

PINECREST HOUSING LIMITED (PHL)

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This policy sets out our approach to promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk by safeguarding them from risk of abuse and harm. Working with other organisations, we will safeguard tenants and others by aiming to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect. Safeguarding applies to children, young people and adults at risk.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Clearly outline what constitutes abuse, neglect and harm
- Ensure we fulfil our legal obligations to report safeguarding concerns to the relevant authorities
- Support local authorities with their statutory duties relating to safeguarding

We consider the abuse of anyone to be wholly unacceptable and fully recognise the harmful effect that abuse has, not just on the victim but also their families and the wider community. The protection offered by this policy applies to tenants living in accommodation managed or owned by PHL Social Housing. This policy applies to all PHL staff and to any contractors and sub-contractors who are providing services to PHL.

Definitions

Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

A **child** is anyone who is under the age of eighteen.

A **young person** here is a care leaver, a person who is 18 and over but is still receiving children's services. For example, a person who has substantial and complex needs might be supported in a residential education setting until the age of 25.

An **adult at risk** (sometimes called a vulnerable adult) is someone aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not these needs are being met). Safeguarding applies to adults at risk who are unable to protect themselves from experiencing, or the risk of experiencing, abuse as a result of their care and support needs.

Abuse is the violation of a person's human and/or civil rights by any other person or persons.

Neglect is the failure to meet a child, young person or adult at risk's basic needs.

Harm is physical and/or psychological injury.

Prevention

We work towards minimising the potential for abuse to occur. We raise awareness of abuse and its effects and inform our tenants on how to keep themselves and others safe by giving appropriate advice. We will highlight the role that local people play in safeguarding and encourage members of the community to report suspected abuse either to us or to a relevant agency, and offer support in reporting concerns.

Reporting

We view abuse or suspected abuse as extremely serious and are committed to exposing, investigating and addressing issues of abuse or suspected abuse. We recognise that because of

the level of contact we have with customers, we are well placed to identify children, young people or vulnerable adults who may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse. All staff are required to report any safeguarding concerns they have as soon as they arise. We fully support staff to report concerns and ensure that their concerns are taken seriously. If we consider a criminal offence has occurred, or the customer faces an imminent risk we notify the police immediately. If we have concerns about the immediate health and welfare of a customer in relation to a safeguarding matter, we notify the emergency services and local authority as soon as possible.

Responding to a safeguarding concern

We seek to offer tenants the safest and most supportive environment in which they can report abuse. Any report or allegation of abuse will be listened to and investigated. We support and cooperate with local authorities where they have concerns that relate to one of our customers. We respond to all local authority requests regarding safeguarding (sometimes referred to as Section 42 requests) in a timely manner.

We support tenants through any investigation process. We ensure that an adult's wellbeing is promoted when reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns. We have regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action and support them to share their views with other agencies. We recognise that adults at risk can sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

We recognise that our tenants will include both victims and perpetrators. We therefore work in partnership with other agencies to support victims of abuse and address the risks presented by perpetrators. In cases where a perpetrator is a PHL tenant, we will utilise the most appropriate intervention available to manage their behaviour and will work with relevant agencies to provide appropriate support as needed.

In child safeguarding cases we will work with the family and other agencies as appropriate to produce a holistic solution that best meets the child and/or family's' needs.

Partnership Working

Responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk is shared amongst a number of agencies. We recognise the role we have to play in taking all reports of abuse and neglect seriously and that many organisations share our desire to tackle and eradicate abuse. To this end, we work with other organisations such as the police and local authorities to achieve our aims and recognise our legal requirements.

Consent and Capacity

We always assume that an adult has the mental capacity to make decisions about their personal safety, unless we have been formally advised otherwise by an appropriate health and/or social care professional or have seen relevant documentation e.g. power of attorney. If we suspect that an adult does not have mental capacity, we refer them to the appropriate agency for an assessment.

We only accept consent to share information with other agencies if it is freely given, informed and not inferred or provided under duress. If consent is refused, information is only shared in the following circumstances:

- There is a need to safeguard a person/people at risk
- There is a significant risk of harm to self or others
- We are reasonably concerned that the person lacks the mental capacity to make an informed decision about sharing the information
- We suspect the person has the mental capacity to make that decision but they may be under duress or coerced
- We suspect a criminal offence has been or will be committed
- PHL are implicated in the allegation
- Some other legal provision requires it, including under a court order.

Where the issue relates to a child, we do not need to seek consent to make a referral.

We will keep a record of decisions relating to the sharing or non-sharing of information and the reasons on which such decisions are made.

Policy Review

We will review this policy at least once every two years to make sure it remains relevant and accurate. Our reviews will take account of customer complaints, stakeholder feedback, and changes in legislation, regulation or sector best practice.

Version	Checked By	Amendments	Approved By	Date of Approval	Published by	Date of Review
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