
Safeguarding Policy and Procedure (Inclusive of Domestic Abuse)

Document History

Version	Date	Change	By
2.0	2 Jul 2018	New to replace existing	M Margrie
2.1	15 Jul 2019	Added reference to DASH	M Margrie

Approvals

Version	Date	Approved By (Note minute number if applicable)	Equality & Diversity Impact Analysis Completed By
2.0	16 Aut 2018	Board minute 18113	
2.1	15 Jul 2019	M Magrie, CEO	

Review Cycle	Every three-years or as required.	Next Review Date	August 2021
---------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------------	-------------

Table of Contents

Safeguarding Policy & Procedure.....	1
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Definitions	1
3 Responsibilities	2
4 Signs and Indicators of Abuse or Neglect	3
5 Victims of Domestic Abuse	4
6 Safeguarding Procedures.....	5
7 Supporting Victims of Domestic Abuse	6
8 Actions Against Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse	7
9 Confidentiality and Information Sharing	8

Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cirencester Housing (CH) aims to take all reasonable measures to provide safe and secure homes, promoting the welfare of tenants and members of their household, licensees and leaseholders, herein after referred to as 'residents'.
- 1.2 CH is committed to:
 - 1.2.1 Ensuring that the welfare of residents is always paramount
 - 1.2.2 Maximising people's choice, control and inclusion and protecting human rights
 - 1.2.3 Working in partnership with others to safeguard children and vulnerable adults
 - 1.2.4 Ensuring safe and effective working practices are in place
 - 1.2.5 Supporting staff within the organisation
- 1.3 This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of CH in working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting residents' welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all employees, staff, permanent, secondary and contractors as well as all people who work on behalf of CH, hereafter referred to as 'staff'.
- 1.5 Throughout the safeguarding process, the individual person must feel safe and their needs must be considered throughout. This policy is about protecting and prevention of abuse.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Child / Children:** the duty to safeguard applies to children under the age of 18.
- 2.2 **Child Safeguarding:** violence and abuse committed against an under 16 is a child safeguarding issue. Violence and abuse perpetrated by an under 16 is a domestic violence and abuse issue.
- 2.3 **Vulnerable adult:** also known as an adult at risk, is any person aged 18 years or older who is in need of care and support because of mental, or other disability, age or illness, regardless of whether they are receiving the support, and because of those needs are unable to protect themselves against abuse, serious exploitation or neglect.
- 2.4 **Care and support:** the mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers. It includes the assessment of people's needs, provision of services and the allocation of funds to enable a person to purchase their own care and support. It could include care home, home care, personal assistants, day services, or the provision of aids and adaptations.
- 2.5 **Abuse:** A range of behaviours that may cause harm and/or constitute abuse. Forms of abuse are discussed in section 4.
- 2.6 **Domestic abuse:** Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
- 2.7 **Coercive behaviour** is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim." Domestic violence and abuse are rarely one-off events and are often used systematically to gain power and control over the victim, with the violence and abuse increasing in frequency and severity over time.

- 2.8 **Controlling behaviour** is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Cirencester Housing will:

- 3.1.1 Act to identify and prevent abuse from happening.
- 3.1.2 Have a zero-tolerance approach to domestic violence and abuse. We will treat all reports we receive with the utmost sensitivity and will take a victim-centred approach to cases, with the aim of reducing risks posed to the victim and any affected household members.
- 3.1.3 Respond appropriately when abuse has or is suspected to have occurred.
- 3.1.4 Provide support, advice and resources to staff in responding to safeguarding and domestic abuse issues.
- 3.1.5 Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities to attend training and to support staff in accessing these events.
- 3.1.6 Ensuring that the organisation has a dedicated staff member to whom concerns must be reported (“the Appointed Person”).
- 3.1.7 In so far as is necessary and practicable, conduct current DBS checks on any staff and volunteers directly responsible for the care and support of vulnerable adults. (Refer to the definition of care and support in Section 2).
- 3.1.8 Ensure that other organisations that manage property on behalf of CH are aware of and have and implement safeguarding policies and procedures consistent with this policy.
- 3.1.9 Support taking action against perpetrators of abuse using legal remedies where appropriate.
- 3.1.10 Ensure we work closely with partner agencies and contribute to local initiatives to raise awareness of safeguarding and domestic abuse.

3.2 The Appointed Person is the Housing Officer. The Appointed Person will:

- 3.2.1 inform the Chief Executive of reports of suspected or actual abuse, keeping him/her apprised of CH’s compliance with this policy.
- 3.2.2 Discuss cases and work together with the Operations Manager to deliver the aims and requirements of this policy.

3.3 Staff and volunteers will:

- 3.3.1 Follow the safeguarding policies and procedures, particularly if concerns arise about:
 - 3.3.1.1 safety and welfare of a child or vulnerable adult
 - 3.3.1.2 reports of domestic abuse by a victim
 - 3.3.1.3 reports of suspected abuse or domestic abuse received from others
- 3.3.2 Participate in safeguarding training and maintain current working knowledge as appropriate to their role.
- 3.3.3 Become familiar with the No Secrets Guidance 2000
www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-secrets-guidance-on-protecting-vulnerable-adults-in-care
- 3.3.4 Communicate concerns about the welfare of children or vulnerable adults appropriately

- 3.3.5 Contribute to actions required including information sharing and attending meetings.
- 3.3.6 Work collaboratively with other agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of tenants and residents.
- 3.3.7 Remain alert to the possibility of abuse.
- 3.3.8 Recognise the impact that diversity, beliefs and values of tenants can have.

4 Signs and Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

4.1 Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator. Abuse may be inflicted by anyone who encounters the tenant or resident. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected, these include but not limited to: -

- 4.1.1 Unexplained bruises or injuries
- 4.1.2 Lack of medical attention where necessary
- 4.1.3 Persons belongings or money going missing
- 4.1.4 Deterioration of appearance
- 4.1.5 Self harm
- 4.1.6 Becoming withdrawn

4.2 Types of abuse and neglect are set out in the Care Act 2015

Domestic Violence	including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence
Sexual abuse	including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting
Psychological abuse	including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks
Financial or material abuse	including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
Modern slavery	encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
Discriminatory abuse	including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion
Organisational abuse	including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional

	practice because of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
Neglect and acts of omission	including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
Self-neglect	this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

4.3 Female genital mutilation

4.3.1 Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision, involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for nonmedical reasons. The practice is extremely painful and has serious health consequences both at the time of mutilation and in later life.

4.3.2 It is an offence to:

- 4.3.2.1 Perform female genital mutilation.
- 4.3.2.2 Assist a female to carry out female genital mutilation on herself.
- 4.3.2.3 Assist anyone (whether a UK national or not) to carry out female genital mutilation on a UK national anywhere in the world.
- 4.3.2.4 Fail to protect a girl aged 16 or under from female genital mutilation.

4.3.3 Where female genital mutilation is reported to us, we will respond to the report in accordance with this policy. We will cooperate with relevant agencies and refer victims to appropriate sources of support.

4.4 Forced Marriage

4.4.1 A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or cannot, in cases of individuals with learning disabilities) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used.

4.4.2 The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking a victim's wages or not giving them any money) can also be a factor.

4.4.3 Where forced marriage concerns are reported to us, we will respond to the report in accordance with this policy. We will cooperate with relevant agencies and refer victims to appropriate sources of support.

5 Victims of Domestic Abuse

5.1 Any person can experience domestic violence and abuse, regardless of age, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion or other characteristics. Domestic violence and abuse does occur in intimate partner relationships, but also includes violence between family and household members.

5.2 Victims of domestic violence and abuse may be isolated, ashamed and disempowered and may need extensive support.

5.3 Domestic violence and abuse also includes incidents of 'honour'-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

- 5.4 Domestic violence and abuse may be a manifestation of hate behaviour directed at the victim due to certain personal characteristics.

6 Safeguarding Procedures

6.1 DO

- 6.1.1 Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times as if you believe what the complainant are saying.
- 6.1.2 Do tell the complainant they are right to tell you.
- 6.1.3 Do reassure them that they are not to blame.
- 6.1.4 Do be honest about your own position, who you must tell and why.
- 6.1.5 Do tell the complainant what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- 6.1.6 Do take further action – you may be the only person able to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.
- 6.1.7 Do keep a record of what was said and what was done.
- 6.1.8 Do seek medical attention if necessary.
- 6.1.9 Do inform parents/carers unless there is suspicion of their involvement.

6.2 DON'T

- 6.2.1 Don't make promises you can't keep.
- 6.2.2 Don't interrogate the complainant – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this.
- 6.2.3 Don't cast doubt on what the complainant has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- 6.2.4 Don't say anything that makes the complainant feel responsible for the abuse.
- 6.2.5 Don't Do Nothing – make sure you tell the Appointed Person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

6.3 Staff must report their concerns to the Appointed Person if the staff member suspects a child or vulnerable person is being abused or at risk of abuse.

- 6.3.1 If at any time they suspect the complainant is in immediate danger, at risk of harm or in need of medical attention they call 999 immediately.
- 6.3.2 As long as it does not increase their risk of harm, explain to them that it is your duty to share your concern with the Appointed Person.
- 6.3.3 A written report and/or case note words is to be prepared as soon as possible.
 - 6.3.3.1 Record what the resident has said using the resident's own words.
 - 6.3.3.2 Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
 - 6.3.3.3 Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate.
 - 6.3.3.4 Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times, the information must only be shared with the Appointed Person and others on a need to know basis.

6.4 Where there are allegations of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, a safeguarding concern form supplied by the local Safeguarding Board or Social Care Team must be completed and sent to the relevant Social Care Team:

- 6.4.1 <https://childrenh.gloucestershire.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/ehassess>.
- 6.4.2 The consent of the individual should be requested where they have capacity to give the same.

6.5 Alleged abuser and victim who are co-residents or co-tenants

- 6.5.1 It is important that consideration be given to a co-ordinated approach, where it is identified that both the alleged abuser and alleged victim are residents of the same household or co-tenants.
- 6.5.2 Meetings with both parties in attendance are not considered appropriate.
- 6.6 Allegation of abuse against a staff member
 - 6.6.1 CH will ensure that any allegations made against a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly following CH's Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.
 - 6.6.2 Where a member of staff is thought to have committed an offence, the Police will be informed.
 - 6.6.3 A risk assessment will be undertaken and this will include whether it is safe for the member of staff to continue in their role whilst an investigation is undertaken.
 - 6.6.4 Employees should be aware that abuse is a serious matter that can lead to a loss of employment and criminal conviction.

7 Supporting Victims of Domestic Abuse

- 7.1 If a victim reports domestic violence or abuse in person they will be seen immediately by a member of staff. If they make a disclosure by other means, they will be offered a meeting within one working day, or at a later time that is convenient for them.
- 7.2 Where cases of Domestic abuse are suspected or reported, CH will work sensitively with the victim, and with consent, refer them to Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service for specialist support. CH should complete a Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence (DASH) Risk Assessment and submit to Gloucestershire County Council via the email address found at the bottom of the form. The DASH form can be downloaded from:
<https://www.gscb.org.uk/i-work-with-children-young-people-and-parents/issues-affecting-children-and-young-people/domestic-abuse/>
- 7.3 Incidents of domestic violence or abuse will be investigated in accordance with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.
- 7.4 We will respond to disclosures of domestic violence and abuse by:
 - 7.4.1 Treating all complaints of domestic violence and abuse seriously
 - 7.4.2 Taking a victim-centred approach to reports of domestic violence and abuse
 - 7.4.3 Giving priority to the safety of victims and their household
 - 7.4.4 Ensuring confidentiality in so far as is practicable and appropriate
 - 7.4.5 Working with specialist agencies to manage the victim's safety
 - 7.4.6 Taking or supporting legal action against perpetrators where appropriate
- 7.5 Victims will be referred with their consent to other agencies that provide support, including:
 - 7.5.1 Police
 - 7.5.2 Domestic violence support agencies
 - 7.5.3 Victim Support
 - 7.5.4 National domestic violence helplines
 - 7.5.5 Legal advice (normally accessed via a support agency)
 - 7.5.6 Referral to a 'sanctuary' scheme
- 7.6 Victims will be supported as necessary in accessing any of the above services.
- 7.7 At CH's discretion, further action to assist victims may be taken, such as:

- 7.7.1 Repairing damage to the property (if an CH resident); repairs may be rechargeable
- 7.7.2 Assisting with implementation of extra security at the property
- 7.8 CH recognises that housing is normally a key issue in domestic violence and abuse cases. We understand that many victims may not wish to move in order to maintain local and family connections or avoid disruption to their children and their schooling. We aim to work with the victim to take action to manage the risks posed to them in remaining at home and where possible we will support the rights of the victim to ensure that they are not deprived of accommodation.
- 7.9 In cases where the victim is a household member but not a tenant or licensee, they will be advised to approach a local authority for rehousing assistance. We may in exceptional circumstances consider granting a tenancy or licence to the victim when they are not a tenant or licensee. Such a grant will be considered on a case-by-case basis after consultation with relevant agencies and will only be made in agreement with the Chief Executive.
- 7.10 CH will assist the victim to move to another CH property if available and where we believe that this would help in decreasing the risk presented to them. We will seek the advice of outside agencies in making assessments of risk for rehousing purposes, such as Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), support agencies and the Police. We will not consider a transfer if it would not reduce the risk presented. If we offer a transfer on domestic abuse grounds, we will make only one reasonable offer of alternative appropriate accommodation, in accordance with the victim's housing needs.
- 7.11 Where there is an immediate or elevated risk to the victim and alternative housing is required, CH will advise and support the victim to approach a local authority for assistance as a homeless person.
- 7.12 Where the victim and perpetrator have a joint tenancy we cannot intervene to decide which party should occupy the property. We will refer the victim to obtain independent legal advice on their options, which include:
 - 7.12.1 Seeking an occupation order
 - 7.12.2 A court order to transfer the tenancy to their sole name
 - 7.12.3 The victim serving Notice to Quit to end a periodic or 'lifetime' tenancy
- 7.13 Where a Notice to Quit is served by the victim to end their joint tenancy and the perpetrator fails to vacate, we will take possession proceedings to remove the perpetrator.
- 7.14 Where the victim serves Notice to Quit to end their joint tenancy, we may consider granting a sole tenancy to them; this may be for an alternative property, or the same property where it is considered safe to do so. Any decision will be based on the risk posed to the victim and the suitability of the property for their housing needs. The victim, before serving the Notice to Quit, should request from us a determination as to our intentions to avoid losing their tenancy.

8 Actions Against Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

- 8.1 CH may support victims to take legal action against perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse and help them access advice about their options.
- 8.2 Where the perpetrator is a CH resident or household member, we may initiate legal action against them in accordance with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- 8.3 Where the perpetrator is not a resident or a household member, we will refer the victim to access appropriate support to increase their safety and seek advice on taking legal action.
- 8.4 Any action taken will be pursued in consultation with the victim as far as is reasonable.

- 8.5 The overriding consideration of any intervention taken by CH is to reduce the risk to the victim. Legal action will not be pursued where this is likely to increase the risk to the victim.
- 8.6 Civil remedies available to CH include:
 - 8.6.1 Possession proceedings
 - 8.6.2 Injunctions
- 8.7 CH will also assist victims to access support from specialist support agencies which can advise them on specialist legal remedies, including:
 - 8.7.1 Non-molestation orders
 - 8.7.2 Occupation orders
 - 8.7.3 Restraining orders

9 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 9.1 No Secrets' (Department of Health 2000) states that the government expects organisations to share information about individuals who may be at risk from abuse. This is also stressed by Safeguarding Adults (ADSS 2005) the framework for good practice.
- 9.2 It is important to identify an abusive situation as early as possible so that the individual can be protected.
- 9.3 Withholding information may lead to abuse not being dealt with in a timely manner. Confidentiality must never be confused with secrecy.
- 9.4 Staff have a duty to share information relating to suspected abuse with Social Care and the Police.
- 9.5 Consent is not required to breach confidentiality (capacity issues must be considered) and making a safeguarding referral where:
 - 9.5.1 A serious crime has been committed
 - 9.5.2 Where the alleged perpetrator may go on to abuse others
 - 9.5.3 Other vulnerable adults or children are at risk in some way
 - 9.5.4 The vulnerable adult is deemed to be at serious risk
 - 9.5.5 There is a statutory requirements e.g. Mental Capacity Act, Care Act, Children's Act,
 - 9.5.6 Public Interest overrides the interest of the individual
 - 9.5.7 When a member of staff of a voluntary service or a volunteer is the person accused of abuse, malpractice or poor professional standards.
 - 9.5.8 If a member of staff is in any doubt about the legality of information sharing, they must in the first instance consult the Appointed Person.
 - 9.5.9 Staff can also get information from the Elder Abuse Helpline on 0808 808 8141 or visit their website www.elderabuse.org.uk.
 - 9.5.10 The Gloucestershire Multi Agency Referral is available here: https://www.gscb.org.uk/media/1254/gloucestershire_mash_information_leaflet-60709.pdf