



Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction:

1.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff who are involved in providing supported and other housing services are aware of the potential for abuse, can recognise abuse, deal with abuse when it has occurred and know the reporting requirements.

1.2 This document includes guidance for staff in recognising and dealing with abuse or suspected abuse and the Society's internal procedures that must be followed if abuse is suspected.

1.3 Our commitment towards equality, diversity and inclusion will be upheld in this policy.

2. Policy objectives:

2.1 The Society strives to ensure that all tenants and licensees are protected from abuse of any kind.

2.2 We are fully committed to multi-agency working to tackle abuse or suspected abuse of any our tenants or licensees.

2.3 We ensure that our policy and procedures are consistent with Norfolk County Council's multi agency approach on protecting vulnerable adults.

3. Definition of abuse:

3.1 Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

3.2 It may be physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, financial, neglect, discrimination or institutional.

4. Policy:

4.1 The Society believes that every person who uses our services has a right to:

- a life free from fear.
- be treated with dignity and respect.
- have their choice respected and not to be forced to do anything against their will.

4.2 To prevent abuse and to deal with instances of abuse or suspected abuse, the Society will:

- Implement the measures set out in this policy.
- Ensure that the Scheme Managers are trained.

4.3 We acknowledge that the Society has a primary responsibility to deal with abuse, and that rigorous measures must be put in place to deal with incidents of abuse.

The Society's measures for preventing and dealing with incidents of abuse include:

- Ensuring that effective policies and procedures are in place and are being followed by staff who are sufficiently skilled and have an awareness of abuse.
- Practicing effective recruitment and selection processes which involve CRB checks and thorough checking of employment history and references.
- Ensuring that breaches of policy and procedures are dealt with appropriately and consistently.
- Maintaining effective partnerships with other agencies, including Norfolk County Council and the Police.
- Ensuring that cases of abuse are reported to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Ensure that individual cases of abuse are reviewed by the Operations Sub Committee to improve working practices.

5. Procedure:

5.1 The Society member of staff hearing or receiving the allegation of abuse should record the information. The record should include name of the victim, name of the alleged perpetrator(s), time, date and full details of the alleged incident. If possible, the person recording the allegation should get the complainant to sign the account as a true record of their statement. Any witnesses should also sign the record.

5.2 If the staff member suspects the abuse is being perpetrated by another member of staff, then the staff member should make a full written record of their suspicions.

5.3 In the case of either 5.1 or 5.2, the Chief Executive Officer must be notified of the suspected abuse and given a copy of the written statement.

5.4 The Chief Executive Officer will liaise with other agencies to determine whether investigation of the alleged abuse is dealt with under the Society's internal procedures or those of Norfolk County Council and the Police.

5.5 The Chief Executive Officer will take responsibility for the Society's response to the suspected abuse. This will mean conducting an internal investigation, if necessary, as the 'Investigating Officer' and acting as the Society's representative in any multi-agency action that is taken.

5.6 All allegations of abuse must be reported to Norfolk County Council within 24 hours of the allegation being made.

5.7 An internal investigation will be appropriate where the alleged perpetrator is a member of the Society's staff. An external investigation will be appropriate where the alleged perpetrator is not a member of staff.

5.8 Norfolk County Council has their own protocol and procedures for responding to abuse/alleged abuse.

5.9 Where Norfolk County Council is the lead agency in carrying out any investigation, the actions they will follow are set out in their local procedures and protocols.

6. Information sharing:

The potential for breaching confidentiality whilst at the same time implementing an effective Safeguarding policy is a difficult balance. The approach is to address confidentiality issues on a case-by-case basis following these general principles:

- Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis when it is in the best interests of the alleged victim. It may be shared with other agencies involved in the case such as the Police.
- Informed consent will be obtained prior to sharing the information.
- Where it is not possible to obtain informed consent or where consent is withheld, information may still be shared if a person may be harmed if the information is not shared.
- The need to protect the victim from the source of abuse shall always take precedence.

7. Support for the victim:

The Society will ensure that the alleged victim receives support which will normally be provided by an external party such as Social Services or Victim Support.

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