



## Safeguarding Policy

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<b>Responsible director</b>	<b>Executive Director – Customers &amp; Communities</b>
<b>Policy monitoring body</b>	Safeguarding working Group
<b>Resident input into policy date</b>	Tenant Committee, October 2021
<b>Date for policy review</b>	October 2022
<b>Linked strategies/policies</b>	See Section 10
<b>Version/date</b>	<b>V1 - October 2021</b>
<b>Owner</b>	Amanda Seals, Head of Living Well

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (“the Group”, “WCHG”) is a community-based landlord, providing a number of services to the tenants & residents of Wythenshawe.
- 1.2 This policy outlines WCHG’s approach to the safeguarding of both children and adults at risk, and our commitment to working collaboratively with Manchester City Council and other partners to effectively safeguard vulnerable people.

## 2. Relevant Legislation, Scope and Definitions

- 2.1 This policy applies to all tenants and families of Wythenshawe Community Housing Group and all users of the Group’s facilities or services. It also applies to young people and vulnerable adults who may take placements or work experience, apprenticeships or other forms of work training or volunteer programmes with WCHG. It applies to all staff, colleagues and volunteers who work with, or come into contact with children, young people and adults at risk. The Group has responsibilities under the Children’s Acts 1989 and 2004 to safeguard children at risk of abuse and neglect and under the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to safeguard adults with care and support needs.
- 2.2 Whilst neither the Care Act 2014 nor its statutory guidance specifically defines abuse, it does state that professionals should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect as it can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered.

The Care Act statutory guidance goes on to provide a detailed definition of each of the ten types of abuse which is listed below. Further to this, the guidance highlights that incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more. Therefore professionals should look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm.

Abuse can take many forms including:

1. Sexual (including sexting, child grooming and cuckooing)
2. Physical (including cuckooing)
3. Emotional (including cyberbullying and cuckooing)
4. Psychological (including cuckooing)

5. Financial (including cuckooing)
6. Neglect
7. Domestic Violence or Abuse
8. Modern Slavery
9. Organisational or Institutional abuse
10. Discriminatory Abuse

2.3 Abuse may include poor care practices, bullying or humiliating, or not allowing contact with friends and family. Abuse often involves criminal acts. Abuse can be a single act or may continue over a long period. It can be unintentional or deliberate, but will result in harm to the victim, either physically, emotionally or in its effect on the person's wellbeing or development.'

2.4 Children and young people are those below the age of 18 years.

2.5 Adults at risk are defined as:

- Aged 18 years and over
- Are, or may be, in need of Community Care Services because of learning or physical disability, older age or physical or mental illness
- Are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by others

### **3. Objectives**

3.1 The objectives of this policy are set in line with Manchester City Council's [Safeguarding Standard](#) and the [Self Neglect Strategy and Toolkit](#) and aim to provide effective guidance for all our staff to be able to identify potential safeguarding issues, and for us to investigate and refer cases where necessary.

#### **WCHG's objectives are:**

3.2 To comply with all relevant legislation and best practice and ensure that this policy and toolkit are published and promoted within the organisation so that all staff are made aware of their responsibility to be vigilant about safeguarding issues, their own conduct, and how to respond to any concerns or suspicions they may have.

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- 3.3 To ensure a prompt and proportionate response when it appears that a child, young person or adult at risk may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
  - 3.4 To work with partner agencies and Manchester City Council to minimise risk and to ensure that where concerns are identified, they are swiftly and appropriately raised, and information is effectively shared.
  - 3.5 To ensure that the policy is publicised so that children, young people and vulnerable adults are aware of the Group's approach and responsibilities.
  - 3.6 Each member of staff at WCHG has a 'legal duty of care' to act in the best interest of its tenants and therefore everyone is responsible for safeguarding the people we work with, taking actions to avoid abuse occurring and reporting incidents when they occur

#### **4. Policy**

- 4.1 The Group will comply with Manchester City Council's Safeguarding Standards and we aim to ensure that our staff are equipped to identify and investigate cases as appropriate, making further referrals as needed.
  - 4.2 We will:
    - Ensure our services are open and accessible, take users' views into account, and promote equal access
    - Promote our safeguarding commitment to users with a digital first approach providing information on our website and provide a contact telephone number to enable users to raise any safeguarding concerns.
    - Support and encourage individuals to recognise abuse and ensure this is easy to report
    - Investigate appropriately all potential safeguarding cases and carry out a risk assessment so that appropriate referrals or support can be effected
    - Treat all concerns confidentially, on a need-to-know basis
    - Share information with partners in the best interests of the person to ensure that their safety and security is the overriding factor in any process, within the guidelines of General Data Protection Regulation
    - Work in partnership with other agencies, and collaborate with the [Manchester Safeguarding Partnership](#) as required, incorporating learning from serious case reviews as appropriate
    - Promote e-safety to protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm whilst using technology and the internet
    - Have a named Safeguarding Lead, and a member of our Board who champions safeguarding for the Group
    - Promote details for staff who lead on safeguarding investigations
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- Ensure adequate training is available for all safeguarding leads and that other members of staff receive regular information briefings
- Ensure that safer staffing is adhered to, and recruitment processes reflect this, with a probation period and induction, and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are completed where necessary
- Respond to allegations against staff using the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership guidelines. Where relevant, we will use the Group's own disciplinary procedures and, where appropriate, referral to external organisations
- Provide guidance for employees managing working relationships with young people who may be part of the organisation as volunteers, work placements, apprenticeships or any such work training programme.
- Ensure that the vulnerable residents of our Sheltered and Extra Care schemes are adequately protected by ensuring our on-site staff are appropriately briefed and know how to raise a concern appropriately – this may be in relation to care being received or family members and needs to be managed sensitively and provide regular discussion and information for residents through resident's meetings.
- Support the delivery of the Group's Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, by referring any causes for concern in line with the Safeguarding Policy. Taking advice from the [Modern Slavery Helpline](#).
- Ensure operating systems of management, supervision, internal inspection and quality control have the potential to reveal abuse where it exists

## **5 Training**

- We will support staff, board members and volunteers across our business in understanding how to recognise the signs of abuse and what to do if they have a concern via annual safeguarding briefings
- A training matrix will be used to ensure that staff who have safeguarding responsibilities receive adequate training and that this is refreshed at least every three years
- We will monitor training records so that we are able to offer training opportunities where there are gaps
- Training and support are available for staff managing working relationships with young people and vulnerable adults who may be part of the organisation as volunteers, work placements, apprenticeships or any such work training programme

## **6. Responsibility and Reporting**

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- 6.1 The Executive Director of Customers & Communities shall act as WCHG's Safeguarding Lead and shall be responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.
  - 6.2 Safeguarding data will be provided to the Leadership Team on a monthly basis. The data will include all referrals recorded including actual or any potential safeguarding concerns received. Data will also include referrals made to partner agencies such as Adults and Children's Services. An annual report is taken to the board to provide assurance through the governance process of the safeguarding activity of the organisation
  - 6.3 All referrals will be assessed and if immediate action is required then urgent contact will be made in order to fully understand the concerns. If no immediate action is required, the case will be allocated to the relevant co-ordinator for assessment and signposting or support.
  - 6.4 Priority must at all times be to keep the child or adult at risk safe and to minimise the potential risk of significant harm.
  - 6.5 When dealing with disclosures of actual, or suspected abuse outside of normal working hours, procedures are in principle the same as those for normal working hours. The Out of Hours Duty Manager will deal with the referral, and escalate appropriately as required.

## **7. Crisis Situation**

- 7.1 In the event of a national or local crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which increases risk of harm, the Group may use its customer data to identify vulnerable people and children at increased risk of abuse. We will work with local agencies and partners to support any identified individuals with the following:-
  - contact individuals to check on their welfare
  - co-ordinate necessary support such as food bank parcels
  - liaise with internal and external agencies on an individual's behalf

## **8. Consultation, Monitoring and Review**

- 8.1 The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually, and an annual update to Board will provide an assurance of our compliance.
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## **9. Equality & Diversity**

- 9.1 The Group ensures that the Safeguarding Policy and procedure is accessible to its diverse customers and will take into account the different needs of our customers when considering action.
- 9.2 WCHG recognises that customers of all races, ages, religions, gender, sexual orientation, literacy levels and disability should be treated equally and fairly.
- 9.3 WCHG will provide information in languages other than English, in Braille, Large Print, audio **and** in easy read formats. Our receptions and interview rooms are fitted with a hearing loop system.
- 9.4 If you require assistance with translation of this policy, large print, easy read, braille, or an audio copy, contact us by phone on: 0300 111 0000 or: 0800 633 5500 or by email: [communications@wchg.org.uk](mailto:communications@wchg.org.uk)

## **10 Associated Strategies, Policies and Documents**

- Hoarding Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Financial Inclusion Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy
- Support Strategy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Code of conduct
- Professional boundaries
- Recruitment and selection policy
- Data protection policy

### **Reference material**

- [Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual](#) (updated June 2020)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children](#) (July 2018)

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- [Manchester City Council Safeguarding Adults Policy 2015](#)
  - [Information sharing guidelines: March 2015](#) (updated July 2018)