



Policy Outline

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

OVERALL PURPOSE

The aims of this policy are essentially to provide a framework which enables the organisation to :

- Protect vulnerable children
- Raise awareness of Child Safeguarding issues and responsibilities
- Strengthen working relationships with Children's Services and Social Care

To ensure that all relevant procedures comply with the Organisation's mission:
"Putting Customers first "

INTRODUCTION

West North West Homes Leeds will ensure that:

- West North West homes Leeds (WNWhL) seeks to ensure that the Policy does not discriminate against customers on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability/illness or age.
- WNWhL has developed and will implement its own Child Safeguarding Procedures, which will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- WNWhL will ensure customer care is delivered at all times and that we comply with our mission statement "Putting Customers First" and commitment to Every Child Matters.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

We will monitor the implementation and delivery of services through this Policy through:

- 100% CRB checks for relevant personnel, and compliance with the Vetting and Barring regulations when these become operational later in 2009.
- Quarterly meetings between Housing Services Manager & Locality Coordinator (Children Leeds Partnership)
- Representation at the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board area meetings.
- Provision of 2 training sessions annually, and further briefings on an ad hoc basis
- Present an annual update to Board covering Child Safeguarding and wider Every

Child Matters issues.

- Provide information to customers on an annual basis utilising 'The Buzz' newsletter.

Child Safeguarding Policy

1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 West North West Homes Leeds (WNWhL) recognises the rights of every child to Safeguarding from abuse of any kind, and is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children in the communities it serves.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this policy and procedures, 'WNWhL' will apply equally to the organisation's partnering contractors.
- 1.3 Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Definitions of child abuse are identified in Appendix 1, and Appendix 2 lists the related documents.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this policy, the word 'child' is used to refer to those under the age of 18, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The word 'staff' is used to refer to anyone working on behalf of WNWhL whether that work is paid or voluntary, full or part time, and includes contractors, the self-employed and board members.

2.0 Outline of Service

- 2.1 WNWhL recognises the important role its staff can play in their day to day work, from recognising child welfare issues to working with Children's Services to enable them to fulfil their Regulatory duties to the vulnerable. WNWhL will appoint a member of the Management Group and a Board Director to act as Child Safeguarding Champion (CPC), who will take the lead on child Safeguarding issues as per the child Safeguarding procedures.
- 2.2 By introducing this policy and procedures, and providing appropriate training, WNWhL will ensure all staff members are aware of their responsibility to be vigilant about child Safeguarding issues, their own conduct, and how to respond to any concerns or suspicions they may have. This policy indicates how WNWhL undertakes to fulfil its responsibility as an organisation, and should be read in conjunction with the Child Safeguarding Procedures.

Recruitment, training and supervision of staff

- 2.3 All WNWhL staff members who have specific and regular contact with children will be required to undergo a Criminal Record Bureau enhanced check. This requirement will also apply to staff visiting schools and working with children on an 'ad-hoc' basis, and to the Child Safeguarding Coordinator upon taking this role. Until these checks have been completed satisfactorily, the member

of staff must not work alone with children but may work under the direct supervision of an existing staff member who has been checked.

- 2.4 Details of staff who have completed CRB checks will be maintained by Human Resources. This process will be reviewed regularly so that checks do not become out of date. New procedures, called the Barring and Vetting Regulations, are to be implemented in line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The core purpose of the act is to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. The new regulations are expected to be 'live' from November 2009.
- 2.5 All staff members will be familiarised with the WNWhL Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures as part of their induction, and kept up to date with subsequent training sessions as necessary. The Child Safeguarding Champion and any member of staff involved in regular youth work, who are more likely to have a child confide in them, will receive more specialised training. Training will be delivered through a partnering approach the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). We will inform our primary Partner organisations of our Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- 2.6 Observing this policy and the related procedures will safeguard staff and WNWhL from any malicious or incorrect suspicions or allegations, as well as safeguarding children. Where an allegation or suspicion of abuse is reported against a member of staff, the appropriate Head of Service should be informed of the situation immediately, so that the disciplinary and / or complaints procedures may be followed in tandem with external investigations. Please see the Child Safeguarding Procedures for further details.
- 2.7 The member of staff concerned will be treated fairly, respectfully and honestly, and be supported throughout the process. They will be clearly informed of the procedures being followed, their implications and outcome, as long as doing so does not prejudice the external investigation or the right to confidentiality of the victim or concerned party. The member of staff will have the rights laid out in the WNWhL Disciplinary Procedures. If the member of staff should choose to resign, then the Child Safeguarding Procedures will still be implemented.

Code of Conduct

- 2.8 Members of staff will treat children with respect in attitude, language and actions at all times, and encourage other adults and children to do likewise.
- 2.9 WNWhL staff will adhere to the this Code of Conduct at all times

Visits

- 2.10 When visiting tenants and residents, a member of staff should show their I.D. (WNWhL or contractor's photographic identification badge) before entering the home, should not enter unless an adult is present, and should avoid being left alone in a room with a child at any time during the visit.

Activities/Meetings

- 2.11 Where group activities are taking place, such as summer trips or youth

projects, parental / carer consent forms must be obtained for every child taking part in an activity without the parent or carer present. Any work or projects undertaken with LCC Youth Service will adhere to the Council's Youth Service guidelines, and WNWhL and partner agencies will follow these guidelines in respect of ratios for safe supervision and risk assessment.

Images

- 2.12 Staff members should ensure they have the verbal or written permission of the parent / carer before taking photographs or recordings of children. The subsequent use of any such images or recordings is reliant upon the specific written permission of the relevant parent or carer. The staff member will explain the purpose of use (e.g. for publicity materials) and will not identify the children in the picture by surname or disclose / publish any of their contact details.

Internet

- 2.13 Staff members may not access any inappropriate or offensive illegal materials relating to children. Doing so constitutes gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal. If Internet access is being provided for children's use as part of activities organised by WNWhL they must be supervised at all times or restrictive software used to ensure their safety.

3.0 Specific Needs

- 3.1 WNWhL will take into account any specific needs, which may arise, of older and vulnerable people, people with disabilities, and Black and Minority Ethnic groups, in a manner that promotes equality and inclusiveness

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 This policy has been shared with stakeholders including Social Care and Childrens Services.
- 4.2 The Policy has been discussed with customers at the Customer Sounding Board on 5 June, and has been discussed at the SIG on 9 June.
- 4.3 The policy and associated draft procedures have been shared with SMT and 3rd tier Managers as a further means of consultation.

5.0 Implementation

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of all WNWhL Staff to ensure that their work is carried out in line with this policy and the procedures relating to it.
- 5.2 All our staff will be trained at induction and at regular intervals to ensure they are aware of the requirements of this policy.

6.0 Monitoring

- 6.1 WNWhL will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by reviewing performance

against Services Standards & Local Performance Indicators.

7.0 Review

In preparation for delivering this policy during 2009 West North West homes Leeds has reviewed and taken into account new or emerging government legislation and government and council policies.

As a result, this policy now fully reflects, and is inclusive of the issues arising from those policies and legislation, and considers the impacts arising.

7.1 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 has introduced the concept of 'safer recruitment' and regulations relating to employment have been introduced, as indicated above in para 2.4. The new safeguarding regulations will be 'live' from November 2009 and will be administered by the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

8.0 Legislation

8.1 New or emerging legislation and new policy for 2009 include:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Appendices to this policy

Appendix 1: Definitions of Child Abuse

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from 'Working Together To Safeguard Children' (2006), a joint document from the Department of Health, the Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills. A child may suffer or be at risk from more than one type of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home and abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Appendix 2: Related documents

- Children's Act 1989,
- Children Act 2004
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Leeds Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures
(www.leedslscb.org.uk)

WNWHL Documents :

- ASB Policy
- Tenancy Support Policy
- Vulnerability Policy
- Child Safeguarding Procedures
- Domestic Violence Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Every Child Matters Action Plan
- Vulnerability Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy

