

# **Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy**

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**Policy ref:**

**Policy author/holder:** Head of Supported Housing

**Date approved:** 20 September 2023

**Approved by:** Customer Operations Group

**Effective date:** 20 September 2023

**Review date:** September 2024

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## **1 Purpose and anticipated outcomes**

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1.1 This policy sets out our commitment to promoting safeguarding and the protection of adults at risk. It provides a framework from which our employee teams and other workers ( including volunteers), Board members, contractors and agents can understand their responsibilities (including those under the Care Act 2014 ) to promote the prevention and protection of individuals and groups from abuse and neglect by:

- Understanding our commitment and their duties in safeguarding adults at risk
- Understanding what constitutes abuse
- Knowing when and how to report it
- Safeguarding individuals in a way that supports them in making choices and having control in how they choose to live their lives.

1.2 The anticipated outcomes of the policy are that we provide services in an environment which safeguards the welfare of at- risk individuals and groups. We are committed to working collaboratively in a multi - agency manner, Making Safeguarding Personal and compliant with the requirements of statute and good practice to protect individuals from harm, abuse, and neglect.

## **2 Scope and definitions**

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2.1 This policy applies to all employees, Board and committee members, volunteers, agency workers, students on work placements, agents and contractors carrying out work with our customers or in their homes.

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2.2 For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures:

- An Adult at risk is defined as any person aged 18 years and over who is, or who may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age, or illness and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him/ herself or unable to protect him/ herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

### 2.3 Safeguard or protect?

Safeguarding comprises all the preventative measures that we take to try to stop someone being abused or subjected to neglect – it is everyone’s responsibility to report any concerns.

Protection refers to activities undertaken to prevent adults suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. It encompasses statutory responsibilities ( such as those resting with the Local Authority or the Police) to stop or limit abuse once it has taken place.

## 3 About this policy

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### 3.1 General policy statement:

- The welfare of the adult at risk is paramount.
- All individuals, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/ or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse and neglect.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

3.2 We all have a responsibility to report concerns. We have an organisational system to follow up on reported concerns and to learn lessons from each case.

3.3 The key principles that underpin the safeguarding work that we do are:

- **Empowerment:** People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.
- **Prevention:** It’s better to act before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection:** Support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Partnership:** Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting concerns of abuse and neglect.
- **Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

3.4 As part of this policy, we aim to:

- Actively research good practice and promote what we learn to our partners.
- Ensure that the services we provide directly to vulnerable people offer appropriate safety and protection.
- Enable us to make informed and confident responses to safeguarding issues.

3.5 We aim to ensure that we can respond effectively by:

- Raising awareness throughout our organisation.
- Actively encouraging good practice amongst all our agents.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, to minimise or manage situations where abuse/ neglect or allegations of abuse/ neglect may occur.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of adults at risk
- Minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies.
- Recruiting, training, supervising, and supporting those of us who work with vulnerable groups to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect vulnerable people from abuse and neglect.
- Ensuring we all know how to protect ourselves against false allegations
- Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Reporting abuse or possible abuse/ neglect that is observed during the course of our work.
- Requiring all of us to adopt and abide by our Safeguarding policy together with procedures and good practice that may be published from time to time.
- Identifying those individuals and agents that require Disclosure and Barring Service ( DBS) Checks.

## **4 Responding to a safeguarding concern**

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4.1 If you have a safeguarding concern, you are required to:

- Raise your concerns through the Assure Safeguarding Portal to the Safeguarding Lead where you believe an adult is at risk of harm, in line with our standard operating procedure.
- Report your concerns clearly, and;
- Cooperate with any fact finding or local investigation.

4.2 Where the concern is escalated to the Local Authority they will decide if the referral has reached the safeguarding threshold. The Local Authority must make enquiries, or ensure others do so, if it believes an adult is subject to, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. An enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to stop or prevent abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom.

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- 4.3 Recognising abuse and neglect is not easy and it is not the responsibility of anyone working on behalf of LiveWest, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to investigate whether or not abuse or neglect has taken place. The responsibility is to raise a concern to enable conversations to happen within LiveWest and relevant professionals to investigate appropriately if a formal escalation happens.
- 4.4 We have a responsibility to provide training advice and support to employees regarding safeguarding. The organisation also has a responsibility to provide leadership and support to employees in carrying out their responsibilities.

**Doing nothing is NOT an option**

- 4.5 In all cases the raising of a concern through the Safeguarding Portal on Assure will be completed, once confirmed as a Safeguarding matter, a Generic Safeguarding case to be opened on Cx and an agreement reached on involving Adult Social Care, or going directly to Police if there is immediate danger.
- 4.6 The Alerter will follow our procedures and complete the internal process and if required follow the formal escalation process. (Please note for IMS staff the Safeguarding Lead will assign the task of escalating a formal safeguarding concern to a Local Authority within the Housing/Supported Teams).
- 4.7 If the concern or allegation is about an employee, a Board member or agent then we will fully support and protect anyone who reasonably believes that they are making a disclosure in the public interest and reports their concern that an adult may be at risk (further detail can be found of the process to be followed in the Whistleblowing policy).

## **5. Monitoring and review**

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- 5.1 There is an appointed Safeguarding Lead across the business who is responsible for receiving reports of suspected abuse through the Safeguarding Portal. They check how each case has been identified and managed, provide advice to staff who raise concerns and agree next steps on how protective factors can be achieved locally or if a formal escalation is required. Together the alerter/Case Owner and the Safeguarding Lead oversee the case through to successful conclusion.
- 5.2 The Safeguarding Lead provides accurate data on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis to inform the Health and Safety Scrutiny Group and the Executive Team and Board on the numbers of cases received the number of formal escalations that have been necessary and acted upon by the Local Authority, and those escalated and not acted upon resulting in invoking Professional Differences procedures.
- 5.3 Other responsibilities for the Safeguarding Lead include representation for CSPR, SCR and DHR for LiveWest where customers have been the focus of the review.

- 5.3 There is a Safeguarding Leads of Business Areas Group who remain informed by the reports of cases raised in their respective business teams and any additional learning required from formal CSPR, SCR and DHR.
- 5.4 The Board is responsible for the oversight of Safeguarding and will seek assurance that the systems to deliver this are effective. The Board (or appropriately devolved committee) will review an annual report which includes but is not limited to the information identified by the Safeguarding Leads of Business Areas Group to aid the development of Safeguarding and learning from experience by the organisation.
- 5.5 In the case of services provided directly to vulnerable groups, Service Managers ensure that local work instructions are regularly reviewed including amendments to reflect relevant changes in procedure and personnel within Local Authority Social Services teams.
- 5.6 We work in several different Local Authority areas and provide our colleagues with digital access to respective safeguarding reporting platforms on Our Space:  
<https://ondomain.sharepoint.com/sites/OurSpace/SitePages/Safeguarding.aspx>
- 5.7 It is essential that colleagues raising concerns know how to raise a safeguarding concern and familiarise themselves with this.

## 6 Legal considerations

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We aim to carry out the policy in-line with:

- Specific legal obligations and regulatory requirements , including the Data Protection Act 2018 , General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the Regulator of Social Housing’ s regulatory code as it applies to vulnerable groups.
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners 2018
- Relevant good practice including that published by the Sport England, the National Housing Federation and Chartered Institute of Housing
- The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 .
- The Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 with the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards ( amendments to Mental Capacity Act)
- Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Disclosure and Barring service ( DBS).
- Health & Safety legislation

## 7 Linked / associated policies and other references

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7.1 Below is a list of linked or associated LiveWest policies and procedures and to which our employees, contractors and other individuals are required to comply, as appropriate:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Whistleblowing Procedure

### Version Control

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Version ref	Approved	By whom	Reason
1	September 2023	Customer Services Group	New version following separation of combined policy