

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

We are committed to working with others to ensure that people who live in our homes and receive services provided by us do so in an environment that is safe from abuse.

We recognise that it is everyone's responsibility and we can all play a part in preventing, being alert to and responding appropriately to abuse. How we aim to achieve this is outlined in section 4.

2. Purpose

To set out our approach to safeguarding to fulfil our legal and regulatory obligations.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- our tenants;
- residents living in private sector homes to whom we provide a service;
- residents living in properties that we manage; and
- staff.

4. Policy

Our policy is to:

1. raise awareness about the abuse and/or neglect of children, young people and adults at risk;
2. we have a culture that does not tolerate such abuse and encourages people to raise concerns;
3. prevent abuse from happening wherever possible;
4. respond promptly and proportionately where abuse does happen to stop the abuse and ensure the person harmed receives effective and appropriate support including ongoing support / after care; and
5. work within the agreed multi-agency framework. Ensuring a co-ordinated response to safeguarding.

This policy is underpinned by associated procedures that provide straightforward guidance for all staff about what to do if any concerns are identified about harm/abuse, including where a member of staff may be implicated. They ensure that we respond promptly and effectively when there are concerns of abuse/harm to a child or young person or an adult at risk.

These are not intended to be used in isolation but in conjunction with other policies and procedures to promote best practice.

Our approach and key policy principles

The following principles shape our approach to safeguarding.

1. We recognise that many people have the capacity to keep themselves safe and make informed choices and decisions. We will not assume someone is vulnerable to abuse simply because of age or disability. We will however, act to support customers and help them to seek protection from abuse, in the light of particular concerns and in response to an individual's particular needs.
2. Anyone raising a safeguarding alert, allegation or concern in good faith should always be listened to, believed and assured that we will act on their concern.
3. The wishes and preferences of the Adult at Risk should be central to the Adult Safeguarding process – known as Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP). The definition of an adult at risk is an adult who is over 18 years and who is in receipt of or may be eligible for community care services. An Adult at Risk is a term that covers a wide range of people, from those with a learning disability, dementia and also include adults whose mental capacity fluctuates. Some adults at risk may be living in sheltered situations and others will be living in the community on their own or with family members.
4. We recognise the value in promoting safeguarding so that customers can safeguard themselves.
5. We have a duty to be vigilant regarding the welfare of those covered by the scope of this policy and to train staff to recognise the signs of abuse and/or neglect and report it.
6. We are responsible for ensuring that where a customer or potential customer is a known risk to others that a risk assessment is undertaken regarding the appropriateness of any proposed letting and to agree how risks will be managed. We will work in partnership with the relevant multi-agency public protection panel in this respect.
7. We recognise our obligations to ensure our staff who are working with children, young people and adults at risk are competent and safe to do so, we undertake DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks in line with current legislation. We will ensure via our procurement processes that our contractors and sub-contractors also comply with these requirements.
8. We will ensure our staff are confident and fully equipped to respond to concerns of abuse. This will be achieved by specific role-based training, clear procedures and availability of supporting information.
9. We will have clear lines of accountability and defined roles and responsibilities within the organisation for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
10. We recognise that abuse may be committed by a member of staff, agent or by others who are in a trusting relationship with a vulnerable person. We will have procedures in place to enable concerns to be identified and addressed, including referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where abuse of a child or young person by a professional is suspected and Adult Services where abuse of an adult at risk by a professional is suspected.

11. Safeguarding is a multi-agency approach which depends on effective joint working. We recognise the lead responsibility of local authorities in coordinating safeguarding work and our own role in alerting Children's and Adult Services and the police of any concerns regarding safety. Any suspected or actual crime will be referred to the police.
12. Appropriate information sharing between organisations is essential to safeguard people at risk and we will act in accordance with agreed inter-agency information sharing protocols. Where possible we will seek a person's consent to share information. We cannot guarantee full confidentiality when our duty to safeguard adults or children at risk, or the public interest, is greater than our responsibility to an individual.
13. We will maintain good record keeping (clear, concise, factual and accurate) as this is essential in safeguarding, enabling an appropriate response to concerns. It can also prevent abuse by providing indicators of particular risks or vulnerabilities.
14. We recognise the importance of monitoring all reports of suspected or known abuse, their management and resolution including serious case reviews.
15. We recognise the importance of operating a customer-centred approach, which treats people with dignity, respect and without prejudice. We will respect the rights of the person causing harm, as far as is possible.
16. All contractors, sub-contractors of Bolton at Home and Arcon will be made aware of the Group Safeguarding Policy and have access to E Learning Safeguarding Adults and Children training as part of procurement/induction, as well as a clear process to report concerns into the relevant organisation for investigation and support. This will ensure they work in accordance with our policy and procedure.
17. Other procedures will underpin our policy and provide staff with the framework for supporting customers. These should be read in conjunction with this policy.

5. Equality and Diversity

We appreciate that abuse may receive less recognition amongst particular groups, religions and cultures. We will ensure we raise awareness of safeguarding issues and our approach with customers of all backgrounds and ensure they are comfortable and empowered to report and discuss incidents of abuse and neglect.

6. Legislation

The policy has been written with reference to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

1. Children's Acts 1989 and 2004
2. The Government's guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
3. Care Act 2014
4. Mental Capacity Act (2005) and Mental Capacity Act – code of practice (2007) provide a framework to empower and protect people who may lack capacity to make decisions for themselves
5. Human Rights Act (1998) – includes a duty on public bodies to intervene proportionately to protect the rights of citizens

6. Data Protection Act (2018) – governs the protection of personal data and provides a framework to ensure that personal information about a person is shared appropriately
7. Equality Act (2010)
8. Mental Health Act (2007)
9. Criminal Justice Act (2003)
10. Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015
11. Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999
12. Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
13. Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) – established the Disclosure and Barring Service
14. Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) – places a duty on everyone to report something that leaves someone at risk
15. Health and Social Care Act 2012

7. Responsibility

We will ensure this policy is successful, with staff having individual and collective responsibility to implement the policy.

We achieve this by training all our management teams to enable them to provide safeguarding support to their staff, identify and deliver mandatory training to all our teams and ensure support and guidance are available.

8. Consultation

The following consultation has been carried out in the formation of this policy.

1. At the SiP (Seniors in Partnership) Meeting on 14th May 2021.
2. At the Safeguarding Champions Meeting on 11th May 2021.
3. To the Group Leadership Team Meeting on 14th June 2021.
4. With Arcon’s Head of Housing Services at Arcon Housing 14th June 2021.

9. Monitoring, review and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually with any changes approved through our governance process as necessary. The review will take account of:

1. changes to statutory/regulatory guidance and developing good practice;
2. any learning identified as a result of case reviews; and
3. changes in guidance/practice by the Local Safeguarding Boards.

Date approved	Operations Committee - 6 September 2021 Arcon Board – 14 September 2021
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