

Adult Safeguarding Policy

Department	Governance
Policy Owner	Designated Safeguarding Officer
Approved Date	7 November 2024
Date for Renewal	November 2027
Version Number	1.1
Equality Impact Assessment Date	28 October 2024

Purpose

This policy sets out Flagship's approach to safeguarding adults. At Flagship we believe every person has a right to live safely, free from harm, abuse and neglect.

We recognise our position in working with adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, the importance of having mechanisms in place to minimise this and take appropriate steps when concerns arise.

We recognise safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and anyone in our organisation can witness or become aware of an adult being at risk. We develop and implement training and procedures to ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities and know what to do in the event a safeguarding concern arises.

The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Help protect tenants and occupiers of Flagship Group properties who are subject to or at risk of abuse and neglect.
- Recognise and report safeguarding concerns regarding adults at risk.
- Record safeguarding concerns and referrals.
- Provide relevant safeguarding information to local authorities when requested.
- Co-operate with relevant agencies on safeguarding issues.

We understand the prevalence of domestic abuse in our homes and communities and the devastating effect this may have. A separate policy exists outlining our approach to domestic abuse.

Definitions

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect (Statutory guidance under the Care Act 2014).

An adult is anyone who is 18yrs or older.

Safeguarding duties will apply to an adult who:

- has care or support needs (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect.
- as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect (including self-neglect)

An adult with care and support needs may be an older person, someone with a physical or learning disability, a mental impairment such as dementia, a mental health condition, illness or neurodiversity, a physical long term health condition or illness or someone who is dependent on others to maintain day to day living.

Abuse is defined as “the violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person”. It is behaviour that either deliberately or knowingly causes harm or endangers life or infringes on rights. It may be a single or repeated act. It may be deliberate or involve neglect, such as failing to take appropriate action. It can also involve a person being persuaded to do something that he or she has not consented to or cannot consent. It can often occur where there is an expectation of trust.

Abuse and neglect can take the following forms:

Physical abuse

Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions. This includes female genital mutilation.

Domestic abuse

Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, coercion and control, stalking, or so called ‘honour’ based violence. Domestic abuse can occur within a relationship or after a relationship has ended.

Sexual abuse

Including rape, sexual assault, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, 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, online 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.

County Lines/Cuckooing

The exploitation of individuals in relation to the trafficking, storage and supply of illegal drugs including where a vulnerable adult’s home is taken over (cuckooing).

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 as a result 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.

We take all concerns, whether current or historical seriously and will refer as appropriate.

Principles

The Care Act 2014 sets out six key principles which underpin all adult safeguarding work (including our approach):

Empowerment – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

Prevention - It is better to act before harm occurs.

Proportionality – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

Protection - Support and representation for those in greatest need.

Partnership – Local solutions through services and agencies working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse

Accountability - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

We will uphold the principle of making safeguarding personal, understanding it should be a person-led approach.

We fully recognise the 5 key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in all aspects of our work by:

- Presuming each adult at risk has capacity
- Supporting individuals to make their own decisions
- Recognising the right for individuals to make their own decisions, even if they may seem unwise
- Making sure what we do for adults at risk (without capacity) is in their best interests
- Making sure that anything we do is the least restrictive action for the individual

Further detail

We will provide appropriate induction, role specific and refresher training on recognising and reporting abuse or neglect, to all relevant staff. Safeguarding leads will be in place in appropriate service areas who will receive enhanced training to support colleagues.

Staff will be aware of our “report a concern” process and will be able to do this easily. Where concerns are identified as safeguarding, a referral will be made to the appropriate agency through their referral mechanisms. Information about how to do this will be easily accessible for staff.

We will share information with relevant agencies if we are concerned that an adult is being abused or neglected. We will not investigate individual vulnerable adult protection cases but will make referrals to the appropriate statutory agency. We will however continue to work with those agencies and that adult as part of a co-ordinated agency response and will participate in case conferences as required.

We will keep a record of all safeguarding concerns, referrals and outcomes.

In some cases, we may complete an internal safeguarding review in line with our value of continuous improvement.

When recruiting staff, we select and vet new starters to the business by requesting appropriate disclosures during the recruitment process, utilising the UK's Disclosure and Barring Service where relevant.

EIA Statement

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for this policy on 28 October 2024 and a number of positive impacts were identified. One negative impact was also identified which has been mitigated.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed as necessary, and at least every three years by the Director (Legal and Governance) and any changes will be approved by the Governance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Measuring effectiveness

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured through:

- Numbers of safeguarding referrals to assess demand and awareness of safeguarding
- Time frames for consideration of safeguarding concerns and onward referrals.
- Data which could indicate further training need for example categories of concerns