



Mount Green
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Safeguarding Adults Policy

Approved by the Exec Team:	21 August 2019
Implemented on:	21 August 2019
Review Date:	July 2022
Service Area:	Neighbourhoods/Independent Living



Safeguarding Adults Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1 Mount Green will not tolerate the abuse of adults with care and support needs. We are committed to promoting wellbeing, preventing harm and responding effectively if concerns are raised about Mount Green tenants.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- ensure that Mount Green follows Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Board Policy and Procedures
- Responds to safeguarding issues in line with The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Adult safeguarding work is about protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect, and about responding well when adults with care and support needs are experiencing or are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 3.2 Mount Green works with a wide range of adults in both our general needs and Independent Living accommodation and as such we acknowledge that vulnerable residents may be at risk of some form of abuse or neglect.
- 3.3 We recognise that every person has the right to be safe from abuse and fear. We all have a responsibility to prevent, recognise and act on any potential abuse and neglect quickly to keep adults at risk of abuse safe from harm in the neighbourhoods and communities where we work.

4. Definitions

4.1 **What does 'safeguarding adults' mean?**

Safeguarding adults means preventing harm and reducing the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs. It is about people and organisations working together to stop abuse or neglect wherever possible. At the same time we must safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live. Safeguarding adults must promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned

4.2 **Who is an 'adult at risk'?**

The definition of adults that adult safeguarding processes may apply to is set out in section 42 of the Care Act 2014. They are people who:



- are aged 18 years or more, and
- have needs for care and support (whether or not these are currently being met),
- are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

This includes adults with physical, sensory and mental impairments and learning disabilities, however those impairments have arisen, such as whether present from birth or due to advancing age, chronic illness or injury.

Also included are people with a mental illness, dementia or other memory impairments, and people who misuse substances or alcohol.

In this policy the term “adult” means people coming within this definition.

- 4.2.1 Mount Green is aware that just because a person is old or frail or has a disability, does not mean they are inevitably ‘at risk’. Section 42 (1) (b) of the Care Act says that one of the tests to determine whether there is a duty for there to be a safeguarding adults enquiry is that the person “is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect”

4.3 What is Abuse

Abuse can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual should always be considered. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. The following are examples of issues that would be considered as abuse or neglect:

- **Physical abuse** includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, unlawful or inappropriate restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic abuse** is “an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse... by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality” (Home Office, 2013). Domestic violence and abuse may include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; as well as so called ‘honour’ based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- **Sexual abuse** includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial and material abuse** includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.



- **Modern slavery** includes human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use the means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhuman treatment.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse** includes abuse based on a person's race, sex, disability, faith, sexual orientation, or age; other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment or hate crime/hate incident.
- **Organisational abuse** includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Self-neglect** covers a wide range of behaviours, such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviours such as hoarding. A safeguarding response in relation to self-neglect may be appropriate where:
 - a person is declining assistance in relation to their care and support needs, and
 - the impact of their decision, has or is likely to have a substantial impact on their overall individual wellbeing

4.3.1 Potential indicators of abuse include:

- Change in living conditions
- Lack of heating, clothing or food
- Sudden loss of weight or change in personal appearance
- Unexplained injuries/bruising
- Changes in mood – seeming withdrawn or fearful
- Unexplained changes of behaviour/engagement
- Inability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of money
- Unexplained withdrawals from an account
- Unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents
- Sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents

5. **Policy Statement**

Mount Green will not tolerate the abuse of adults with care and support needs. It is committed to promoting wellbeing, preventing harm and responding effectively if concerns are raised

5.1 **Policy Objectives**

Mount Green is committed to the aims of adult safeguarding



- prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs
- stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live
- promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned
- raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing abuse
- identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
- provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult
- address what has caused the abuse or neglect

To contribute to meeting these aims, we will

- Manage our services in a way which minimises the risk of abuse occurring
- Work with adults with care and support needs and other agencies to end any abuse that is taking place

To achieve these aims we will

- Ensure that all managers, employees and volunteers have access to and are familiar with this safeguarding adult policy and procedure and their responsibilities within it
- Ensure concerns or allegations of abuse are always taken seriously
- Ensure the Mental Capacity Act is used to make decisions on behalf of those adults at risk who are unable to make particular decisions for themselves.
- Ensure all staff receive training in relation to safeguarding adults at a level relevant to their role.
- Ensure that people using our services, and where relevant their relatives and their friends, have access to information about how to report concerns or allegations of abuse.
- Ensure there is a named lead person to promote adult safeguarding awareness and practice within the organisation

This policy and procedure has been developed to be consistent with the Safeguarding Adults Board Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

5.2 Principles

The following six principles will inform the ways in which staff work with adults at risk and underpin all adult safeguarding work.

- **Empowerment** We will ask people about what outcomes they want at the point of concern and record this information.



- **Prevention** – We can appropriately respond to signs of abuse and take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – We work in the best interests of the adult and will always seek the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – We will support and seek to represent those in greatest need in the safeguarding adult process.
- **Partnership** – We will work with others to identify local solutions through a range of services.
- **Accountability** – We seek to be accountable and transparent in all our services. Staff understand what is expected of them and others.

5.3 Partnership Working

As a provider of housing and support services, we play an important role in building and maintaining partnerships with local authorities and key specialist agencies.

We will work with them on a regular basis to safeguard our residents. We are committed to working swiftly and productively with all relevant agencies to take action to protect an adult who may be experiencing or is likely to experience significant harm. We recognise that we have an important role to play with local authorities and the police in the prevention, detection and reporting of concerns and we will always support them with their investigations in the best way possible. However, we recognise that local authorities are often the lead agency when co-ordinating safeguarding investigations.

We will co-operate by sharing information with the local authority and/or Police as appropriate. Local agreements/protocols are in place that set out the processes and principles for sharing information between Mount Green and other agencies.

We will ensure that all staff, contractors, agents and any third party working on our behalf understand this policy and procedure, are aware of the signs of abuse and know what to do if they have reason to believe that abuse is taking place.

5.4 Confidentiality and Sharing Information

The Care Act does not require consent for adult safeguarding work, so absence of consent is not a barrier to such work. However, the person should be informed before referring an adult safeguarding concern to the local authority, unless to do so creates disproportionate risk.

Adults have a general right to independence, choice and self-determination including control over information about themselves and their privacy. In the



context of adult safeguarding these rights can be overridden in certain circumstances.

- Emergency or life-threatening situations may warrant the sharing of relevant information with the relevant emergency services without consent
- The law does not prevent the sharing of sensitive, personal information within organisations. If the information is confidential, but there is a safeguarding concern, sharing it may be justified
- The law does not prevent the sharing of sensitive, personal information between organisations where the public interest served outweighs the public interest served by protecting confidentiality – for example, where a serious crime may be prevented
- The General Data Protection Regulation sets out a framework to enable the lawful sharing of information.
- An individual employee cannot give a personal assurance of confidentiality
- It is good practice to try to gain the person’s consent to share information, but only where this is relevant.

As long as it does not increase risk, we will inform the person if we need to share their information without consent.

5.5 Responding to suspected or alleged concerns of abuse or neglect

Our staff may enter residents’ homes to carry out a range of tasks and in doing so they may see evidence of abuse or neglect.

If a member of staff suspects abuse or has received a report of abuse they will:

- Complete a Mount Green Safeguarding Concern Form and send it immediately to the Mount Green Safeguarding Lead.
- The Safeguarding Lead will contact the adult at risk and may refer the concern to Adult Social Care Services and where appropriate, the Police.
- Record any discussions and actions carried out following suspected or alleged abuse or neglect accurately, thoroughly and promptly.
- Fully co-operate with any agencies involved with cases of alleged abuse or neglect.
- Work with other agencies to investigate any alleged breach of tenancy agreement and take action through policies and procedures where appropriate.

5.6 Staffing

We are committed to working within best practice as established by the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) and will follow rigorous procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff. DBS checks will be completed when recruiting staff to work in a ‘regulated’ activity.

Where a person suspected of abuse or neglect is a member of staff, the member of staff will be suspended and a disciplinary investigation will be



carried out immediately. Appropriate action will be taken in line with our Disciplinary Policy.

In order to protect themselves from allegations of abuse, or situations that could be misunderstood, staff members will maintain strong professional boundaries as detailed in the Code of Conduct.

All relevant staff will receive appropriate and timely training.

5.7 Whistle blowing

When raising a concern staff are encouraged to speak in the first instance with their line manager. If they feel this is inappropriate, or if the allegations regard their line manager, they should contact the Director of Operations.

Our Whistleblowing Policy for staff provides a confidential route for staff to raise serious concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or dangers within the organisation. If a staff member asks for their identity to be protected, anonymity will be maintained wherever possible.

We are committed to listening to any suspicion and acting. However, if a member of staff feels that Mount Green is not taking their safeguarding adults concerns seriously, they have the right to explain their concerns to the Police or Social Services/Local Authorities.

6. Monitoring

We will record and monitor every safeguarding alert and produce an annual report to the Board.

7. Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 Mount Green respects and values the differences of our customers, partners and staff. We will treat all residents fairly and with respect.
- 7.2 Everyone has the absolute right to be protected from abuse, regardless of age, gender, disability, pregnancy and maternity, class, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, location, marital status, criminal behaviour or immigration status.
- 7.3 We recognise that there may be additional communication barriers for adults who are disabled or for those whose first language is not English. We are committed to helping them overcome these barriers and will work jointly with external parties in these cases.
- 7.4 We will communicate with residents in the way that suits them wherever possible.



8. Consultation and Publicising the Policy

This policy will be publicised to residents through:

- Our Residents' Handbook
- Leaflets
- Our website

