



1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning the safeguarding of adults and children at risk of abuse.

1.2. The Care Act (2014) states that the following 6 key principles must underpin all adult safeguarding work:

- Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention – It is 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.
- Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

The Care Act refers to ‘making safeguarding personal’ meaning it should be person-led and outcome-focused. It engages the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

1.3. The 1989 Children Act identifies 4 categories of child abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

Further detail on the types and indicators of abuse is given in the Safeguarding Children Procedures to assist colleagues how to recognise and deal with child safeguarding concerns.

This policy is based on:

- Statutory guidance under the Children’s Act 1989 and 2004 with the purpose of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, and ensuring children grow up with safe, effective care and have optimum life chances to enter adulthood successfully
- The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board E-Safety Strategic Framework and other good practice guidance in relation to the appropriate and safe use of internet and digital media by children and young people

1.4 There are 10 main types of abuse of adults at risk:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Self Neglect
- Domestic Abuse

Further information on types and indicators of abuse is given in the *Safeguarding Adults Procedure and Guidance*.

1.5 Alliance Homes has separate *Safeguarding Adults Procedures and Safeguarding Children's Procedures* to ensure colleagues/ contractors know how to recognise and deal with suspected abuse.

1.6 This policy is based on adults and children at risk having the right to live free from abuse.

1.7 Cath Pullin (Head of Housing and Community Services) is the designated Safeguarding Lead for Alliance Homes, including the safeguarding of both adults and children. The lead will provide a link to the local authority Safeguarding Team, report on referrals and support Alliance Homes colleagues.

2. POLICY DETAIL

2.1 Alliance Homes is committed to ensuring that adults and children who live in our homes or use our services are not exploited or abused, and that our working practices minimise the risk of abuse.

2.2 This policy applies throughout Alliance Homes and extends to contractors used by Alliance Homes. Support colleagues are more likely to come across suspected abuse due to the nature of their work, but any colleague or contractor may potentially identify a person at risk in the course of their work.

- 2.3. Alliance Homes have adopted the following definition of abuse:
“Abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within a relationship, where there is an expectation of trust, and which causes harm or distress to a person”. (Adapted from Action on Elder Abuse’s definition of elder abuse)
- 2.4. The Care Act 2014 states that the safeguarding duty applies to an adult who:
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of these needs), and; is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
 - as a result of care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.
- 2.5. This policy covers abuse of adults at risk such as tenants, leaseholders, or other customers by anyone who has a relationship of trust with them – friends, relatives, care staff, housing colleagues, support team etc. Sometimes an act between customer and customer may also come within the scope of the Safeguarding Procedures rather than Nuisance or Harassment procedures because of the vulnerability of the victim and the nature of the act.
- 2.6. This policy covers abuse of children, who may live in Alliance Homes’ properties, or visit them.
- 2.7. Alliance Homes recruitment processes are designed to minimise the risk of recruiting colleagues who present a risk to customers; these include obtaining ‘Enhanced’ Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all colleagues that meet the current eligibility criteria and having robust selection and interviewing process.
- 2.8. All relevant customer facing colleagues are required to receive training on how to identify report and take action on abuse. All colleagues will follow Alliance Homes guidance on Professional boundaries designed to prevent opportunities for financial or other exploitation (see *Professional practice and boundaries guidance*).
- 2.9. Alliance Homes will work in co-operation with the local authority safeguarding adults and safeguarding children’s teams and where relevant, agencies such as doctors, the police and victim support agencies.
- 2.10. Colleagues must respect individuals’ confidentiality and not divulge information given in confidence unless justified as an assessed risk to the adult at risk or child. All suspected cases should be reported to an Alliance Homes line manager
- 2.11. Alliance Homes acknowledges individuals’ rights to privacy, dignity, independence, and choice, and recognises that these rights will sometimes involve a degree of risk. Where an individual chooses to accept this risk, their wishes will be respected subject to their capacity to anticipate and understand the risk.

Further guidance on the Mental Capacity Act is located on the North Somerset Safeguarding Adults pages: <https://www.nssab.co.uk/resources-safeguarding-professionals/deprivation-liberty-safeguards>

- 2.12 Customers of support services will be informed at the start of their service about this policy, in a manner or alternative format appropriate to their needs. Other methods are also used to explain abuse such as leaflets, handbooks or flyers on notice boards in communal areas and via our website www.alliancehomesgroup.org.uk
- 2.13 Procedures will ensure that all cases are properly and objectively recorded and monitored by Managers. The information is securely stored in accordance with UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), tailored by the Data Protection Act 2018 and Alliance Homes Group's Data Protection policy and procedures.
- 2.14 When adult or child abuse is suspected or identified, colleagues will follow Alliance Homes Safeguarding Adults or Children's procedures and guidance.
- 2.15 Colleagues are encouraged to act when suspicious that abuse is occurring at work, no matter who the perpetrator is. Alliance Homes will respect and not penalise those who stand up for anyone who is suspected of being abused. Further information on 'whistle blowing' and who to contact is given in the Alliance Homes Counter *Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy*, or further support to identify where a concern should be raised can be found on HOME under 'report a concern'.
- 2.16 If allegations are made against a colleague, an investigation will follow and, if required, action taken in line with *Alliance Homes Capability and Disciplinary Procedure*.
- 2.17 Alliance Homes has adopted the Persons in Position of Trust (PiPoT) framework from North Somerset Council, to support collaborative working between agencies where allegations of safeguarding are made against persons in positions of trust. More detail is provided in the Safeguarding Adults procedure.

3. MONITORING, CONSULTATION AND REVIEW

- 3.1 The Safeguarding Leads are responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.
- 3.2 The Safeguarding Leads will monitor Safeguarding Referrals, reporting to Senior Management and provide an annual report.

3.3 This policy will be reviewed within 3 years of its Board approval date.

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

4.1 This policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

4.2 The purpose of such an assessment is to consider the effect of the policy with regard to the recognised strands of equality and ensure that it does not unfairly impact any individual or group. The strands are age, race, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. Remedial action will be undertaken if a detrimental effect is identified.

4.3 This policy and any other related Alliance Homes publications can be provided in other formats for those with visual, literacy or language difficulties.

5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Safeguarding Adults Procedure
- Safeguarding Children Procedure
- North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Policy and multi-agency procedures
- Capability and Disciplinary Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy
- Professional practice and boundaries guidance
- Human Rights Policy
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement
- Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy
- Data Protection policy and procedures

6. APPROVAL

Approval stage	Date completed
Equality Impact Assessment completed	July 2022
SLT review / approval	15 August 2022
Board approval	24 August 2022
Review due before	24 August 2025

Minor update made to clause 1.7 and approved by the Board on 28 February 2024.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Equality Impact Assessment Form

1. Name the Strategy, Policy, Procedure or Function being assessed and name of author.

Safeguarding Adults and Children policy - Group-wide
 Cath Pullin, Head of Customer Experience - Housing Services and Liz Griffiths, Director of Customer Services

2. Aims of the policy being assessed.

- *Whose need is it designed to meet?*
- *Are there any measurable elements such as time limits or age limits?*

The policy is aimed at Alliance Homes Group colleagues and contractors who may identify adults and/or children at risk of abuse. The policy states the main principles of abuse and how Alliance Homes will seek to address cases identified.

This policy applies to an adult identified as being vulnerable and any child.

3. Who has been consulted in developing the policy?

This is a current policy that is under review after 3 years, in line with Alliance Homes review processes. It has included feedback from colleagues across the organisation and reflects local changes in policy and safeguarding.

Identify potential impact on each of the diversity “groups” by considering the following questions (the list is not exhaustive but an indication of the sort of questions assessors should think about):

Protected Characteristic	No impact	Negative impact	Positive impact	Information source/s **	Comments/evidence
Race	X				Safeguarding information is available in alternative languages and Alliance continues to have strong links to SARI. We have no evidence of discrimination on the grounds of race.
Disability	X				Safeguarding referrals can be made in person, via telephone / mini com and via written communication. Where a report is made, colleagues will visit customers to discuss concerns if they are physically or mentally unable to discuss over a telephone. This could include the use of an interpreter or sign language translator.
Gender	X				Irrespective of gender, customers can access reporting safeguarding in the same ways.

Transgender	X				No evidence of discrimination, however it is recognised that transgender customers may be less likely to report. Colleagues are aware of Hate Crime reporting process, including transgender.
Sexual orientation	X				Colleagues aware of Hate Crime reporting process including LGBT and this is covered in training.
Religion or belief	X				We have no evidence that the policy produces a negative impact.
Age	X				Reports received span the full range of ages affected by this policy.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	X				No impact.
Pregnancy and Maternity	X				No impact.

Does the policy promote equality of opportunity?

Yes

What is the level of impact? -

The Lead roles for safeguarding across Alliance Homes are intended to share information and knowledge of safeguarding and to review the consistency of response to safeguarding cases. The leads will regularly share findings and focus on learning from safeguarding incidents, whilst sharing this learning across the organisation. Colleagues are recruited, and where required, DBS applications are made to maintain the safety of customers at all times. Training packages are reviewed in line with the policy review timescales.