



Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Irwell Valley Homes (IVH) believes that all its customers and their family members have the right to live free from fear of abuse and that safeguarding issues are paramount to safe service delivery. To this end, it ensures that it supplies services that provide for the needs of children and adults at risk and protects them from abuse.
- 1.2 The policy relates to customers living in our homes who are either children or adults at risk and in need of safeguarding procedures.
- Hate crime and domestic abuse and violence, are covered by separate policies and therefore not included specifically in this Policy.
- Safeguarding of colleagues (including volunteers and board members) are covered within our HR policies and procedures and therefore not covered by this policy.
- 1.3 Whilst the protection and safety of children and adults at risk is everybody's responsibility, much of the management and enforcement of the safeguarding process is the responsibility of the local authority in which the resident lives. This Policy ensures that we always comply and act in accordance with the procedures and requirements of the relevant local authority Safeguarding Board.
- 1.4 This policy links to IVH's mission statement "to enable people to live well in their home and community". The protection of vulnerable customers is essential and is inherent to the services we provide. It is recognised that our services, including our repairs and adaptations services, should be flexible and responsive to meet the needs of our vulnerable customers.

2.0 Aims of the Policy

- 2.1 IVH aims to ensure that no act or omission on the part of the organisation, or that of its colleagues, or its partner organisations, puts a child or adult at risk inadvertently and that systems are in place to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. IVH will recognise, respond, report, record and refer all safeguarding concerns to ensure the risks to children, young people and adults are detected, understood and addressed.
- 2.2 The approach of this policy is based on and reflects the principles of both UK legislation and guidance and international agreements. Key legislation and guidance in this regard are as follows:
- Care Act 2014 - the Act is a wide-ranging piece of legislation, but it prescribes a clear legal framework for how local authorities and other bodies should protect

adults at risk of abuse or neglect. We will abide by existing regulatory requirements and legislation as detailed in the cross-referenced documents section.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 – brings together various legislation and guidance to promote an inter-agency approach to effective safeguarding for children.
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is a law that protects and supports people who do not have the ability to make decisions for themselves. It also provides guidance to support people who need to make decisions on behalf of someone else.

Policy Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, we have adopted the Care Act 2014 definition of an ‘adult at risk’ of abuse or neglect as someone who has need for care and support who is experiencing or is risk of abuse or neglect as a result of their care needs and is unable to protect themselves.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined, in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as ‘activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online’.

We will abide by existing regulatory requirements and legislation as detailed in the cross-referenced documents section of this policy.

3.0 Safeguarding Principles:

We will always comply and act in accordance with the procedures and requirements of the relevant local authority Safeguarding Board.

We will report any safeguarding concerns raised about the conduct of colleagues in relation to children to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and act in accordance with the LADO’s advice and guidance.

We will contribute to Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and any other form of safeguarding review and learning process as well as public protection forums, including Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

We will look to identify and prevent incidents of abuse or neglect through close and careful tenancy management. This will include gathering appropriate information at the application and letting stage, starter tenancy procedures, ongoing tenancy engagement and effective inter-agency working.

We reserve the right to use enforcement action against perpetrators of abuse to protect vulnerable customers, including the use of civil injunctions and possession proceedings.

We will treat customers, fairly, and consider how we can adapt services and communications to meet individual customers' needs, taking into account protected characteristics, and any barriers that may prevent fair and equal access to services.

We will make sure any community facilities or services are safe spaces, seeking to reduce hazards posed by or to customers or other persons.

We will allocate our homes taking into consideration the needs of our prospective and current customers. We will work with advocates or trusted persons to help ensure customer's needs are met.

We will provide tenancy sustainment services to help customers in need maintain their tenancy, and that customer vulnerability is considered in the context of income maximisation when considering escalating eviction proceedings.

We will provide support for colleagues and managers who have responsibility for handling and reporting safeguarding concerns. They will be guided by procedure and good professional practice. This will include case management supervision, reflective practice and regular complex case reviews. Spot checks will take place on casework and record keeping ensuring cases are appropriately managed. Escalation processes will ensure that safeguarding referrals to local authorities are progressed and acted upon.

We will use Safer Recruitment practices for any applicants who are likely to be in contact with children and/or adults at risk. This will involve the completion of the appropriate vetting and barring checks for identified post-holders prior to the commencement of employment. We will also take advice and guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service and act on any advice or instruction given by them.

We will make all colleagues aware and provide training on our Whistleblowing Policy and procedure to enable colleagues to raise concerns about the conduct of others in the organisation. We will encourage concerns to be raised and provide easy to use electronic forms to report them. Any concerns will be investigated by specified members of the leadership team or, if necessary, by an external body.

We will conduct risk assessments to measure the safeguarding risk posed by the customer, or if necessary, where they may pose a safeguarding risk to others. Furthermore, lone working risk assessments will be used to address the increased risk to both customers and colleagues associated with this working arrangement.

We will provide information and training on safeguarding of children and adults at risk to all colleagues, Board & committee members, volunteers, placement students and contractors. We will stress the importance of reporting any suspicions or concerns they may have and the procedures which must be followed. This will include briefings in new colleague induction, training sessions and 'toolbox' talks to colleagues and operatives. Colleagues who have greater contact with children and adults at risk will receive more specific and detailed training. We will also provide specific training to managers of front

line services in handling initial safeguarding advice to their team members prior to advice being sought from the professional colleague lead for safeguarding.

We will identify a professional colleague lead for safeguarding. This role will be to support colleagues within the organisation to recognise the needs of children and adults at risk and to support with safeguarding referrals to the local authority, either directly, or in collaboration with frontline colleagues.

We will identify a designated safeguarding lead within the Leadership team. This role will promote safeguarding across the organisation, working in partnership with members of the SLT and heads of service and with our LA partners/safeguarding boards to promote safeguarding and agreeing training requirements. The post holder will be designated safeguarding champion/lead for the purposes of local authority compliance.

We will report safeguarding data to the Leadership team and Board to ensure that members are kept informed on safeguarding issues that affect our customers and their families. This data will be utilised in the development of our policies and procedures regarding safeguarding, service delivery as well as colleague training and customer awareness raising.

We will work with partners to safeguard children and adults at risk and share information with one another in order to best safeguard the persons concerned. This includes, but is not limited to, the local authority, police, education services, the NHS, housing, care and support agencies.

We will work to the principles of the police initiative 'Right Care, Right Person' to ensure that people of all ages, who have physical/mental health and/or social care needs, are responded to by the right person, with the right skills, training and experience to best meet their needs.

We will provide our Safeguarding Procedure to all colleagues via the intranet and will ensure the policy and e-learning form part of our mandatory training programme for all colleagues.

We will record all individual cases within our housing management system and will store and share data in line with IVH's data protection policies.

We will comply with the Deprivation of Liberty/Liberty Protection Safeguards (DoLS/DLS) to ensure that checks and balances are in place where it is agreed that we are required to deprive a person lacking capacity of their liberty; this will be instigated and completed by the relevant local authority.

3.0 Responsibility:

Board will monitor the assurance and effectiveness of this policy through quarterly CAF reporting and the annual review of safeguarding.

The Executive Director (Customers) is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

The Leadership safeguarding lead, as well as the Leadership team as a whole, are responsible for ensuring effective safeguarding practice is embedded within the organisation's practice.

The colleague safeguarding lead is responsible for the advice and assistance to frontline colleagues.

All colleagues have a responsibility for promoting good safeguarding practice. Performance in this area is monitored by managers.

4.0 Performance Indicators/Targets/Standards:

- 4.1 Each local authority has its own safeguarding procedures, so their standards must be adhered to; in this respect colleagues must be aware of the procedures and standards of the local authority in which they work.
- 4.2 Safeguarding data will be provided to Board on a quarterly basis; this will identify trends and areas of risk for our customers and the business and help inform training requirements. Board will be provided with an annual safeguarding report covering all aspects of safeguarding practice and data affecting our customers. There are no performance indicators or targets in relation to this policy.
- 4.3 In the event of a safeguarding concern that relates to colleague conduct, or where there may be a risk of reputational damage, the leadership safeguarding lead or other senior member of staff will determine if the matter requires reporting to Board, the local authority/LADO and/or the Regulator of Social Housing.
- 4.4 Internal standards dictate that safeguarding information must be held on IVH's IT systems. In the instance of highly sensitive/confidential information, arrangements must be made to hold the information in a more secure environment.
- 4.4 This policy will be reviewed for effectiveness and policy/legislative change on a two-yearly basis by the author.

5.0 Equality and Diversity Implications:

- 5.1 IVH is committed to treating people with honesty, dignity, respect and trust. This applies to colleagues, customers, potential customers, contractors and Board Members. At IVH:
 - Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents
 - Diversity is recognising difference and responding positively to those difference.
 - Inclusion is about creating an environment where our services and employment opportunities are accessible to all.
- 5.2 IVH will be mindful of the Equality Act 2010 in all its actions and will consider all the protected characteristics of the Act, which are: Race, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Region or Belief, Age, Marriage/Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity explicitly. Further to the protected characteristics IVH will be mindful of socio-economic disadvantage and will do everything in its power to minimise this and other forms of disadvantage.

6.0 Cross Reference Documents:

- 6.1 This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Procedure
- Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure
- Anti-social Behaviour including Hate Crime Policy
- Customer complaints Policy and Procedure
- Neighbourhood Management Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure
- Hoarding Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Modern Slavery Statement
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure
- “Supporting You” and “Keeping You Safe” Colleague Guides

These procedures will complement those held by the local authorities’ safeguarding teams. Information sharing process will abide by the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR and all relevant IVH data protection policies.

6.2 This policy is written in line with the following legislation and guidance:

- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Children Act 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards / Liberty Protection Safeguards
- Mental Capacity Act 2005