

# Safeguarding Children and Young People 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 Our organisation is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people (children) in our care. We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation.
- 1.2 This policy provides the framework from which our colleague, teams and other workers (including volunteers), Board members, contractors and agents can understand their responsibilities to protect children from abuse and neglect by:
- Understanding our commitment and their duties in safeguarding children.
  - 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.
- 1.3 We are committed to working collaboratively in a multi - agency manner and being 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, student on work placements, agents and contractors carrying out work with our customers in their homes.

- 2.2 For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures the words “child” or “children” are used to refer to anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- 2.3 Safeguarding is a term which is broader than ‘child protection’ and relates to action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Safeguarding is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children as:
- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
  - Preventing harm to children's health or development
  - Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
  - As well as taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes
- 2.4 There are four defined categories of child abuse:
- Physical abuse
  - Emotional abuse
  - Neglect
  - Sexual abuse
- 2.5 Child Protection refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm including neglect, abuse, sexual and criminal exploitation, accidents, bullying, self-harm, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, and radicalisation.
- 2.6 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 Policy statement**

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- 3.1 The welfare of children is paramount.
- 3.2 All individuals, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/ or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse and neglect.
- 3.3 All suspicions and allegations of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- 3.4 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.

3.5 As part of this policy, we aim to:

- Actively research good safeguarding practice and promote what we learn across our organisation and to our partners
- Ensure that we work proactively with children to provide services which reduce the risk of harm to them and sets high expectations to ensure that children feel safe, understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm.
- Enable us to make informed and confident responses to safeguarding issues

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

- Raising awareness throughout our organisation so that staff are prepared and supported to respond to children who may be at risk and receive suitable training.
- 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 children.
- Supporting children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside their home.
- Helping children to have a strong sense of safety and well-being and so are unlikely to be missing from care on a regular basis.
- Working with children to support them to understand the importance of online safety, and to understand how they can keep themselves safe.
- Ensuring staff are prepared and supported to manage situations and behaviour and using clear and consistent boundaries to contribute to a feeling of well-being and security for children. Children will be encouraged to create ways to de-escalate situations and find creative alternative ways to manage their behaviour.
- Minimising dangers and working closely with the child's allocated social worker and their family, if appropriate and in accordance with plans for their future.
- Adopting safer recruitment including identifying those individuals and agents that require Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks.
- Training, supervising, and supporting those of us who work with children to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and neglect.
- Responding to any allegations against staff appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Reporting promptly abuse or possible abuse/ neglect that is observed during our work. See Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.
- 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.

- 3.7 Information will be managed confidentially and only shared without consent where the duty to protect children from harm supersedes an individual's right to privacy. Safeguarding decisions will be made in a timely manner and should not be subject to unnecessary delay. Children have a right to have their voices heard and their views should genuinely shape and influence how we work.

#### **4 Service standards, monitoring and review**

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- 4.1 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 colleague 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.
- 4.2 The Safeguarding Lead provides accurate data on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis to inform the Health and Safety Operational Group, the Executive Team and Board on the numbers of cases received and 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.
- 4.3 Other responsibilities for the Safeguarding Lead include representation for Child Safeguarding Practice Review, Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews for LiveWest where customers have been the focus of the review.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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> It is essential that colleagues raising concerns know how to raise a safeguarding concern and familiarise themselves with this.

## 5 Legal considerations

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

- The Protection Standard
- Regulation 20
- Children Act 1989: Care planning placement and case review
- Children Act 1989: Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers
- The Francis Review: Freedom to Speak UP

## 6 Linked / associated policies and other references

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6.1 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:

- Safeguarding Children and Young people Procedures
- Positive relationships and Behaviour Management Policy
- Positive relationship and Behaviour Management Procedure
- Physical Intervention Procedure
- Missing Child Policy
- Missing Child Procedure
- 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