

THREE BOROUGHES HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

This policy outlines Three Boroughs Housing Co-operative's commitment and approach to safeguarding all the adult Members and children living in its homes by protecting them from harm and promoting their wellbeing. The Co-operative wants to ensure that its Members and their families live a life free from all forms of abuse.

The Co-operative recognises that everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults and as a responsible landlord has a duty to report all instances of abuse or suspected abuse.

2. Objective of the Policy

To help Members and employees understand their safeguarding duties and the Co-operative's principal role in reporting safeguarding concerns to the relevant agencies.

3. Definitions

- **Abuse** - a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons
- **Neglect** - the failure to meet a child, young person or adult's basic needs
- **Harm** - physical and/or psychological injury
- **Child** - anyone under the age of 18, and anyone with a disability up to the age of 25
- **Young person** - a care leaver aged 18 or over, but still receiving support from Children's Services
- **Adult** - anyone who is not a child or young person

Appendices 1 and 2 at the end of this policy outline the Care Act's Statutory Guidance relating to Safeguarding and types of adult abuse. Appendix 3 outlines the Children's Act Definitions of Child Abuse.

4. Responsibilities

The Management Committee has a duty to oversee the Co-operative's approach to safeguarding matters.

All employees, Co-operative Members and contractors are responsible for understanding the different types of abuse and reporting concerns or any suspected abuse.

5. Approach and Actions

The Co-operative will adopt a zero tolerance approach towards abuse and will:

- Take all abuse or suspected abuse seriously and act promptly and proportionately to all concerns raised.
- Take immediate action if imminent harm or abuse is suspected.
- Report all safeguarding concerns to the relevant agencies, such as the local authority or the police and respond promptly to any requests from partner agencies regarding safeguarding issues.
- Create an environment where staff and Members feel encouraged to report concerns and know how to do so.
- Take a child or adult centred approach, putting the needs of the individual first and working with them before deciding what action to take.
- Comply with all legal requirements and best practice.
- Provide support to those affected by safeguarding issues, including making referrals and seeking assistance from other support agencies.
- Keep accurate records of all safeguarding incidents and the actions taken.
- Ensure the Co-operative's Data Protection Policies and procedures are applied at all times.

6. Consent

Adult referrals

Consent should be sought before a referral is made for an adult and before any information is shared with other agencies. If consent has not been received, or a person has refused consent, the risks to the person's safety must be reviewed and consent will only be overridden where there is a risk of 'serious harm'. A risk of serious harm is when a person's life is in danger and/or they are the victim of abuse causing a deterioration of mental or physical health.

Child referrals

If a child safeguarding concern arises, it is best practice to discuss the concern with the parent or carer before a referral is made, unless it puts the child at risk.

7. Capacity

The Co-operative will ensure the key principles contained in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 are applied when safeguarding adults.

- A presumption of capacity – every adult has the right to make their own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity unless proved otherwise.
- Individuals being supported to make their own decisions – all practicable help must be given before a person is treated as not being able to make their own decisions.

- Unwise decisions – a person has the right to make a decision that others may regard as unwise. If there is a risk they may have been exploited or influenced, further advice should be sought from social services.
- Best interests – anything done for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done in their best interests.
- Least restrictive option – anything done for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms

8. Contractors

All contractors and agents providing front line services on behalf of the Co-operative must:

- Have an awareness of safeguarding and of the different types and indicators of abuse.
- Notify the Co-operative of all safeguarding concerns.
- Fully co-operate with any investigation if an allegation is made against them.
- Never knowingly enter a property where the sole occupant is or appears to be under 16 years of age.

9. Reporting abuse – Employees and Members

If an allegation is received relating to an employee, a Management Committee Member or other volunteer, it will be reported to the police and the local Safeguarding board. Internal investigations will not take place until the outcome of any external criminal or social services investigation is known.

The Co-operative's Safeguarding Procedure should be followed when reporting abuse.

To safeguard themselves, all employees and Members should adhere to the Co-operative's Codes of Conduct.

10. Training

Training will be made available for all employees and Members to promote awareness and understanding of the different types and indicators of abuse and how concerns should be reported.

11. Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to this policy:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Health and Social Care Act 2008
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010

Or any statutory modification or re-enactment of these.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects best practice and to address legislative, regulatory or operational changes.

Approved by the Management Committee on	5th April 2022
Signed	
Position of Signatory	
For review on	5th April 2025

Appendix 1

The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance: Six Safeguarding Principles

- **Empowerment** - people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent
- **Protection** – support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** - the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Partnership** – local solutions through services working within the community. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- **Accountability** – safeguarding practices and arrangements should be accountable and transparent to the public.

Appendix 2

The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance: Types of adult abuse

- **Physical abuse** – the use of force that results in pain, injury or a deterioration in a person’s physical state. Examples include: hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, excessive restraint.
- **Sexual abuse** – sexual activities when the individual does not want the activity, or they have not consented, they do not understand/have the capacity to understand or they are under 16 years old. Examples include: rape, sexual assault, indecent exposure, inappropriate looking or

touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual harassment, sexual photography, subsection to pornography, sexual acts without consent or pressure to consent.

- **Psychological abuse** – a harmful effect on the emotional, health and/or development of an adult. Examples include: threats of harm, intimidation, humiliation, verbal abuse, harassment, blaming, controlling, isolation, coercion, unreasonable withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** – using the property, assets or income of an adult who is vulnerable without their consent and making financial transactions for adults without mental capacity. Examples include theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, preventing a person's access to their money, the misuse of possessions or benefits.
- **Discriminatory abuse** – service, or care given, influenced by an aspect of the individual at risk. Examples include: harassment, verbal abuse or unequal treatment based on a protected characteristic such as age, disability or gender.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – not meeting basic or specific social and/or medical needs. Examples include: withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or heating, ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care, support or educational services.
- **Self-neglect** – neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings, including behaviour such as hoarding.
- **Institutional abuse** – the mistreatment of people brought about by poor or inadequate care or support. Examples include: lack of leadership, not offering choice or promoting independence, failure to respond to complaints.

Appendix 3

Children Act 1989: Definitions of child abuse

- **Emotional abuse** – behaviour which can or has the potential to have severe negative effects on the behavioural or emotional development of a child, such as ill-treatment or rejection.
- **Physical abuse** – possible or actual physical injury or a failure to protect a child from injury.
- **Sexual abuse** – sexual exploitation of a child.
- **Neglect** – failure to meet basic needs or protect a child from the risk of danger.