

Safeguarding Adults at Risk and Child Protection Policy

Housing Management Policy 6

Keniston Housing Association

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure we fulfil our obligations to safeguard adults and children and promote their welfare. We aim to identify, adults, children and families who would benefit from early help. We want to involve other agencies at an early stage and ensure that all staff in contact with children and adults are trained in identifying and reporting any form of abuse.

2. Who this policy applies to:

Throughout this policy the term 'staff' is used to refer to staff who come into contact with children and adults at risk. This policy also applies to all tenants at risk of abuse, not just those living in sheltered housing.

3. Policy Statement

Keniston aims to take all reasonable measures to provide safe accommodation and services. The protection and safeguarding of adults at risk and children is everyone's responsibility. All staff will be able to identify tenants at risk and must report any concerns for the well-being of adults at risk and children as detailed in Keniston's procedure. Staff will follow local multi agency safeguarding procedures and will know what to do if they have concerns about abuse.

We are committed to safe recruitment selection and vetting for staff who are likely to be in contact with adults at risk and children.

This policy distinguishes between Safeguarding Adults and children as the legislation and terminology used is different.

4. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

Keniston will abide by existing regulatory requirements and legislation such as:

- The Homes and Communities Agency regulatory neighbourhood and community standard
- The Children Act [1989]
- The Protection of Children Act [1999]
- The Children Act 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Care Act 2014

Registered providers, although not under the same duties as Local Authorities (LA's), continue to have an important role in safeguarding because of their contact with adults and families. The regulatory requirement is that housing associations must work with LA's and are expected to comply with LA procedures such as prompt reporting, sharing information and co-operation.

5. Safeguarding Adults

5.1 Introduction

Adults at risk are people who may have care and support needs and might be at risk of abuse or neglect and are unable to protect themselves. Adults at risk can be at risk of one or several of the following categories of abuse. The list is not exhaustive:

Physical, Emotional, Psychological, Social, Financial, Neglect, Deprivation, Misuse of medication, Discriminatory and Sexual Abuse

Abuse takes many forms and may consist of single or repeated acts towards an adult at risk who has not consented or does not have the capacity to consent. It can occur in any relationship, and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the adult at risk. Abuse may occur in any context or environment and could be perpetrated by one person or by several people. Abuse could be from any person including family, carers, neighbours, peers, other service users or strangers.

The six safeguarding principles are: empowerment, protection, prevention, proportionate responses, partnership, and accountability.

5.2 Definitions

Adult safeguarding means 'working with adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect safeguarding is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect.' (Statutory guidance to the Care Act 2014)

Abuse is when a person has caused harm, or may be likely to do so, to the physical, emotional or material wellbeing of another person.

Harm may be caused by direct acts, or by failure to provide adequate care. It may be systematic and repeated or may consist of a single incident.

5.3 How Keniston will deal with suspected or known abuse to adults at risk

The Housing Services Manager (HSM) will be the designated officer and will take the lead when dealing with Safeguarding issues.

The following are principles and actions followed by staff and are detailed in the procedures.

- If the person is in immediate danger staff will call the police or ambulance
- If staff have any concerns then they will raise it with the HSM straight away.
- Staff will make a written record using the victim's own words.
- Staff will not agree to keep it a secret. It will be explained that it has to be passed on to the HSM.
- Staff will reassure them that the allegation will be taken seriously and dealt with discreetly. Staff will maintain confidentiality at all times and only discuss the case with those people outlined in this policy.
- Staff will only ask necessary questions, enough to be able to pass onto the relevant agency, so as not to distress the victim.
- Staff will not confront the alleged abuser
- Consent must be obtained from the person concerned before a referral is made to Adult Social Services or the police. It is however recognised that consent may not be possible e.g. in cases where people lack capacity. Where this is the case, they will be supported by advocates, so that their best interests are pursued.
- Where an adult at risk with capacity has made a decision that they do not want action to be taken and there are no public interest or vital interest considerations,

their wishes must be respected. However, it is important that if they or others are at risk of harm the information should be passed to Adult Services or the police even if consent is not obtained.

- The above applies if it is the alleged abuser who has care and support needs.
- The HSM will make the report to the Local Authority safeguarding team using the referral mechanisms as directed in the local policies.
- Staff will fully co-operate with any police investigation.

6. Child Protection

6.1 Introduction

Child protection involves taking steps to safeguard children at risk of or are suffering from physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.

“Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or institutional or community setting, by those known to them or...a stranger...They may be abused by an adult/adults or child/children” (Working Together to Safeguard and Children 2013)

6.2 Definitions

Child abuse can be broken down into two distinct definitions:

- Something a person does to a child
- Something a person fails to do for a child

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This includes children who have left home.

6.3 How Keniston will deal with suspected or known abuse to children

We work with other organisations in the Local Authority areas in which we work, through the Local Safeguarding Children Boards to ensure the good practice and effective sharing of information that helps protect children is in place.

Similarly as with adults, the designated officer, being the Housing Services Manager (HSM) will take the lead when dealing with Safeguarding issues.

The following principles and actions to be taken by staff are detailed in the procedure.

- If staff have any concerns about the wellbeing of a child, then they will raise it straight away with the HSM to help clarify the nature of their concerns.
- Staff will make a written record of the nature and circumstances of their concern including any previous concerns held.
- The HSM will report our concerns to the relevant agency such as social services or the Police within 24 hours if our concerns involve physical injury or sexual abuse.
- The HSM will ensure prompt reporting to the appropriate agency
- We want to maintain a good relationship with families so Staff will be honest and open and will explain to the family involved as soon as we realise there may be a child protection issue, and that we may have to share the information with

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other agencies. However parents should not be told if doing so may put the child at greater risk of harm.

- Staff cannot deal with the problem alone, so it will be tackled through a multi-agency approach.
- Staff will maintain the child and the family's confidentiality at all times. Staff will only discuss the case with those people outlined in the procedure.

8. Partnership working

We will work in partnership with Local Authority Safeguarding Boards and we understand that sharing information, joint working and effective communication are essential for keeping people safe. We will ensure we will co-operate with Local Safeguarding Boards.

7. Allegations against staff

Any member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff, with regard to safeguarding adults or child protection, they should report it as soon as possible to the designated officer, being the HSM, or Chief Executive if appropriate. The matter will be reported the appropriate agency before an internal investigation can take place.

8. Prevention and Awareness

- Keniston will request criminal records check processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service as part of our recruitment process. This will be obtained for staff that as part of their role come into personal contact with residents.
- The Association will publicise this policy
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk will be included as an aspect of the 6 monthly Support Plan for our sheltered residents.
- Ensure dangerous offenders, as defined by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 are not offered tenancies in locations offering access to children
- Staff will understand the importance of our safeguarding role and our responsibilities
- We will ensure that we record tenants who are vulnerable i.e disability or mental health on our system.

9. Training

All staff will receive refresher training in Safeguarding every three years. All staff who are in contact with residents will attend training appropriate to their role.

10. Consultation

This policy has been drafted with the assistance of Bromley Council, Bexley Council and West Sussex County Council.

11. Equality and Diversity impact statement

The Housing Services Manager is responsible for undertaking the equality impact assessment and other senior managers contributed to this assessment.

Approved at the meeting of the Management Committee held 22 January 2015