SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Business Information provided by Gloucester City Homes

DOCUMENTATION MASTER SHEET

Amendments to this Document are Detailed Below.

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
01	14/02/2019	New Policy	Reviewed by TP 21/02/19 approved subject to requested amendments	LA	Tenant Panel
02	09/04/2019	Amendments following TP and development of procedures	09/05/19	LA	Tenant Panel
03	18/12/19	Update following best practice review, legal review by Capsticks solicitors llp and change to County Council procedures	09/01/20	LA	Tenant Panel
04	"	"	23/01/20	LA	Audit and Risk committee
05	Feb 2021	Update to DSL – Change to Named Officer	Feb 2021	NT	AP
06	Oct 2021	Update DBS criteria	Oct 2021	NT	AP
07	Feb 2024	Update to DSL – change to named officer	Feb 2024	NB	NT

08	April 2025	Update to DSL – change to named officer	April 2025	NB	NT
09					

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

OVERALL AIM/INTRODUCTION

GCH acknowledges that all children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation, that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is everybody's responsibility, that doing nothing is not acceptable and working in partnership with relevant agencies, in conjunction with local safeguarding procedures, has demonstrable results.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all children and vulnerable adults in GCH accommodation and support services, applicants and visitors to our services. It supports the safeguarding processes of local authorities in whose areas we work and ensures that we have clear and effective joint working arrangements and defined areas of responsibility with all relevant agencies and partners.

The policy and its accompanying procedure and guidelines outline the responsibilities of GCH's Board, staff and volunteers in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults using our services and how we work together

The policy recognises that the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults who live in our homes is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers, working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting their welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect.

This Policy over-arches both Adult and Child abuse, and GCH recognises that abuse affects people of all ages.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY EXPECTATIONS

GCH comply with relevant legislation and regulation, including –

- Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) regulations
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding vulnerable groups Act 2006
- Guidelines in "No Secrets" publication
- Care Act 2014
- Children's Act 2004
- Gloucestershire 'Working Together' guidelines 2008

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- GCH Adult Safeguarding Procedure
- GCH Children Safeguarding Procedure
- Anti-Slavery Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Equalities and Diversity Policy
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Professional Boundaries Guidance
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Data Protection and the Disclosure of Information
- Recruitment Policy and Procedure
- Criminal Record Bureau Employees Checks

SERVICE STANDARDS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all staff to support the organisation's commitment to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and attend training as required. It is the responsibility of GCH's Board, Executive, Strategic Leadership Team and all managers to ensure compliance and the effectiveness of the procedure accompanying this policy.

GCH's Safeguarding Lead is responsible for maintaining, updating and delivering appropriate procedures to deliver policy objectives, and that these are available and understood by all teams.

GCH's Safeguarding Lead is – Andy Wood, Supported Housing Services Manager

It is the responsibility of managers and all front-line staff to ensure that they understand the importance of this policy and related procedures and receive training at induction and in their on-going training plan.

Failure to report suspected harm or abuse in line with the procedure that accompanies this Policy may be regarded as colluding with the harm or abuse and be in breach of conditions.

All staff working with children or vulnerable adults are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and its associated procedures.

DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding is the right of every child and vulnerable individual accessing our services to be protected from any form of abuse. Abuse occurs when the child's or vulnerable adult's rights are not respected.

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes them harm, endangers life or violates their rights. It includes not only physical, emotional and psychological ill treatment but also neglect (including self-neglect), financial or sexual abuse, and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It concerns the misuse of power, control and/or authority and can be perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation.

- A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- An adult is anyone aged 18 or above.

A vulnerable adult is someone of 18 years or over 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness' and 'who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself
or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation' *No Secrets' Guidance 2000.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions. It makes it clear who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this.

The definition of abuse includes Domestic Abuse and forced marriage. Domestic Violence is 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are, or have been intimate partners or between family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Some incidents of abuse could also be relevant to any domestic violence policy and procedures, and we will be clear how we propose to manage any such incident.

Forced marriage is one in which one or both of the spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved, including the use of physical and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is not sanctioned within any culture or religion.

SERVICE STANDARDS

The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is the paramount consideration.

We will not tolerate abuse in any circumstances. Doing nothing is not an option.

All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious beliefs and sexual identity have a right to protection from abuse.

Adults have the right to be in control of their life, make decisions, be treated with respect and consideration and have their confidentiality respected.

All children and vulnerable adults have a right to intervention, support and/or information which could make life better and/or safer for them and be involved in decisions that are made about them.

We will promote the empowerment, wellbeing, security and safety of children and adults at risk of abuse consistent with their rights, mental capacity and personal choices.

We aim to minimise the risk of abuse by being sensitive to cultural, gender and individual needs in our service delivery.

We will maintain a culture and standards that prevent the development of poor care and support practices

GCH recognises that inter-agency cooperation is essential if children and vulnerable adults are to be protected effectively from abuse. We will work closely in partnership with key agencies and professionals, sharing information and developing appropriate strategies to respond to the needs of our tenants and clients.

All staff will be aware of, and comply with, local guidelines in relation to reporting concerns about children or vulnerable adults at risk. Where no such local procedures exist externally, we will provide our own.

We will report every instance of disclosed or suspected abuse to the appropriate social services contact in line with each Local Authority safeguarding procedures alerting the police or other emergency services as required. Where appropriate, we will report concerns to the Disclosure Barring Service or the Care Quality Commission.

GCH actively encourages and supports reporting of concerns and will protect staff disclosing malpractice from the risk of victimisation provided the disclosure is made in good faith.

GCH will review new legislation as it arises and continually review our procedures in line with good practice.

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

GCH deliver the principles of this policy through the application of procedures which clearly distinguish between the safeguarding requirements for vulnerable adults and for children.

Our procedures recognise that we have responsibilities as an employer of staff who work with children and with vulnerable adults. They also recognise that any staff may identify potential abuse in their daily work.

GCH's recruitment and selection procedure requires references, proof of identity, and for our front-line services basic or enhanced disclosure and 2 yearly re-checks for every staff member who works with vulnerable adults and children. Our employment policies prevent barred persons from being employed in any position that involves working with vulnerable adults or children.

All staff will work within the procedures that accompany this policy and all GCH staff will receive training on this policy at induction, front line staff will receive annual Safeguarding training and also in their on-going personal development training.

The procedures that deliver this policy complement local authority safeguarding procedures and will ensure that all staff engaged in delivering our services:

- Are alert to the possibility of abuse of a vulnerable adult or child in our services.
- Are alert to abuse of a tenant, client or applicant to any GCH service know how to recognise abuse
- Understand the need to share information about concerns with agencies that need to know
- Understand professional boundaries
- Identify risks associated with lone working by staff they manage
- Know and use local authority guidelines (or GCH guidelines in their absence)
- Know how and where to report concerns
- Are aware of good practice

Serious incident reporting procedures ensure that the Board is made aware of serious allegations involving members of GCH's staff.

The application of this policy recognises the key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 which sets out the right for everyone covered by the Act to make decisions and for any decision made on their behalf to be in their best interests.
Staff will always act in accordance with the principles of that Act when they believe that someone is being abused and in determining how to report that abuse.

GCH will provide customers of services for vulnerable adults with information about how and with whom they can share any concerns, complaints and anxieties.

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We will inform customers of our services for vulnerable adults and children of our policy and procedures on vulnerable adults and children through the sign up procedure, meetings with housing officers and in our service handbooks.

Safeguarding is a standard agenda item for service delivery team meetings and operational management team meetings.

Our procedures ensure that staff know the arrangements and contact details for reporting concerns to local authority safeguarding teams.

We will work with relevant agencies, on individual cases and reviewing best practice and new legislation so that we develop appropriate strategies for responding to the needs of our tenants and clients

REVIEW

This policy will normally be reviewed triennially to ensure that it reminds fit for purpose, unless an earlier review is required due to regulatory, statutory or other requirements.