

Safeguarding Adults and Child Protection Policy

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Responsible Officer	Assistant Director Housing
This policy is applicable to	Karbon Homes Group
Approved by	Executive Team
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Key related documents (policy, procedure, customer literature)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding procedure and appendices • ASB and Domestic Abuse policies, procedures and appendices • HR/OD Policies • Data Protection Policy • Staff code of conduct • Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy • Speak Out Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Lone Working Policy
Sources of best practice or guidance used in developing this policy	See references section

Version control			
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Consultation	
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Staff	November 2023
Union(s)	NA
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Human Resources / Organisation Development	NA
Health and Safety Working Group	NA
Other stakeholder (please state)	NA

Policy statement

This policy sets out our commitment to take all reasonable steps to prevent and detect abuse and to raise alerts where abuse is suspected and/or reported.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Adults and Child Protection Procedure.

Risk policy is designed to control

10 Regulatory and legislative environment.

Key performance measures

- Number of safeguarding alerts received.
- Number of safeguarding alerts referred to a local authority.
- Nature of alerts.
- Time taken to investigate/refer alerts.

Definitions

The Care Act 2014 defines safeguarding as protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This policy is written in accordance with statutory guidance under the Care Act 2014

Abbreviations

Safeguarding Advisors (SAs)

1.0 Purpose of Policy

1.1 This policy has been produced to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of residents and service users, to protect those groups from abuse (with regard to the relevant legislation and issues of consent) and to support the abused person and their relatives. It is also to protect children and young people living in our properties and to provide staff and anyone working on our behalf with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection. We believe in the following:

- Everyone has the right to live his or her life free from fear, violence or harm.
- Everyone has the right to be protected from harm or abuse.
- Everyone has the right to an independent lifestyle and the right to make choices, some of which may involve a degree of risk.
- Actively promoting the empowerment and wellbeing of vulnerable residents and service users through the services we provide.
- Acting in a way that supports the rights of the individual.
- Recognising people who are unable to take their own decisions and/or protect themselves, their assets and bodily integrity can be subject to abuse.
- Recognising that the right to self-determination can involve risk.

- Promoting the safety of residents and service users.
- Respecting the rights of the alleged perpetrator.
- No child or young person should experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe.

2.0 Policy Detail

2.1 We are committed to working collaboratively with our partner agents and statutory authorities to prevent or reduce the risk of abuse or the mistreatment of vulnerable adults and children. We will:

- Raise awareness and recognition of the issues involved.
- Implement and monitor a vulnerability database.
- Develop our approach to monitoring reasons behind, for example, missed appointments/rent arrears/refused access/none engagement with support, in order to identify possible vulnerability.
- Take action when abuse is suspected.
- Ensure that staff have a knowledge and understanding of our policy and procedures through appropriate training.
- Support monitoring, reviewing and evaluation of our own practices.
- Ensure that our customers and carers have access to information about adult and child protection, this policy and the associated procedures and that we promote the wider safeguarding agenda.
- Operate safe recruitment practices and routinely take up and check references.
- Support staff who raise concerns.
- Safeguarding is taken into account in all appropriate OD/HR strategies, systems, policies and procedures and those of our partners, suppliers and contractors.
- Staff and volunteers in contact with customers with support needs have regular supervision and support to help them identify and respond to possible abuse and neglect.
- Out of hours services will record the facts concerning the alleged abuse or neglect and report their concerns in accordance with their service level agreement.
- All staff at all levels have a shared responsibility to take appropriate action where there is a suspicion or allegation of abuse.

3.0 Types of Abuse

3.1 We recognise the potential for adults and children to experience abuse. The Care Act stipulates that limitations should not be placed upon what constitutes abuse or neglect. Abuse and neglect include (taken from the Care Act 2014):

- **Discriminatory abuse** - including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Domestic violence** - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Physical abuse** - including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **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.
- **Radicalisation** - the process of a person being influenced or coerced into supporting violent extremism including terrorism. Vulnerable individuals may be susceptible to exploitation / coerced into violent extremism by radicalisers.
- **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.
- **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 person has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

3.2 Abuse can:

- Consist of a single act or repeated acts.
- Be an act of neglect or an omission to act.
- Be intentional or unintentional or result from lack of knowledge.

3.3 Signs of abuse can include the following:

- Behavioural problems.
- Mental health problems.
- Physical signs, e.g. bruising.
- Relationship difficulties.
- Drug and/or alcohol problems.
- Financial problems, e.g. rent arrears.
- Attempted suicide or self-harm.

3.4 People who live in accommodation and/or receive services provided by us should do so in an environment that is safe and free from abuse. All staff have a

responsibility to safeguard children and adults who are at risk of and/or are experiencing abuse or neglect.

- 3.5 We will safeguard children and adults from abuse by taking all reasonable steps to prevent and detect abuse and raise alerts where abuse is suspected.
- 3.6 This will be achieved by all staff following the procedure set out in the Safeguarding Adults and Child Protection Procedure.
- 3.7 We will continue to work in partnership with statutory and other agencies in performing our obligations to safeguard children and adults.

4.0 Who Is At Risk?

- 4.1 A vulnerable adult at risk is a person aged 18 or above who is, or may be eligible for community care services and whose independence and wellbeing is at risk due to abuse or neglect.
- 4.2 Children and young people - individuals who have not reached their 18th birthday.
- 4.3 A person may be at risk or vulnerable because they:
 - Have learning or physical disabilities.
 - Have mental health problems.
 - May be old, frail or ill.
 - Cannot always take care of themselves or protect themselves without help.

- 4.4 Additionally:
 - Some children are particularly vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

- 4.5 It must not be assumed that someone is automatically at risk because of age, disability or gender.

5.0 Safeguarding Advisors

- 5.1 We have staff designated as **Safeguarding Advisors (SAs)**. They receive and act on alerts but also have a role in advising and supporting other staff. These individuals are listed in Appendix 1 of the procedure guide.

6.0 Customer Vulnerabilities

- 6.1 This policy is applied in line with Our Approach To Vulnerability Policy. Everyone matters. We want people to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect, and access to our services. We will offer support, reasonable adjustments, and adaptations to remove barriers. We will discuss with our customers what is reasonable and appropriate. In delivering this service we may need to escalate a particular case – if we do then customer vulnerabilities will be considered as part of the decision-making process.

6.2 We will support people with vulnerabilities to deliver this service. We will work alongside external agencies such as social services, the police and fire services and other appropriate agencies to help and support people with vulnerabilities in the delivery of our services but also to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements as a social landlord. Details are provided in the appropriate areas in this policy. All our customer policies are available on the website.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years. The review will be brought forward if there are significant changes to good practice, regulatory or legislative requirements.
- 7.2 The Assistant Director Housing is responsible for the monitoring, review and implementation of this policy.

8.0 Equality and Diversity

- 8.1 This policy is applied in line with Karbon Homes' Equality and Diversity Policy and the associated legislation including the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010. At Karbon Homes we aim to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and define the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 8.2 However, we like to go even further. Beyond these protected characteristics we also take into consideration additional factors such as socio-economic status and language barriers which may also play a part. Our vision is for everyone to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect and access to our services.
- 8.3 To help us achieve this, we will work to improve accessibility for all, offering reasonable adjustments, adaptations and discussing ways that we can work to remove any barriers. A reasonable adjustment involves making a change to the way that we usually do things.
- 8.4 All of our customer policies and key information are made available on the Karbon Homes website. This platform has an easy to use assistive tool that supports accessibility to our information. This includes translation, audio, changes to the size of text, ruler and screen mask. We also aim to make our information and services more accessible by using Plain English in our communication and offering sign language and language interpreters where required.
- 8.5 We work together to look at options and agree what adjustments would be reasonable in your individual circumstances. If you would like to find out more, please get in touch with the team.

9.0 Data Protection and Privacy

- 9.1 We have a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/third parties under the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the

Data Protection Act 2018 and other associated legislation. This is clearly set out in the Data Protection Policy for the Karbon Homes Group which, along with its associated procedures, must be followed throughout the operation of this procedure.

- 9.2 In cases of safeguarding children and adults at risk, organisations do not have to tell people that they are processing their data, for instance if it will cause them harm or prevent a referral, nor give them access to their data, nor delete their data if requested.
- 9.3 Colleagues will ensure that when completing a Safeguarding referral that they clearly record whether the customer is aware of the referral and if consent was given for the referral. If Consent was neither given or requested, the colleague must fully explain why they feel the sharing of the information is necessary, this is to enable the Group to establish the lawful basis applicable for the sharing of the information which must be performed in line with the Lawful Basis procedure.

10.0 References

- 10.1 Care Standards Act 2000 is the legislation framework for the registration and inspection of care homes and domiciliary care agencies.
Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 requires that the needs of carers are assessed.
Children Act 1989
Children Act 2004
Children and Families Act 2014
Court of Protection (England and Wales) High Court can make arrangements to manage the financial affairs of someone who lacks mental capacity. A power of attorney, enduring power of attorney and the appointee system of the Department of Social Security may be helpful in some instances of financial abuse.
Data Protection Act 1998
Equality Act 2010
Family Law Act 1996 (England and Wales) may be used against a wide range of abusers who live with the abused person. It is not confined to spouses.
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 allows local authorities to promote the welfare of older people.
Human Rights Act 1998 allows everyone basic rights. Article 3 – “no-one shall be subject to degrading treatment or punishment”.
Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers - HM Government 2015.
Lord Chancellors Office of the Public Guardian which helps protect people who lack capacity.
Mental Capacity Act 2005 protects vulnerable adults who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves about their care and treatment due to disability, mental illness, brain injury or dementia. A person found guilty of neglect or ill treatment of a person who lacks capacity faces stronger penalties.
Mental Health Act 1983 (England and Wales) can be used where a person is mentally ill and believed to be ill-treated or neglected.
NHS and Community Care Act 1990 which requires local authorities to undertake an assessment of need.

Offences Against the Person Act 1861, Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Acts and the Sexual Offences Act can also be used in certain circumstances.

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees disclosing a public concern providing they are acting reasonably.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of Practice - statutory guidance for organisation which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities - HM Government 2014.

The Care Act 2014

The regulatory framework for sheltered and supported housing. The regime includes a Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) covering a range of service delivery standards including a compulsory Core Service Objective on protection from abuse. At the very minimum providers must have up to date procedures (including whistle blowing policy and recruitment checks) for avoiding and responding to actual or suspected abuse.

United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991

Working together to safeguard children - a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children - HM Government 2015.