



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust

The Trust

Safeguarding Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and guidelines that Peaks & Plains Housing Trust (the Trust) commits to in respect of safeguarding adults at risk and children.
- 1.2. The Trust will work in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults, children, young people and their families
- 1.3. The Trust expects all employees, volunteers and contractors working on our behalf to be able to identify, report and act on safeguarding concerns.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The policy applies to all Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors. The policy provides guidance on the Trust's obligations and expectations for safeguarding children and adults at risk. Temporary and agency staff are included in the obligations arising from this policy.
- 2.2. The Trust has separate policies for supporting customers who may also require safeguarding as a result of anti-social behaviour and/or domestic abuse. This policy should be read in conjunction with those policies.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1. The Trust has responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to safeguard children at risk of abuse and neglect and under the Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to safeguard adults with care and support needs
- 3.2. The Care Act (2014) introduced six principles for working with adults with care and support needs:
 - Empowerment
 - Prevention
 - Proportionality
 - Protection
 - Partnership
 - Accountability
- 3.3. The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 provides the legal framework for establishing if people can make a specific decision themselves. There are 5 principles of the MCA which are explained in detail at 5.8.1 (below).
- 3.4. The Trust's recruitment processes will include Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks at either Standard or Enhanced levels for new staff where it has been identified that the post being recruited to is a position that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act regulations.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. Safeguarding refers to the protection of the welfare of children and the promotion of the wellbeing of adults.
- 4.2. Safeguarding adults means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from harm and abuse (Care Act 2014). Adults with care and support needs are most at risk of harm, abuse and neglect. For example;
- People with learning disabilities
 - People with mental health problems
 - Autism
 - Older people
 - People with physical disabilities
 - People with visual and sensory impairment
 - People who rely on others for care and/or support
- 4.3. 'Abuse' is any behaviour that deliberately or unknowingly causes a person harm or endangers their life and is a violation of a persons' human and civil rights by another person or persons. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts.
- 4.4. 'Significant Harm' means ill treatment, the impairment of health and the impairment of development.
- 4.5. Safeguarding Children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment
 - Preventing impairment of children's health and 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.

5. OUR POLICY

- 5.1. The Trust believes that living life free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. The Trust recognises that safeguarding those at risk is everyone's responsibility and all staff play a part in preventing, being alert to and responding appropriately to abuse and/ or neglect related concerns that occur within our homes and communities.
- 5.2. The Trust will ensure that all staff and contractors that visit people in their own homes or work with children and adults in our communities are:
- Aware of their responsibilities to identify and report safeguarding concerns.
 - Compliant with legal and regulatory requirements
 - Willing to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce the risk of harm and abuse for our customers
 - Able to identify the types of abuse relating to children and adults.
 - Aware of where abuse can occur and the perpetrators of abuse.

- Always acting in the customer’s best interests by making safeguarding personal for the customer
 - Able to report concerns internally and to statutory bodies.
 - Aware of the Trust’s Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.
 - Aware that safeguarding is the responsibility of all the Trusts employees and contractors
- 5.3. Through the induction process and regular training, staff (and contractors) who come into contact with children and adults in their everyday work, will understand the responsibilities within their role around safeguarding children and adults.
- 5.4. Our staff and contractors are responsible for:
- Taking seriously, listening carefully and reporting appropriately any adult safeguarding concerns reported.
 - Ensuring immediate action is taken, as per the policy if someone in serious danger or a crime is likely to be/or has been committed.
 - Ensuring there are accurate records of the allegation, initial enquiries and action and appropriate paperwork/forms as instructed by this policy and supporting procedures.
 - Acting in accordance with this policy, and its associated procedure and protocols and attendance at appropriate training and supervision.
 - Understanding the Whistleblowing policy and obligations to report suspected or actual abuse or neglect. The Trust’s Whistleblowing Policy encourages and supports staff to report concerns about the conduct of staff members. The Trust will report any safeguarding concerns raised about the conduct of staff members to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and act in accordance with the LADO’s advice and guidance.
- 5.4.1. The Trust has clear lines of responsibility established for the raising of safeguarding concerns. There is full accountability throughout the organisation for the detection, recording and reporting of child and adult safeguarding concerns. The sharing of information is essential for the effective safeguarding and promoting of the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people. It has been identified in serious case reviews where poor information sharing resulted in missed opportunities to take action to keep people safe.
- Where possible the Trust will seek the persons consent to share information, however the Trust cannot guarantee full confidentiality when there is a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults or children at risk, or in the public interest.
- 5.5. The Trust has a designated Safeguarding Lead who is the Head of Customer Experience. The Safeguarding Lead will ensure the Trust is represented at relevant multi-agency forums and be responsible for ensuring the organisation is kept up to date with legislative changes and learns from best practice.
- 5.6. The Trust will provide training and guidance to new and existing staff on:
- The types of abuse
 - Where abuse occurs and by whom

- Recognising the signs of abuse
- Reporting safeguarding concerns internally and to statutory bodies
- How to deal with a disclosure of abuse

5.7. Safeguarding Adults

5.7.1. The Trust is committed to improving the lives of those experiencing abuse. The six key safeguarding principles, defined by the Care Act 2014 underpin all safeguarding practice 'making safeguarding personal', The Trust will ensure that a person led and outcome focused approach is taken.

5.7.2. The Trust subscribes to the six principles of the Care Act 2014;

- Empowerment: People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention: It's better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership: Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

5.7.3. The Trust uses customer data to identify customers at increased risk of harm, e.g. disabled and older customers. We will use patterns of customer behaviour to proactively identify customers at risk, e.g. high/low volume of repairs, gas capped, high/low volume of contacts.

5.8. Considering Mental Capacity

5.8.1. The Mental Capacity Act applies to everybody who has dealings with people who may lack capacity, and particularly if they have a professional relationship with the person. The Trust will comply with the requirements set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and will consider the Act's five key principles during interactions with customers:

- A presumption of capacity – every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise
- Supporting individuals to make their own decisions – a person must be given all practicable help before anyone treats them as not being able to make their own decisions
- Unwise decisions – just because an individual makes what might be seen as an unwise decision, they should not be assumed to lack capacity to make that decision
- Best Interests – an act done, or decision made under the Act 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 must consider whether it is possible to decide or act in a way that would interfere less with the person's rights and freedoms of action, or whether there is a need to decide or act at all.

5.8.2. We will take the opportunity to confirm capacity when appropriate (eg.at tenancy sign up, review and termination; during arrears discussions, anti-social behaviour incidents and complaints). If in doubt the Trust will make appropriate referrals and request that a capacity assessment takes place.

5.9. **Safeguarding Children**

5.9.1. The Trust is committed to safeguard children and young people who use or are connected to the Trust to protect them from abuse. The Children’s Act sets out two key principles of “making safeguarding everyone’s responsibility” and adopting a “child-centred approach”.

5.9.2. The Trust will always act in the best interests of the child when there is a safeguarding concern, which may mean contradicting their wishes. The Trusts Safeguarding Team / Safeguarding Inbox provides support and advice to staff relating to safeguarding concerns. The Trust operates a separate policy and procedure which must be read in conjunction with this policy, setting out the Trust’s response to reports of domestic abuse.

5.10. **Multi Agency Working**

5.10.1. The statutory guidance within the Care Act emphasises the need to share information about the safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity. The Trust will share information and fully contribute to multi agency working, this may include staff representing the Trust at meetings with its partner agencies. The Trust will respond to requests from the Local Authority, Safeguarding Adult Boards, Safeguarding Children Boards, Child Protection Conferences and Serious Case Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews wherever appropriate. “Complex safeguarding” is used to describe criminal activity (often organised) or behaviour associated with criminality, involving vulnerable children where there is exploitation and/or a clear or implied safeguarding concern.

6. **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

6.1. This policy, by its nature and focus, supports the needs and promotes the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and adults, people as defined by the nine protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010).

6.2. The Trust will ensure that its Safeguarding policy is accessible to its diverse customers and will take into account the different needs of people wishing to raise a safeguarding concern. We will offer practical support for customers who may otherwise find it difficult to raise a safeguarding concern.

6.3. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure that all appropriate actions are put in place to support those tenants who have protected characteristics.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1. All staff and contractors have responsibility for responding to safeguarding, as set out in 5.4 (above).
- 7.2. The Board is responsible for approval of this policy and for ensuring safeguarding activity is carried out effectively by the Trust's staff.
- 7.3. The Head of Customer Experience is the Trust's designated lead safeguard officer, who is responsible for the operational implementation of this policy.
- 7.4. The Trust's Customer Support and Enforcement team will undertake investigation of safeguarding reports and ensure referrals are made to appropriate partner agencies.

8. MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 8.1. Safeguarding is a key operational responsibility. As such, Board will receive an annual performance report, relating to safeguarding activity within the period.
 - 8.1.1. Board reporting of safeguarding will include;
 - Number of Concern Reports
 - Evaluation of investigated cases and alerts and lesson learnt
 - Compliance with policy and procedures
 - 8.2. Any safeguarding failures or near misses will be reported to the Executive Management team and, where appropriate, to the Board.
 - 8.3. Safeguarding activity including referrals and outcomes will be part of the monthly reporting suite of KPIs reported to the Trust's Performance Management Group.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1. The Trust's Challenge Group has been consulted on this Safeguarding policy and has endorsed this policy.

10. REVIEW

- 10.1. This policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the anniversary of its approval.
- 10.2. The policy will be reviewed sooner if there are major legal, regulatory or other changes which make this necessary. This policy will also be reviewed should there be a significant failure or near miss to safeguard our customers.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Recruitment Process – online e-learning
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Workplace Violence & Abuse Policy

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Name:	Safeguarding Policy
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Approved by:	PPHT Board
Drafted By:	David Squires, Head of Customer Experience
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