

Safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children policy**Approved by: Housing, Assets and Customer Services Panel****Date of approval: 31 July 2017****Review date: 31 July 2020****Version: 2****1. Statement of intent**

- 1.1 We are committed to ensuring the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children in all areas of our operation. We operate a policy of zero tolerance of abuse, neglect and exploitation and are committed to preventing and reducing the risk of harm to vulnerable adults and children and to keeping them safe, whilst supporting individuals in maintaining control of their lives.
- 1.2 It is every person's human right to live a life free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Through implementation of this policy, we will recognise the needs of each individual. Everyone has an equal right to support and protection, irrespective of their individual differences or circumstances. This policy and associated procedures apply equally to all adults and children at risk and all recognised forms of abuse. We will not discriminate on the grounds of any protected characteristic. Due regard will be given to individual differences including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

2. This policy applies to...

- 2.1 All the staff employed by Radian directly, Board members and those working with us and for us, for example agency staff members, volunteers and apprentices, have a responsibility to work within this policy and associated procedures. Failure to do so would result in disciplinary action.

3. Policy

- 3.1 Safeguarding is about protecting vulnerable adults or children's right to live safely, free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This policy outlines our commitment to do everything reasonable to identify and report abuse, or the risk of abuse, with no delay, in order to protect the people who receive our services and their children.
- 3.2 Statutory duties and power rests with Social Services and we must cooperate with them in the discharge of their duties and powers. We must ensure that we have the mechanisms in place to enable early identification and assessment of risk through timely information sharing and targeted multi-agency support.

- 3.3 Where ever possible we will work to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation from happening by raising awareness and understanding and making early, positive interventions with individuals and families and so preventing the deterioration of a situation. It is about working together, including with other agencies, to support people to make decisions about the risks they face in their lives and protecting those who lack mental capacity to make those decisions.
- 3.4 We will support residents and their children to safeguard themselves from abuse and neglect and, where appropriate, will keep their interests at the centre of any safeguarding activity.
- 3.5 This will be in line with recruitment checks, data protection policies and procedures, whistle blowing policies and Local Authority multi-agency agreements, risk management frameworks and information sharing protocols and confidentiality agreements to ensure we avoid and respond to actual or suspected abuse and acts of neglect or omission. We will take appropriate steps to ensure our services are provided in a way that complies with both the law and published best practice.
- 3.6 We fully recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, which means:
- Commitment at the governance and strategic level;
 - A strong culture that we will **see something and say something**;
 - Have operational arrangements in place to cover relevant guidance and best practice;
 - Each and every one of us understanding our individual contribution and responsibilities for achieving the best outcome for our customers and their families.
- 3.7 Through a variety of mechanisms we will raise awareness of abuse and neglect and safeguarding with our customers (and also their family and advocates, where appropriate) and our communities. We are committed to involving residents in designing and providing information about safeguarding in terms of understanding what abuse is and how to report this. Information will be provided in a range of formats to meet the communication needs of individuals and which recognises their unique perspectives.
- 3.8 We will ensure members of staff have the confidence to deal with concerns, to speak up and, where necessary "blow the whistle". We recognise that findings from Serious Case Reviews have sometimes stated that if professionals or other staff had acted upon their concerns, or sought more information, death or serious harm might have been prevented. Everyone has a responsibility to prevent, recognise and act on abuse and neglect. We will promote an organisational culture of openness so that staff, volunteers and residents and their advocates can raise their concerns.
- 3.9 We will make sure that all staff and volunteers understand their role in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children and are competent in recognising and acting on abuse and neglect. They will receive adequate awareness training on how to identify and report suspected cases and will be able to access advice from members of staff who are safeguarding leads and regular face to face supervision from managers. The level of awareness and training will be relevant to different roles and levels of responsibility.

- 3.10 We are committed to multi agency working with all stakeholders and to ensuring that we cooperate with Local Authorities, including effective links with Safeguarding Leads, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), Safeguarding Adult Boards (SABs) and Safeguarding Children Boards (SCBs).
- 3.11 We aim to recruit high quality staff, board members and volunteers following our recruitment and selection procedure. All staff that provide support to, or work directly with, vulnerable adults and children will be subject to a valid enhanced disclosure undertaken through the Disclosure and Barring Service. This will include a check against the Adults' Barred list.
- 3.12 All managing agents and partners of our supported housing schemes must have and follow their own adult and children safeguarding policy and procedure. Verification that these are in place is included in the monitoring visits undertaken by our Partnership and Agents team. This is not a substitute for the commissioners need to assure themselves of the safety and effectiveness of the commissioned services, or the regulators ensuring that regulated providers comply with the expected standards of care and taking enforcement action where necessary.

Adult safeguarding

- 3.13 Our policy and procedure is underpinned by the six principles of adult safeguarding, as enshrined in the Care Act and its statutory guidance, as follows:
- **Empowerment** – adults should be supported to retain control of their own lives, with their wishes, feelings, values and beliefs fully considered. The professional's role is to support the person to make informed decisions throughout the process and to engage and participate in the management of the risks they are experiencing. This means we focus on involving the person from the very beginning, asking the person what they want to happen, helping the person make informed choices to achieve the outcomes they want and ensuring the person's voice is heard. Taking action without consent should only be done if there is a clear justification to act contrary to the person's wishes e.g. if the person lacks capacity, if they and/or others are in danger, if a serious crime has been committed.
 - **Protection** – the safeguarding framework should support people to safeguard themselves from abuse, or be protected if they are unable to make their own decisions about their safety.
 - **Prevention** – is the primary goal and includes increasing understanding, promoting awareness and supporting people to safeguard themselves. Arrangements should be in place to minimise the risk of abuse.
 - **Proportionality** – responses to concerns must be proportionate to the assessed risk and the nature of the concern. Responses must reflect the five key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in which an adult is assumed to have capacity and, therefore, be able to make their own decisions (even unwise ones). Where a person is assessed and found to lack mental capacity, in any area of decision making, any decisions made on their behalf must be made in their "best interest" and take into account their views and wishes in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice and be least restrictive to their rights and freedoms, as possible.
 - **Partnership** – working collaboratively to prevent and respond effectively to concerns of abuse. This includes with the person, other partners, relatives, friends, informal carers and advocates to achieve positive outcomes.

- **Accountability** – decisions made should be transparent, recorded and defensible. We must understand what is expected of us, fulfil our responsibilities and work collaboratively with others.

Safeguarding children

3.14 Effective child safeguarding arrangements should be underpinned by two key principles:

- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.** For services to be effective each organisation and each member of staff should play their full part. No one person can have a full picture of a child's circumstances and needs and everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- **A child-centred approach.** The child's needs are of the greatest importance, and the needs and wishes of each child should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before the problem escalates.

4. Legal & Regulatory Framework

- Homes and Communities Agency Regulatory Standards
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Mental Health Act 2007
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Code of Practice
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding/Adult Safeguarding (Local Authorities own policies and procedures)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015

5. Related Policies

- Anti-social behaviour and harassment policy
- Code of conduct
- Data protection policy
- Disciplinary capability and sickness absence policy
- Domestic abuse policy
- Equality diversity and inclusion policy
- Complaints and comments policy
- Safety health and wellbeing policy
- Recruitment and selection policy

6. Related Procedures

This policy does not detail the practical advice and assistance that should be provided, nor the actions to be taken by staff and volunteers, when dealing with the issues of safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. Any such advice, action and assistance will be covered in specific procedures, which should be used in conjunction with this policy.

- Safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children procedure
- Antisocial behaviour and harassment procedure
- Authority to discuss procedure
- Data security procedure
- Disciplinary procedure
- Domestic abuse procedure
- Capability procedure
- Fraud, theft, bribery or corruption reporting procedure
- Investigation guidance
- Mental capacity and assessment procedure
- Money laundering reporting procedure
- Employment checks procedure
- Professional boundaries procedure
- Recruitment and selection including probation procedure
- Complaints and compliments procedure
- Whistleblowing reporting procedure

7. Appendices

None

8. Associated Documents

None

9. Definitions

9.1 We follow Plain English guidelines. The complicated terms of this policy are explained here:

Term	Definition
Vulnerable adult	<p>Refers to people aged 18 years and over. Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); • is experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect; and • as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse and neglect <p><i>Safeguarding – care and support statutory guidance</i></p>
Adult safeguarding	<p>Protecting an adult's right to live safely, 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 the adults wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding upon any action. It is an important part of what many public services do and a key responsibility. Local services must work together to identify those at risk and take steps to protect them.</p> <p><i>Safeguarding – care and support statutory guidance</i></p>

Child/children	A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18 th birthday. 'Children' therefore means children and young people (including unborn children) throughout this policy. <i>Working together to safeguard children 2015</i>
Safeguarding children	Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the purpose of this policy, is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect children from maltreatment; • prevent impairment of children's health or development; • ensure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and • take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. <i>Working together to safeguard children, March 2015</i>
Abuse	The violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can take many forms including (for example): physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, financial/material, discriminatory, neglect and acts of omission and organisational abuse. It may also involve the exploitation of susceptible people in order to draw them into violent extremism (the 'Prevent' strategy), self-neglect, modern slavery and domestic abuse (which includes: honour based violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation). It is behaviour that either deliberately or unknowingly causes harm or endangers life or infringes on rights. It may be a single or repeated act. It may be deliberate neglect or lack of appropriate action. It can also be where someone is persuaded to do something to which s/he has not consented or cannot consent.