

Safeguarding Adults at Risk and Safeguarding Children 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 that are likely to be in contact with adults at risk and children.

This policy distinguishes between Safeguarding Adults and children.

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
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Care Act 2014
- Children and Families Act 2017
- Digital Economy Act 2017

Social landlords, 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 Responding to concerns

The Housing Services Director (HSD) will be the designated officer and will take the lead when dealing with Safeguarding issues. The safeguarding duty still applies even if the persons support needs are not being met.

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
- Staff will listen to the person and respect what they want and if staff have any safeguarding concerns then they will raise it with the HSD straight away.
- Staff will immediately make a written record using the persons own words.
- Staff will not agree to keep it a secret. It will be explained that it has to be passed on to the HSD.
- Records will be kept as to why we decided to take action as well as why we might not have taken action. Staff will reassure the person 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 person.
- Staff will consider any mental capacity issues. Staff will consider whether the person is under coercion or duress

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- Staff will consider if anyone else is at risk, particularly children
 - Staff will not confront the alleged abuser
 - Consent must be obtained from the person concerned before a concern is raised to the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) 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.
 - The HSD 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.

5.4 Respecting peoples Wishes

We should support people to remain in control of decision making wherever possible. If the staff have safeguarding concerns and the person refuses intervention, does not give consent for personal information and they clearly have the mental capacity to make this decision then there are some circumstances where we could or should share the information with safeguarding partners within the legal parameters.

This is where:

- a crime has been committed and is a risk to others and is in the wider public interest, particularly where there are children
- where there is a vital interest – a risk to life
- coercion/duress – where the Officer suspects threats are being made or the person is under pressure
- legal request as requested by Police, courts or the SAB.

We will always try to gain consent and tell the person we need to share their information and why before we do so.

5.5 Support for alleged perpetrators

Staff will consider support for perpetrators where they may have a range of care and support needs themselves to minimise risk to others.

6. Safeguarding Children

6.1 Introduction

Whilst staff at Keniston do not work directly with children, we recognise that it is everyone's responsibility to help protect children at risk or are suffering from any form of abuse.

Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the process and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of children at risk.

6.2 Definitions

- Safeguarding refers to all action taken to promote the welfare of children and to protect them from harm.

- Child protection refers to measures taken specifically to protect children from harm.
- Child abuse should be considered to have happened when someone's actions have caused a child to suffer significant harm.
- Significant harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention which is in the best interests of the children. Significant harm can be determined by comparing the health or development of a child with that which could be reasonably expected of a similar child.

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

6.3 Forms of Abuse

These are:

- Physical abuse or injury
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Failure to thrive
- Bullying
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- Cyber Bullying
- Harassment
- Self-harm
- Child trafficking
- Gang violence
- Religions & cultural practices
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Child abuse is evolving with developments in technology, such as online bullying, trolling, child exploitation, trafficking, radicalisation, hate crime and internet child sex offenses.

6.3 How Keniston will respond to 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 Director (HSD) will take the lead when dealing with Safeguarding issues.

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

- Police will be called if the child is in immediate danger of serious harm
- If any staff have any concerns about the wellbeing of a child, then they will raise it straight away with the HSD to help clarify the nature of their concerns.
- Staff will make a written record immediately of the nature and circumstances of their concern including any previous concerns held.
- The HSD 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 HSD will decide on the next action to take.
- The HSD will ensure prompt reporting to the appropriate agency

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- 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 safeguarding issue, and that we may have to share the information with 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, but cannot guarantee confidentiality to a child and will find an opportunity to tell them who will be told and what they will be told and when. Staff will only discuss the case with those people who need to know
- It is not our role to investigate our concerns. Safeguarding concerns are investigated by social care and the police. .

7. Multi-agency and Information sharing

Safeguarding is a multi-agency operation. Sharing information between agencies, professionals who work with children and adults at risk is essential to keeping them safe from harm. 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.

If referred to the Local Safeguarding Adults Board, whilst we respect confidentiality, we will want to know if the outcome is satisfactory. i.e. is the person safe so that we can bring closure to the case. Following a SAB referral, staff will go back to the person and check the outcome.

8. 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 HSD, or Chief Executive if appropriate. The matter will be reported the appropriate agency before an internal investigation can take place.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. Consultation

This policy has been drafted with the assistance of Bromley Council,

12. Equality and Diversity impact statement

All adults and children have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise the additional needs of people from minority groups and the barriers they may face.

Agreed by Management Team on 1st March 2017