

Safeguarding Policy

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Management Information

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1 Policy Statement

We believe that anyone living in our homes and neighbourhoods has a right to protection and safeguarding from abuse, neglect and harm.

We are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children, young people and adults at risk to access services or participate in activities and recognise our responsibilities to safeguard their welfare by protecting each individual from sexual, physical or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying.

We recognise our duties and responsibilities to work collaboratively with all local authorities within our area of operation and other partners to safeguard all

children, young people and adults at risk involved in accessing Plus Dane Housing's services and provision and to ensure that they are free from harm. This may include responding to Local Authorities requests to make enquiries where they suspect abuse or neglect may be happening.

2 Policy Aims

This policy applies to all tenants and families of Plus Dane Housing and all users of the organisation's facilities or services. It also applies to young people who may take placements or work experience, apprenticeships or other forms of work training or volunteer programmes with Plus Dane Housing. It applies to all colleagues and volunteers who work with, or come into contact with children, young people and adults at risk.

Young people and adults at risk can be put at risk of harm through a variety of actions including a failure to act. We aim to ensure that no act or omission on the part of Plus Dane Housing, or that of its employees, puts a child, young person or vulnerable adult inadvertently at risk. Through this policy and associated procedures we aim to:

- Protect young people and adults at risk from harm and significant risk;
- Set out what actions staff should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child, young person or vulnerable adult abuse.

Definitions:

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

Adults at risk:

- Are aged 18 years and over.
- Are, or may be, in need of care or support.
- Are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by others.

Abuse is defined as: a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may be physical, psychological, sexual, emotional, financial, neglect or acts of omission. It may involve people taking money without permission, or not looking after someone properly.

It 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.' Abuse can take many forms including:

- Sexual
- Physical
- Emotional
- Psychological

- Discriminatory
- Financial or material
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Domestic abuse
- Self-neglect
- Modern Slavery
- Radicalisation
- Organisational abuse

3 Link to Corporate Plan

This policy links to the Corporate Plan – particularly our strategic objectives concerning Customer, Products & Services and People. In addition this policy is a key mitigant against regulatory/legislative breaches and reputational damage. The policy ensures that the organisation is responding appropriately to any safeguarding issues, and ensuring staff are adequately trained and supported for the organisation to fulfil its duty with regards to safeguarding children and adults at risk.

4 Our Approach

4.1 Our objectives

Our objectives are to:

- Create and maintain the safest possible environment for children, young people and adults at risk who live in our properties, access services or participate in activities provided by Plus Dane Housing or within the organisation's owned or managed facilities and to recognise Plus Dane Housing's responsibility to safeguard.
- Ensure that the policy and procedures are published and promoted within the organisation so that all staff comply with and discharge their responsibility to be vigilant about safeguarding issues, their own conduct, and how to respond to any concerns or suspicions they may have, emphasising everyone's responsibility to immediately report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Ensure a prompt and proportionate response when it appears that a child or young person or vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- To work with partner agencies and our local authorities to minimise risk and to ensure that where concerns are identified, they are swiftly and appropriately raised and information is effectively shared.
- Ensure that the policy is publicised so that children, young people and adults at risk are aware of Plus Dane Housing's approach and responsibilities.
- Comply with all relevant legislation and best practice.

4.2 Compliance

Children, young people and adults at risk are at the centre of practice. We will:

- a. Ensure our services are open and accessible, take users' views into account and promote equal access.
- b. Promote our safeguarding commitment to users via our website and provide a contact telephone number to enable users to raise any safeguarding concerns. We will display specific safeguarding posters throughout our office receptions and other public places where users visit.
- c. Treat all concerns confidentially, on a need-to-know basis. There are however limits to confidentiality; the well-being of adults at risk & children is paramount over all other considerations.
- d. Ensure staff do not enter properties where they are aware a child (under 18) may be present without an adult. If a younger child is at home alone, the Police should be informed immediately.

4.3 Safeguarding leads:

- a. We have a named safeguarding lead, supported by a network of named safeguarding officers with appropriate levels of training.
- b. We have a named Board member with lead responsibility for safeguarding.
- c. Contact details for safeguarding lead is promoted to staff on induction
- d. Contact details for safeguarding officers are available on the intranet so that staff can report concerns (with appropriate cover for absence)
- e. We have a named e-safety lead, with appropriate level of training.

4.4 Safer Staffing

Safer staffing to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults at risk from abuse, and themselves against false allegations and to reduce the likelihood of allegations being made against them.

- a. Our recruitment practice includes a probation period and an induction. All staff, following the probationary period, have 24hr access to confidential counselling, legal, health and wellbeing support by calling Medicash on 0845 600 2891
- b. We ensure that appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are completed as part of recruitment for any worker, volunteer or placement that may come into unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk, who are required to do so under the scheme.
- c. We respond to allegations against staff. Where relevant, we will use Plus Dane Housing's own disciplinary procedures and, where appropriate, referral to external organisations.
- d. We have in place a Whistle Blowing Code to reassure staff that it is safe for them to raise concerns of abuse or maladministration without fear of harassment or victimisation.

- e. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) role is to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and adults at risk. We will make a referral to the DBS where we have concerns that a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to children or adults at risk.

4.5 Training

- a. We have a plan in place to ensure all staff are made aware of how to recognise the signs of abuse and what to do if they have a concern.
- b. Safeguarding officers and leads undergo mandatory level 2 & 3 training as necessary.
- c. Multi Agency Safeguarding training is undertaken by relevant staff.
- d. Records of training are maintained.
- e. Regular refresher training takes place (at least every 3 years).

5 Assurance

5.1 Risk Management

We have a risk management process and risk assessments in place for activities which will identify any safeguarding risks and how they will be managed.

We provide training on safeguarding at the appropriate level for relevant staff and Board Members.

We publicise our approach to safeguarding to customers.

We have an organisation-wide panel in place to ensure consistency, and to share learning.

Safeguarding forms part of the audit plan.

5.2 Performance management

For this policy, the following performance measures are in place:

An organisation-wide Safeguarding network will meet regularly to monitor adherence to the policy across Plus Dane Housing.

There will be regular monitoring reports as part of the performance management framework identifying safeguarding reports and activity.

5.3 Customer standards

The following standards are in place for the policy:

We will:

- Treat all information confidentially, on a need to know basis
- Ensure trained staff are available to offer support, guidance and advice
- Ensure referrals are made appropriately where concerns are raised