



Putting People 1st

Vulnerable Adults & Child Protection Policy

H.09

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This policy document can be produced in various formats, for instance, in larger print or audio-format; and it can also be translated into other languages, as appropriate.

Our equality and diversity policy statement describes our key equality commitments that we use to develop all organisational services; this includes employment services and services to tenants and other customers.

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1. Introduction

Pineview Housing Association (PHA) is committed to ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and adults and recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse and exploitation. PHA acknowledges its responsibility to act appropriately to all allegations, reports and suspicions of abuse.

2. Aims

Through the implementation of this policy PHA aims to do everything it can reasonably do to protect children and vulnerable adults and to ensure that all concerns for the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult are reported to the appropriate authorities.

PHA staff will work closely with our partner agencies including Glasgow City Council, the NHS and Police Scotland to ensure that children and adults who may be considered vulnerable or at risk get the help they need from all the agencies that have a duty to protect them.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy a child is defined as someone who is:

- Under 16 years of age or
- Still attending school or
- Under 18 years of age and is under supervision

'Child protection' means protecting a child or young person from abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not actually have taken place, there may instead be an identified significant likelihood or risk of harm from abuse or neglect.

'Getting it Right for Every Child' is Scotland's approach to supporting children and young people. It stresses the importance of understanding risks and needs within a framework of the child's world and wellbeing. It states that every child should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 defined an 'adult at risk' as a person aged 16 years or over who:

- Is unable to safeguard his or her well-being, property, rights or other interests.
- Is at risk of harm and
- Because he /she is affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity is more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

The presence of a particular condition does not automatically mean an adult is 'at risk'. Someone could have a disability but be able to safeguard their well-being, property, rights or other interests. All three elements of this definition must be met for the provisions for the legislation to apply. It is the entirety of an adult's particular circumstances which combine to make him or her more vulnerable to harm than others.

4. Categories of Abuse or Harm

Vulnerable Adults:

Under the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, an adult is at risk of harm if another person's conduct is causing or is likely to cause the adult to be harmed or the adult is engaging or is likely to be engaged in conduct which causes or is likely to cause self-harm.

Types of harm may include the following:

Physical Abuse- involving actual or attempted injury to an adult defined as at risk. For example:

- Physical assault by punching, pushing, slapping, tying down, giving food or medication forcibly, or denial of medication.
- Use of medication other than as prescribed.
- Inappropriate restraint.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse- resulting in mental distress to the adult at risk. For example:

- Excessive shouting, bullying, humiliation.
- Manipulation of, or the prevention of access to, services that would be of benefit to the adult.
- Isolation or sensory deprivation
- Denigration of culture or religion

Financial or Material Abuse- involving the exploitation of resources and property belonging to the adult at risk. For example:

- Theft or fraud
- Misuse of money, property or resources without the informed consent of the adult at risk.

Sexual Abuse- involving activity of a sexual nature where the adult at risk cannot or does not give consent. For example:

- Incest
- Rape
- Acts of gross indecency
- Inappropriate touching or verbal or physical sexual harassment.

Neglect and acts of omission by others charged with the care of the adult, including ignoring medical or physical care needs. For example:

- Failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services.
- Withholding of the necessities of life such as nutrition, appropriate heating, etc.

Exploitation- the deliberate targeting of vulnerable adults for personal benefit.

Discriminatory Abuse- for example, treating one customer less favourably than another.

Information Abuse- deliberately giving erroneous information or withholding information.

Human Rights Abuse- for example deprivation of a right to family life or to a fair hearing.

Multiple Forms of Abuse- This may occur in an ongoing relationship or service setting or to more than one person at a time. It is important therefore to look not only at a single incident, but to also consider the underlying dynamics and patterns of harm.

Random Violence- An attack by a stranger on an adult defined as at risk is an assault; this is a criminal matter and should be reported to the Police. However, where there is the possibility that the violence may be part of a pattern of victimisation in a community or neighbourhood, local authority adult protection procedures may also apply in respect of effective multi-agency intervention.

Domestic Violence- Police Scotland define domestic violence as “any form of physical, non-physical or sexual abuse which takes place within the context of a close relationship committed either in the home or elsewhere”. In most cases this relationship will be between partners (married, cohabitating or otherwise) or ex-partners.

The similarity between the above acts of harm in relation to adult protection is recognised. However, the key factor in relation to activating adult protection procedures in such situations is that the victim (or suspected victim) must be an adult at risk of harm as defined in relevant legislation.

Children:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger.

The following definitions show some of the ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child but are not exhaustive. The individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child:

Physical Abuse – involving the causing of physical harm. This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse – involving persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age – or developmentally- inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger or exploiting or corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child, but it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Sexual Abuse – involving any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

5. Responsibilities

While Pineview Housing Association staff are not directly involved in services for children and vulnerable adults, they often have direct or indirect engagement with children, young people, parents and adults.

For example, housing officers visiting tenants may become concerned about children within a family, even without having seen the children.

It is therefore everybody's responsibility to remain alert to circumstances in which children and vulnerable adults may be harmed and to report any concerns to the relevant authorities e.g. Glasgow City Council, Police Scotland.

Such reports will be subject to appropriate protocols and in accordance with the Data Protection Act / General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

6. Training and Development.

The training requirements of Management Committee and staff will be regularly assessed to ensure that they have the necessary skills to effectively implement and monitor this Policy.

7. Equality and Diversity

Our core values include providing a fair and equal service for all people and this is detailed in our Equality and Diversity Policy. Our approach to vulnerable adults and child protection will reflect that commitment.

8. Complaints Process

Anyone who is not happy /satisfied with the service they have received as a result of this policy has a right to complain. Please see the Association's Complaints Policy for details on how to do this.

9. Review/Consultation

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation or monitoring/reporting reveals that a change in policy is required sooner.

Procedures and working methods may be altered more frequently where this is needed.

Policy review will involve consultation with our tenants, our Customer Forum and any other relevant stakeholders as appropriate. We will take account of any views or representations in revising our policy and service provision to assist in the development of effective service delivery.