

Vulnerable customers policy statement

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Policy author /holder Director of Neighbourhoods

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1 Introduction

At LiveWest, we are committed to providing safe, secure, and affordable housing to all our customers, with special attention to those who are vulnerable and in need of additional assistance. We recognise that customers with vulnerabilities may face unique challenges that require tailored services and support to ensure their wellbeing and the successful sustainment of their relevant occupation agreement.

Our approach to serving customers with vulnerabilities is grounded in the following principles:

Equality and inclusion

We are dedicated to fostering inclusive communities where every customer, regardless of their background, is treated with dignity and respect. We proactively work to identify and address barriers that customers with vulnerabilities might encounter, ensuring they have equitable access to housing resources and services.

Holistic support

We understand that vulnerability can manifest in various ways, such as physical, mental, or social challenges. Our services aim to provide holistic support, which includes not only safe housing but also access to tenancy sustainment support and signposting to a range of statutory providers and third-party services.

Collaborative partnerships

We will collaborate with our customers, any of their personal representatives, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that our customers with vulnerabilities are receiving adequate support.

Tailored services

Recognising that each customer's needs are unique, we strive to offer a tailored service to customers with vulnerabilities. Where a vulnerability is identified, we conduct assessments to understand their specific requirements and preferences, allowing us to tailor our services to their individual circumstances where possible.

Preventative measures

We believe in taking proactive measures to prevent vulnerability from escalating. We aim to identify potential challenges and provide or signpost to timely support, preventing issues from becoming crises.

Transparent communication

Open communication is the foundation of our approach. We will ensure that customers with vulnerabilities are informed about the available services, their rights, and how to seek assistance whenever needed. We encourage an ongoing dialogue to address concerns and aim to adapt our service as circumstances change.

Continuous improvement

We are committed to continuously improving our services for customers with vulnerabilities. We regularly evaluate the effectiveness of our policies and procedures, gather feedback from customers, and refine our strategies to better meet their evolving needs.

Statutory and regulatory compliance

We will comply with relevant legislation, regulation, pre-action court protocols and recognised best practice.

In addition to the provision of homes and landlord services we exist to create social value through supporting the development of successful neighbourhoods and communities where people can live independently.

In cooperation with statutory and voluntary agencies we will work to provide services that are flexible enough to address the needs of customers who may be vulnerable. We will also work with other agencies to provide opportunities to customers to find a home that meets their needs if they require specialist support.

2 Key roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all colleagues, volunteers, contractors and board members to be aware of how vulnerability might act as a barrier in terms of customers accessing and receiving services, and to identify how their own area or function may be improved to meet the needs of vulnerable people.

3 Defining and identifying vulnerability

We recognise there are different definitions of vulnerability in various legislation depending on the issues and circumstances in question. It is not possible to outline every situation where a customer could be considered vulnerable.

Generically, vulnerable customers are individuals who are deemed to be more at risk of 'detriment' due to their personal circumstances for a range of reasons, including short-term, long-term, or permanent emotional, mental, physical, financial or social circumstances.

Vulnerability can be subjective, and in terms of determining the vulnerability of the customer, we aim to take a holistic and collaborative approach with the customer and other relevant partner agencies and parties to identify the most appropriate action on a case-by-case basis.

4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

This document underpins the commitment of LiveWest to provide equality in access to and provision of services offered to all customers regardless of their age, religion, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, national origin, sexual orientation, appearance, responsibility for dependents, unrelated criminal activities, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

5 Performance monitoring

We will monitor the outcomes of assessments and support under this policy .

6 Record keeping

We will record information about vulnerable customers who are at risk and receiving support in a consistent and secure way. We will make sure that all information is regularly reviewed and managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

We will record risk information to protect the health and safety of colleagues and contractors in line with our Sensitive Customer Information procedures.

The consent of the individual will be sought in advance of information being disclosed to third parties unless exceptional circumstances apply when LiveWest's data protection and confidentiality policies will be followed.

7 Linked policies and other references

- Anti-social behaviour policy/procedures
- Domestic abuse policy/procedures
- Unacceptable customer behaviour guidance
- Fixed term tenancy reviews
- Safeguarding policy/procedures
- Tenancy management policy/procedures
- Neighbourhood management policy/procedures
- Data protection policies
- Professional boundaries
- Equality, diversity and inclusion policy