

Safeguarding Adults Policy

Our Vision

Building better lives through social care and housing in local communities.

Our Mission

We co-design and deliver services that offer innovative social care solutions and support people to thrive.

Our Values

We are
caring and
compassionate



We are
inclusive
and **trusted**



We focus on
excellence
and
innovation



We work in
partnership
and are
one-team



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Look Ahead
CARE, SUPPORT AND HOUSING

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy and its supporting procedures defines the principles and our approach to safeguarding adults to ensure that every employee is confident in responding to any concerns they may have in a consistent manner and in compliance with all relevant legislation.
- 1.2 We acknowledge that our customers will meet the definitions set out in the Care Act 2014 as they all have care and support needs, however we recognise that some customers will not meet the local authority threshold of having 'care and support needs'. We therefore fulfil our safeguarding duties to all of our customers, regardless of the local authority threshold.
- 1.3 Our primary focus is on prevention and we carry out regular quality checks to ensure that all services and departments have appropriate measures in place to minimise the likelihood of safeguarding incidents, whilst also ensuring that we are ready to respond appropriately and effectively when they do, as described below.
- 1.4 This policy informs the ways in which our employees work with adults, underpinned by the [six key principles of the Care Act](#):
 - i. Empowerment
 - ii. Prevention
 - iii. Proportionality
 - iv. Protection
 - v. Partnership
 - vi. Accountability
- 1.5 This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, Board members and anyone working on our behalf. It outlines our approach and expectations to preventing and responding to concerns of abuse, harm or neglect of adults.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 An **adult with care and support needs** is a person aged 18 years or over, (as defined in the Department of Health Guidance, 2000) who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to care for themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
- 2.2 **Safeguarding** is defined in the Care Act as 'protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect'. Safeguarding applies to all adults who have care and support needs and are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.

- 2.3 For ease of reference in this policy, the term **‘employees’** is used to describe all employees, contractors, volunteers, Board members and anyone working on our behalf.

3. Preventing Abuse and Being Prepared

- 3.1 We carry out routine quality checks to ensure that all services and departments have appropriate measures in place to minimise the likelihood of safeguarding incidents whilst also ensuring that we are ready to respond appropriately and effectively when they do. Our prevention measures are divided into three areas:

Prevention A: Staff who understand safeguarding

- 3.2 We ensure that all employees can identify and report safeguarding concerns and comply with all statutory responsibilities, following the procedures set out by the relevant local authority.
- 3.3 Our Safer Recruitment Policy ensures that we adhere to rigorous procedures, including the Right to Work, criminal records checks and references to ensure that only suitable staff are selected for positions within our organisation.
- 3.4 Before an employee can begin working with us, they are required to sign our Code of Conduct and must attend mandatory safeguarding training as part of our on-boarding procedure. All employees are required to complete ongoing refresher training or workshops annually – failure to do so could result in the employee being suspended without pay

Prevention B: Customers understand safeguarding

- 3.5 We work with our customers to ensure they can recognise and report cases of abuse if they occur. Safeguarding is discussed as part of our customers’ induction into services, and they are given a copy of our safeguarding leaflet in a format/style accessible to them. Where appropriate, support is provided to assist customers in understanding our approach and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Safeguarding is also discussed at customer or house meetings and posters are on display in all accommodation-based services.
- 3.6 We will work with individual customers to develop risk management plans which minimise the chances of safeguarding incidents occurring whilst encourage positive risk taking.
- 3.7 Where customers have a poor understanding of safeguarding and/or do not have capacity to make decisions around their own safeguarding, we will refer them to an appropriate advocacy service who can help them make decisions in their best interest.
- 3.8 We will communicate with any customers who are subject to a safeguarding concern at every stage of the process to determine what they want the outcome to be and what action they want to be taken.

Prevention C: Local safeguarding protocols

- 3.9 We carry out regular quality checks to make sure that all Contract Managers have a local safeguarding protocol that clearly sets out instructions for employees on what

to do to raise a safeguarding concern within their service. This will include relevant named contacts, details of the local authority process and copies of and /or hyperlinks to the Safeguarding Form used by the local authority.

- 3.10 Local protocols must be clear about the external reporting expectations and responsibilities as each local authority will have their own safeguarding procedure and protocols that we must comply with. Local authorities are also likely to have their own local information sharing protocol which must be referenced in service protocols which must be readily available and accessible to employees.

4. Safeguarding Concerns

- 4.1 Employees have access to a [detailed procedure](#) to support them in raising a safeguarding concern which sets out the specific roles and responsibilities for everyone involved.
- 4.2 We take any safeguarding concerns seriously, without exception. Proof is not required to report something as a safeguarding concern, the only requirement is that there must be reasonable grounds to suspect abuse has taken place. Employees have access to the [Care Act's description of the types of abuse](#) and neglect which is not exhaustive and employees understand that each case should be reviewed on its own merits.
- 4.3 All employees have a duty to respond if they are concerned that a customer:
- Has/is being harmed, abused, or neglected; or
 - is at risk of being harmed, abused, or neglected
- 4.4 Concerns can arise from several sources including (but not limited to):
- The customer themselves
 - A staff member
 - A third party such as a family member, other customers, a carer, or a member of the public

A safeguarding concern can also be made directly to the local authority by a third party or employee. Concerns may also emerge having been reported as something else, such as a complaint or anti-social behaviour or through patterns of concerns that emerge through reviews, audits or regulatory inspection visits (CQC etc).

- 4.5 The steps that staff should take are set out in the [detailed procedures](#) but a summary of the 8 steps is set out below.
- 4.6 Where we disagree with the local authority the concern will be escalated to the relevant Head of Service and the Look Ahead Safeguarding team who may make further attempts to discuss the case with the local authority or to raise the concern with the relevant commissioner.
- 4.7 If a decision is made to formally challenge the local authority we will write to the appropriate local authority senior lead setting out the reasons why we believe the case has not be correctly managed and update the relevant commissioner.

Step 1 Immediate	Any staff aware of a safeguarding concern should lead the immediate management, making the situation as safe as possible and ensuring the wellbeing of the customer. Contact emergency services if necessary..
Step 2 Immediate	- Inform your Manager as soon as possible. If they are not working, inform the Head of Service. Where this is not possible, or out of hours, contact the On-Call Manager. - A Manager will determine if the criteria has been met to refer to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team
Step 3 Same Day	- When a Manager confirms this is a Safeguarding incident, complete the Local Authority Safeguarding reporting form (or equivalent). - Record the incident on RIVO (Incident Management System).Keep all information factual, clear and concise.
Step 4 Same Day	A Manager will need to check the details on the Safeguarding form, and once approved it must be submitted the same day. Keep notes of when it is submitted and any communication received.
Step 5 Within 24 hours	A Manager will decide on who else should be informed and how this will happen. This may include (but is not restricted to) police, family members or carers, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Ofsted and Commissioners.
Step 6 Until formally closed	All staff to carry out any tasks as directed by the Local Authority Safeguarding team. A Manager will need to update RIVO with any communication received from the local authority.
Step 7 At any stage	If a Manager is unhappy with how the Safeguarding concern is being managed by the local authority they should escalate this concern to their line Manager.
Step 8 When closed	When the local authority have closed the case, a Manager will need to close the incident on RIVO and provide any updates.

5. Safeguarding Communication

Customers who are subject to a safeguarding concern

- 5.1 A [Making Safeguarding Personal](#) approach is about ensuring our customers have the right to make decisions about their own lives. As a general principle, no action

should be taken for, or on behalf of, any customer without first obtaining their consent.

- 5.2 We listen to customers at every stage of the safeguarding process, always maintaining their dignity and privacy whilst seeking to understand the outcome they want and any action they want to be taken. Wherever possible we will ensure these views are reflected in the actions taken and keep customers informed of developments.
- 5.3 Where a customer lacks capacity to make decisions about their situation we will complete a [Mental Capacity Assessment](#) to determine whether they have capacity or not. Where they do not have capacity, we will involve the relevant appointed person who may be a family member, friend, appointed advocate, solicitor or someone else the court has appointed.
- 5.4 On rare occasions staff may believe that by informing customers of the actions they are taking may increase the risk to the customers or others, and these situations must always be discussed with a manager.
- 5.5 Where a customer has substantial difficulty in understanding or retaining information or communicating their views, we will ensure an appropriate adult is available to support them through the process. This might be a staff member however, if it is determined that they are unable to independently fulfil this role, we will seek an advocate such as an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate ('IMCA') or a Care Act Advocate that the local authority have a duty to provide.
- 5.6 All information regarding any safeguarding concern will be kept confidential, as set out in our Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy.

Customers who are alleged to have caused harm

- 5.7 If the person causing harm is another customer, actions taken might include removing them from contact with particular customers. In this situation arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the needs of the person alleged to be causing harm are also met.

Staff who are alleged to have caused harm

- 5.8 Allegations raised against employees (including volunteers and Bank Support Workers) will be managed in line with our [Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy](#) which sets out the decision making process for considering whether any affected employee should be moved or suspended during any investigation.

6. Police Engagement

- 6.1 All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the local authority. When staff become aware of concerns which are also offences, or potential offences, they should also seek to support and encourage customers to report these to the police.

- 6.2 If staff believe that someone may be at immediate risk of harm then they should contact the police immediately whether or not the customer consents.
- 6.3 In other cases where staff become aware of an offence, or potential offence, and there is no immediate risk of harm to anyone, then staff should support customers to report the issue to the police or contact the police themselves.
- 6.4 Where a customer does not consent to reporting a crime to police staff should seek to discuss this with the customer, understand the reasons why and provide them with information and support. If they continue to withhold consent, staff must discuss this with a manager. Whilst the views of the customer must always be respected as much as possible, staff may decide that the risks and severity of the offence mean that the police should be involved in any event. In some cases, it may be best to have an informal discussion with the police to help decide whether a police response is necessary, but staff need to be aware that police are under obligation to log any crime that is reported to them.
- 6.5 If a customer has been the victim of sexual assault or rape and does not want to disclose this to police, they must always be referred to the local sexual assault referral centre who can take evidence which can be used later if the customer changes their mind. Staff should respect the customer's views not to inform the police in these instances, unless staff have specific knowledge of someone being at immediate risk of harm or where there is any reason to believe the alleged perpetrator may be someone holding a position of trust.
- 6.6 In all cases where staff are aware of an offence, or potential offence, but it is proposed that the police are not informed, this must be escalated to the Director of Practice Development, Safeguarding and Quality and/or a Director of Operations before a final decision is reached.

7. Digital Safeguarding

- 7.1 We are increasingly aware of reports of abuse being carried out online, which may include:
- Exposure to inappropriate or harmful material, such as extreme violence
 - Content that promotes harmful behaviour such as suicide, self-harm and eating disorders
 - Becoming victims of cybercrime such as hacking, scams/hoaxes, fraud and identity theft
 - Radicalisation and extremism
 - Online abuse
- 7.2 We will always consider any risk of abuse online when completing customers' risk management plans and, where possible, support customers in their understanding of using technology safely.

8. Safeguarding Governance

- 8.1 All employees are aware of their [roles and responsibilities](#) in relation to safeguarding. Our Board of Management are ultimately accountable for safeguarding and they, in turn, delegate operational accountability to our Senior Leadership Team ('SLT') who are responsible for ensuring that systems are in place to meet our statutory obligations, minimise risk and manage any reported cases appropriate. The Executive Director Group Operations & Customer Experience is the Safeguarding lead.
- 8.2 The Safeguarding Panel meets bi-monthly with members of the Senior Leadership and Management Teams to provide oversight and direction to any detailed reviews to be carried out in response to emerging themes and concerns.
- 8.3 The Safeguarding Forum meets quarterly bringing together operational frontline staff, managers and central services to share best practice and bring about service improvements.
- 8.4 The Director of Practice Development, Safeguarding and Quality is our Designated Safeguarding Officer who oversees and co-ordinates any internal safeguarding investigations and acts as the lead on any challenges to decisions made by local authorities and reports and advises the Senior Leadership Team on safeguarding matters.

Supporting Procedures, Documents and Guidance

Procedures

- [Safeguarding Procedure](#)

Templates

- [Local Safeguarding Protocol Template](#)

Flowcharts

- [Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Flowchart](#)
- [Safeguarding Referral Flowchart](#)
- [Local Authority Referral Flowchart](#)
- [Disagreement with Local Authority Flowchart](#)

Guidance & Information

- [Safeguarding Roles & Responsibilities](#)
- [Types of Abuse - Summary](#)
- [Types Of Abuse – Descriptions](#)
- [Care Act Principles](#)
- [Making Safeguarding Personal](#)
- [Allegations Against Staff](#)
- [Young People & Care Leaver Services](#)
- [Mental Capacity Assessment](#)
- [See Think Act](#)

Copies of these documents can be supplied on request

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

We will comply with our [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#) which can be found by clicking [Here](#) or visiting our website at www.lookahead.org.uk

Policy Sign Off and Ownership

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Compliance Measures	Key Performance Indicators Governance Structure (see above) Quality 1 Checks
Related Policies/Procedures	Incident Management, Feedback & Complaints, Child Protection, Whistleblowing, Child Exploitation, Deprivation of Liberty (Liberty Protection Safeguards), Mental Capacity, Code of Conduct, Radicalisation & Extremism, Domestic Abuse, Lone Working, Missing Persons, Data Protection & Confidentiality, Managing Allegations Against Staff, Lone Working, DBS, Management of Restrictive Practice, Safer Recruitment
Relevant Legislation and Regulatory Requirements	The Care Act 2014. Care and Support Statutory Guidance Updated 2021 (Care Act 2014). Social Care Institute for Excellence SCIE Report 2011. Making Safeguarding Personal Updated 2020, LGA. Local authority Procedures, including London Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Nov 2024 Human Rights Act 1998

Version History

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Author
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102.00_Safeguarding

11.0	March 2023	Annual review and reformat. Reviewed section on police involvement with legal advice provided by 39 Essex Chambers.	██████████
12.0	March 2024	Annual review. Updated job titles and roles and responsibilities	██████████
13.0	June 2024	Annual review Updated abuse definitions Removed section on See Think Act Added MSP Added Policy Owner	██████████
14.0	July 2025	Programmed review, change of job titles/responsibilities and addition of Making Safeguarding Personal guidance	██████████
15.0	February 2026	Updated references Changed procedural flowchart Added to where concern can arise from to include audit reviews.	██████████