-step guidance to staff on what to do in different circumstances, clearly setting out roles and responsibilities. We will also ensure that tenants are reminded of their own responsibilities for encouraging visiting children to remain aware of where they are on the scheme and to ensure there is appropriate supervision and to give children the usual advice regarding “stranger danger”. Tenants will be made aware that visitors of any age are their responsibility and that any unacceptable behaviour can breach their occupancy agreement.
- 4.3 In the event of abuse of a child being suspected the matter will immediately be reported to a senior member of staff with a view to deciding on the appropriate course of action, including the possible involvement of the Police and other child protection agencies.

**5. Monitoring, compliance and review**

- 5.1 We will put in place systems for recording information and reporting to our Board the number of cases investigated each year, how they were dealt with and the outcomes.
- 5.2 We will also maintain mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the implementation and impact of this Policy and its associated procedures.

**6. Equality impact assessment**

Age	Neutral
Being or becoming a transsexual person	Neutral
Being married or in a civil partnership	Neutral
Being pregnant or on maternity leave	Neutral
Disability	Neutral
Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin	Neutral
Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief	Neutral
Sex	Neutral
Sexual orientation	Neutral

**7. Consultation arrangements**

- 7.1 We will consult all residents and recognised residents’ bodies on any substantive changes to this Policy and their views will be taken into account by the Board before adopting it. Our staff will also be consulted on any substantive changes to this Policy and any reasonable suggestions will be taken into account before the Policy is approved by the Board.