

Policy Title	Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure	No change
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Approved by Operations Committee	May 2020	May 2023
Date of Next Review	May 2023	May 2026

This Policy relates to safeguarding issues in respect of children and adults at risk.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Nehemiah’s mission statement is to build successful, sustainable, and diverse communities by providing housing and well-being services in a culturally sensitive way to our current and future customers.
- 1.2. We ensure this commitment is understood and embedded into our operational practices to help protect children, young people, adults, and volunteers from abuse/harm. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a key partner, given the crucial importance of multi-agency working, by working with our communities, stakeholders, and customers to prevent those at risk from being harmed.
- 1.3. Nehemiah expect all staff, those in direct support roles as well as housing staff and contractors to understand their individual and collective responsibilities. This requires us to:
 - Listen to, value, encourage and support those we work with
 - Provide clear internal procedures for identifying and dealing with concerns about possible abuse and ensure their implementation.
 - Provide effective management for staff through supervision, support, and training.
 - Include continuous risk assessment within our work with young people, families, and adults at risk.
 - Develop and maintain effective information sharing with statutory services, and other agencies, involve children, parents, and adults at risk as appropriate.
 - Work collaboratively with local safeguarding children and adults’ board.
 - Recruit safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.

2. Policy Purpose and Aims

- 2.1 This policy aims to deliver a customer focused approach that incorporates the ethos of our values, by listening to our customers both internal and external. Our approach is to be honest and open with customer relationships based on mutual trust, which ensures children, young people, adults, and volunteers live and work in a safe and secure environment.
- 2.2 As a Registered Provider, we are expected to have our own Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures.
- 2.3 Nehemiah's procedure aims to provide straightforward guidance for staff, managers, and contractors about what to do, how and when, if any concerns are identified about harm/abuse, including where a member of staff may be implicated.
- 2.4 This policy ensures we respond promptly and effectively when there are concerns of abuse/harm. Our focus is on the outcomes, the person at risk wants and not driven by the process.
- 2.5 The approach of this policy is based on and reflects the principals of both UK legislation and guidance. Nehemiah will abide by existing regulatory requirements and legislation.
- 2.6 We will work in line with the Charter for Social Housing Residents. Which sets out commitments residents should expect from their landlord:
 - To be safe in your home.
 - To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants.
 - To have your voice heard by your landlord.

This charter echoes many of the commitments housing associations are making in the Together with Tenants charter, particularly on tenant voice, relationships, accountability, quality, and complaints.

- 2.7 Nehemiah agrees to adapt the 6 principles which are critical to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring, while also ensuring the best possible level of care is given when working with tenants experiencing safeguarding issues. By following the key safeguarding principles, we will ensure we are doing the best we can to protect vulnerable people from harm.

The six principles of safeguarding are:

- **Empowerment:** People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention:** It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

- **Protection:** Including support and representation.
- **Partnership:** Multi agency approach.
- **Accountability** and transparency.

3. Our Policy

3.1 All children, young people, and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to protection from significant harm or abuse.

3.2 Children, young people, and adults have a right to information which could make life better and/or safer for them and we therefore will provide our service users with information about how and with whom they can share their concerns and complaints. We also, where possible, offer a choice in working together including signposting to other agencies.

4. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

4.1 It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that this policy is successfully implemented, and the procedures followed. The Housing Service Manager will act as the Safeguard Lead. Managers with staff responsibility, will be responsible for ensuring that all staff and contractors understands the importance of this policy and the related procedures and comply with them.

It is essential to the implementation of this policy that staff know how to deal with emergencies and to express concerns to the appropriate person in the organisation. During the Safeguard Lead's absence, Property Service Manager will lead with support from Operations Director and Senior Housing and Support Officers.

5. Definitions

5.1 Adult safeguarding – what it is and why it matters.

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their personal circumstances, (source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance#safeguarding-1>)

5.2 Children Safeguarding

- Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
Safeguarding means:
- 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
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

(Source: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection>)

5.3 Abuse has been defined as:

“the violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons” (No Secrets DH 2000)

5.4 Child abuse definition

Child abuse happens when a person harms a child. It can be physical, sexual, or emotional, but can also involve neglect. Children may be abused by: • family members • friends • people working or volunteering in organisational or community settings • people they know • strangers, (Source NCPCC : National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Self-neglect: A wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.
- Neglect, wilful neglect, and acts of omission - ignoring or withholding physical or medical care needs.
- Social media
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriages
- Modern day slavery
- Human trafficking
- Discriminatory abuse - values, beliefs, or culture result in a misuse of power that denies mainstream opportunities. It includes discrimination on the basis of race.

There are also many different indicators of abuse we should be aware of. Examples of possible Indicators of Physical Abuse are listed below. The list is not exhaustive, and people may experience number of abuse types/ indicators at the same time:

- Multiple bruising
- Fractures
- Burns
- Bed sores
- Fear
- Depression
- Unexplained weight loss
- Assault (can be intentional or reckless)

5.4 Definition of Children

Children are taken to be up to 16 years old and young people between 16-18 years old. Because of the nature of our work, it is possible that such young people may be either young tenants of our accommodation or the children of customers or service users.

Every Child Matters: In response to the death of Victoria Climbié, whose death was seen as a serious set of failings by many authorities who did not work together, Every Child Matters scheme was launched.

The main aim of this act is that every child has the support they need to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being. Nehemiah will ensure we follow the key aims of this act by working in partnerships with external agencies and local authorities across our services to help support our tenants and their children.

5.5 Work Experience

Nehemiah is aware of its responsibilities in relation to under 16s, who are offered periods of work experience. We ensure that the proper protocols are observed, and risk assessments are carried out. For example, individuals are in plain sight of their supervisor, site visits are supervised, and all staff are DBS checked on a 3 yearly cycle.

5.6 Definition of Adult

“Adult” is used to refer to anyone aged 18 or over and an “adult at risk” is one who is or may be in need of community care services because of the frailty, learning or physical or sensory disability or mental health issues and who is or may be unable to take care of his or herself or to take steps to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation.

6 Legislative and Policy Framework (Also see Appendix 1)

The publication in 2000 of national guidance, No Secrets, by the Department of Health and the Home Office raised the profile of abuse of vulnerable people. Since its publication, safeguarding services have developed, and public awareness and sensitivity has continued to grow. This has been against the background of other key developments including:

Adult Social Care most recent guidance (April 2013) The Care Act (2014)
Local Authorities, together with key partners (particularly in the NHS and the
Police), developing policies, procedures, commissioning frameworks and
contract monitoring arrangements to prevent abuse
Development of specialist teams and Safeguarding Adults
Boards Mental Capacity and Human Rights
Legislation

The emphasis has increasingly been placed on organisations working
effectively together to prevent people from being abused and empowerment to
ensure people remain at the heart of the process.

This policy has increasingly been developed with reference to the following
organisational policies and guidance:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Hate Crime and Harassment
- Equality and Diversity
- Whistleblowing
- Lone Working
- Disciplinary
- Recruitment and Selection
- Health and Safety
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Comments Compliments and Complaints
- Domestic Abuse
- Legislation listed in Appendix 1

7 Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, whether it is preventative action or
taking action to protect someone, we all have a part to play. Our safeguarding
procedure is attached in Appendix 1 of this document.

Frontline staff are often those who are placed in the best position to identify
safe-guarding concerns. Additionally, they are also in a position of trust. In
order to ensure safeguarding is in place appropriately, staff will be responsible
for:

- undertaking scheduled induction and updated training on
safeguarding
- understanding their function in carrying out child protection
procedures
- remaining aware of reporting requirements and who to contact if
there are safe-guarding concerns.
- remaining aware of how to identify signs of harm and documenting
concerns.
- taking timely action to report safeguarding concerns to their line
manager.

All managers are expected to take responsibility for any alerts that come to their attention in their service area. They must never ignore, underplay, or pass on responsibility to another member of staff or peer.

In order to carry out their DSL responsibilities, the DSL will undertake safeguarding training at least every two years which covers their requirements, responsibilities, and safeguarding processes. As well as maintaining their own training, the DSL will ensure each member of staff, understands the safeguarding processes, and receives appropriate training. Managers and Officers who line manage staff should ensure the Safeguarding Lead is made aware of any safeguarding issues.

8 Equality and Diversity

We will ensure that the ethnic, cultural, or religious needs of those at risk are understood and met when dealing with cases of safeguarding, domestic abuse, or neglect; but we will not accept ethnicity, culture, or religion as a reason for a perpetrator committing abuse.

9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

There are a number of arrangements in place to ensure incidences of abuse are effectively managed and that Nehemiah is fulfilling its corporate/strategic duties. It also ensures that key learning points/areas for improvement are identified and shared across the organisation, including near misses as well as actual incidents.

A review of all abuse cases across the organisation is undertaken, coordinated by all managers and the Safeguarding lead. Safeguarding cases are also discussed in supervision sessions with staff and will now be an agenda item at all team and departmental meetings, which includes the organisational Risk Management Meeting.

All serious incidents including any that involve staff are always reported to the Local Authority. The Corporate Services Manager is always notified of any incident (either alleged, suspected or actual) that involves a member of staff, and the Accident and Incident reporting process is followed.

We will monitor and report on the following to the Operations Committee and Executive Board at agreed frequency, including the production of an Annual Safeguarding Report:

- The number and type of Safeguarding referrals made to Local Authorities and the number and type accepted as Safeguarding by the Local Authority.
- The number of Safeguarding by types of abuse and outcomes from interventions and actions taken.
- Any Serious Case Reviews or Domestic Homicide Reviews we have

been involved in and the learning and improvements we have made as a result.

- Safeguarding concerns relating to our contractors or partners which involve our customers including outcomes.

10 Training

All relevant staff will receive mandatory training on using our policy and procedures and will also be made aware and receive training on the procedures of their local safeguarding boards. The level of training they receive will be considered in proportion to the role within the organisation, clients they work with and risk with which they are potentially dealing.

Everyone working on behalf of the organisation is expected to behave towards customers and staff in a way that demonstrates their commitment to this policy. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action or termination of contracts.

All staff training will be monitored via our HR training records.

All contractors, agencies and individuals working within our services will confirm they have carried out safeguarding awareness training with their staff and read and understand our safeguarding policy and procedure. Confirmation should be obtained by Contract Lead (Property Service Officers, Seniors, and Managers) and forwarded to HR. Our Safeguarding Procedure (Appendix 1) of this policy sets out the process to assist staff and contractors who need to raise a safeguarding concern.

11 Equality Impact Assessment

Nehemiah carries our Equality Impact Assessments to understand the impact that our policies may have on groups of people or individuals. These impacts may be positive or negative.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if legislation or good practice dictates.

Nehemiah's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Procedure

The Safeguarding Procedure should be used in conjunction with Nehemiah's Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy and Local Authorities Safeguarding processes. This procedure is to ensure staff understand the processes involved in safeguarding our tenants and their family.

Each Local Authority has a safeguarding body who are responsible for vulnerable adults and children, (see links in policy). The referral paperwork may vary depending on if you are referring a child or adult. Each Local Authority provides training on safeguarding which should ensure staff are familiar with their processes. All frontline staff supporting tenants and customers will receive regular training from Nehemiah Housing and should attending any safeguarding training organised by Local Authorities.

Safeguarding issues can happen any point in out tenants lives after any accident or bereavement. So, it is important we are alert to this. Tenants information should be regularly updated, especially when we are interacting with them at sign-ups, when reviewing their tenancy, (for example starter tenancies), arrears and ASB interviews, and estate inspections.

The following section outlines provides a brief outline of the safeguarding process:

- 1. What is a safeguarding concern.**
- 2. Who to seek further clarification from to confirm safeguarding concern.**
- 3. Who to report safeguarding concern at Nehemiah.**
- 4. Where and how to report and record safeguarding concern.**
- 5. How the organisation will monitor and review safeguarding.**

1. What is a safeguarding Concern?

A safeguarding concern is when you are worried about the safety or well-being of a child or adult because of something seen or heard, or information which has been given to you. There are many different types of safeguarding issues and types of abuse and these can range typically from physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological & emotional abuse, self-harm and suicidal tendencies, neglect and acts of omission, financial abuse, discriminatory abuse, peer on peer abuse, trafficking and sexual exploitation, bullying including cyber bullying, physical bullying, sexting, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, extremism and radicalisation and gang based crime, (See policy for further clarification).

All staff members have a key role to play in order to safeguard young people/children/adults and to help identify welfare concerns and possible

indicators of abuse or neglect at an early stage. For some young people/children/adults a "one off" serious incident or concern may occur, and you will have no doubt that this must be immediately recorded and reported. However, it is the gathering of a number of small incidents, events or observations that provide evidence of harm being caused to a young person or vulnerable adult.

Concerns arising in one or more of the following areas:

- Young people/children/adults' behaviour
- Young people/children/adults have a physical injury
- Young people/children/adults make a disclosure or allegation
- Young people/children/adults' physical presentation
- Information received from, or the behaviour of a parent/career.

What to record

- The incident, event or observation of concern describing as clearly and concisely
- When recording a disclosure, the tenant own words are recorded and any questions you may have asked to be included.
- Noting any physical marks and/or injuries on a body map where appropriate
- Straightforward language and for fact and opinion to be differentiated.
- Any action you have taken to be recorded
- The form dated, signed, and detailed legible.

2. Who to seek further clarification from to confirm safeguarding concern,

When you have concerns about a possible safeguarding incident you should refer to our policy and discuss with you line manager immediately.

If you believe that there is an immediate risk to our tenant or a member of their family i.e., child/children, you should report concern immediately to the safeguarding board (Local Authority – Safeguarding department).

If you believe the safeguarding is a risk or danger to life you should always call 999 immediately.

3. Who to report safeguarding concern at Nehemiah

If safeguarding concerns raised relate to a contractor this should be immediately reported to your line manager. You should also report concerns to the contract

manager i.e., repairs contractors would be Property Service Manager, the Safeguarding Lead and Corporate Service Manager.

4. Where and how to report and record safeguarding concern

All staff must report any safeguarding concerns, suspicions, or disclosures as soon as the issue is raised. If a tenant wants to disclose any concerns staff should ensure they are made aware how information will be logged and shared both internally, (housing management system ...Safeguard Lead etc...) and externally (social services, safeguarding board etc...). Documenting the concern is important because verbal communications may be misunderstood or forgotten. All information logged should be factual.

You should ensure you keep regular contact with referral agencies. For example, once you report to MARF contacts worker for updates.

You should inform your line manager (via telephone call and email) of any safeguarding concerns and also report it to your local Safeguarding Board. The concern should also be logged on Sassha and updated as and when you receive any further information relating to concern raised. When the safeguarding concern has been addressed staff should close case on Sassha and inform their line manager.

5. How the organisation will monitor and review safeguarding

- All cases reported and logged on Sassha (Housing Management System) will be reviewed in your 1-2-1 monthly. Quarterly audits are carried out on cases place on housing management system
- Quarterly figures and outcomes will be shared with board and operations committee.
- Key case will be used to share good practice and learn at team meetings.
- Cases are regularly evaluated, and action agreed at review meetings.

If staff require any further information, they should discuss initially with their line manager followed by the Safeguarding Lead.