

Safeguarding children and adults at risk policy

Policy ref: Safeguarding

Approved by: Director – Supported Housing & Empowerment

Policy holder: Director – Supported Housing & Empowerment

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1 :: Purpose and anticipated outcomes

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- recognise the right of every child and adult at risk to protection from harm, abuse and neglect of any kind;
- set out Knightstone's commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and adults at risk;
- provide a framework in which Knightstone staff and other workers (including volunteers), board, contractors and agents can understand their responsibilities (including those under the Care Act 2014) to promote prevention and protect individuals and groups from abuse and neglect by:
 - understanding what constitutes abuse; and
 - knowing when and how to report it.

Anticipated outcomes

The anticipated outcomes from this policy are:

- We provide services in an environment that promotes and safeguards the welfare of at risk individuals and groups of people.
- We collaborate on multi-agency working to safeguard and protect individuals and groups from harm, abuse and neglect.
- As an organisation we are compliant with the requirements of statute and good practice.

2 :: Scope and definitions

This policy applies to:

- all staff employed by companies within Knightstone Housing Group;
- those companies' boards of management;
- volunteers helping to run activities organised by or supported by those companies;
- agents and contractors who work with our residents or in or on their homes;
- agency workers or individuals undertaking any other work placement who are engaged to work with vulnerable individuals and groups as part of their duties

For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures:

- 'Knightstone' means all those companies that form the Knightstone Housing Group;
- the words "staff and Knightstone's agents" is used to refer to anyone working on behalf of Knightstone, whether that work is paid or voluntary, full or part time (this includes Knightstone's agents, contractors, consultants, board members, local volunteers and agency workers).
- the words "child" or "children" 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 "adult" is used to refer to those aged 18 or over.
- The words "Adult at Risk" are used to replace the phrase vulnerable adult

Summary of Responsibilities

Everyone has a responsibility to be alert to and raise concerns where adults or children are at risk. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone.

The Local Authority must make enquiries, or ensure others do so, if it believes an adult is subject to, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. An enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to stop or prevent abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom.

You and your organisation are required to alert all children and adults safeguarding concerns to the Local Authority who will decide if the referral has reached the safeguarding threshold and the Local Authority will then be responsible for investigating and ensuring along with Knightstone that protection plans are in place and monitored accordingly.

You are required to:

- attend any initial and subsequent training in regard to safeguarding;
- raise your concerns where an adult or child is at risk of harm in line with our standard operating procedure;
- report your concerns clearly, and;
- cooperate with any investigation

Knightstone have a responsibility for providing training in regard to safeguarding. The organisation also has a responsibility to provide leadership and support to staff in carrying out their responsibilities.

The Knightstone board are responsible for the oversight of safeguarding and will seek assurance that the systems to deliver this are effective. The board (or appropriately devolved subcommittee) will review an annual report which includes but is not limited to the information identified by the Safeguarding Coordinators (see section 5 of this policy) to aid the development of safeguarding and learning from experience by the organisation.

Any suspicion that a child or adult with care and support needs has been or is being abused or neglected should be reported in line with Knightstone's reporting process (this includes calling the Police if the child or vulnerable person is thought or considered to be in immediate danger of harm).

Recognising abuse and neglect is not easy and it is not the responsibility of anyone working at Knightstone, in a paid or unpaid capacity, or for their agents or contractors to investigate whether or not abuse or neglect has taken place.

Definition of an Adult at Risk of harm

The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as someone:

- over the age of 18 who has a need for care and support;
- who is experiencing or is at risk of neglect or abuse; and who, as a result of the above needs, is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

A person at risk does not need to be in receipt of services for the Care Act requirements to apply, they just have to have a need for care and support.

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

Definition of abuse

Adults

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a person with care and support needs is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Examples of types of abuse:

Organisations should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect. The specific circumstances of an individual case should always be considered. The following represents illustrative examples of the types of abuse that would raise the need for enquiry under the Care Act.

Physical

This includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, giving the wrong (or no) medication, restraining someone or only letting them do certain things at certain times.

Domestic

This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, coercive control or emotional abuse. It also covers so-called 'honour' based violence.

Sexual

This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, taking sexual photographs, making someone look at pornography or watch sexual acts, sexual assault or sexual acts the adult didn't consent to or was pressured into consenting. Sexual exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where adults at risk (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Psychological

This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, depriving someone of contact with someone else, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, putting pressure on someone to do something, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Financial or material

This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, putting pressure on someone about their financial arrangements (including wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions) or the misuse or stealing of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery

This covers slavery (including domestic slavery), human trafficking and forced labour. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever they can to pressurise, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory

This includes types of harassment or insults because of someone's race, gender or gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational

This includes neglect and poor care in an institution or care setting such as a hospital or care home, or if an organisation provides care in someone's home. The abuse can be a one-off incident or repeated, on-going ill treatment. The abuse can be through neglect or poor professional practice, which might be because of structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission

This includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to educational services, or not giving someone what they need to help them live, such as medication, enough nutrition and heating.

Self-neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour which shows that someone isn't caring for their own personal hygiene, health or surroundings. It includes behaviour such as hoarding. This relates to situations where people who hoard / self-neglect and where their health and wellbeing are at risk as a result.

Any individual may suffer or be at risk from more than one type of abuse. More information is available in our safeguarding procedures.

Children

The safeguarding duties apply to all children, under the age of 18.

Safeguarding the well-being and emotional health of children and young people is *everyone's business* and this depends on effective joint working between agencies.

In accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Organisations should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect. The specific circumstances of an individual case should always be considered. The following represents illustrative examples of the types of abuse:

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child home alone or the failure to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or young person's basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse

Any type of physical harm to a child or young person. May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding but also giving alcohol or inappropriate drugs.

Emotional abuse

Persistent, emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on their emotional development. It may involve making a child feel that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.

Sexual abuse

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of or consents to what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative acts but also non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

It may also 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.

Sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Female genital mutilation (FGM), hate crime, so-called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, human trafficking and exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence are also forms of abuse which may apply to adults and children.

Prevent – Preventing radicalisation to extremism

Prevent is about safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism. It applies to people of all ages.

Prevent forms one of the four strands of Contest (the others being Pursue, Prepare and Protect) the United Kingdom's Strategy for Counter Terrorism, part of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015).

Like Contest as a whole, Prevent addresses radicalisation to all forms of terrorist related activities, including domestic extremism and non-violent extremism. It aims to stop people supporting or becoming involved in extremism and terrorism.

Three national objectives of the Prevent strategy have been identified:

Objective 1: Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.

Objective 2: Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support.

Objective 3: Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.

In order to deliver these objectives the **specified authorities** have to focus on working with those who may be vulnerable, reducing exploitation and susceptibility to radicalisation into terrorism.

Safeguard or protect?

Safeguarding is all the preventative measures that we take to try to stop someone being abused or subjected to neglect – it is everyone’s responsibility to report any concerns to the appropriate authority.

Protection refers to activities undertaken to prevent individuals suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm and includes children, young people and adults. It encompasses statutory responsibilities (such as those resting with the local authority social services or the Police) to stop or limit abuse once it has taken place.

Doing nothing is NOT an option!

Duty of care

Duty of care means ‘A person must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that they can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure a person directly affected by those acts. This concept forms a cornerstone of the civil wrong of negligence where a breach of duty will resultant harm constitutes liability’. (Lord Atkin – Donoghue-vs-Stevenson 1932)

Key Principles of Safeguarding

The key principles that underpins the safeguarding work that we do are:

- **Empowerment:** People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give 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 concerns of abuse and neglect
- **Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

3 :: About this policy

General policy statement:

- the welfare of the child/adult at risk is paramount
- all individuals, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse and neglect
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

All staff and Knightstone's agents have a responsibility to report concerns. Knightstone has an organisational system to follow up on reported concerns and to learn lessons from each case.

As part of this policy we aim to:

- actively research good practice and promote what we learn to our partners;
- ensure that services we provide directly to vulnerable people offer appropriate safety and protection;
- enable staff and Knightstone's agents to make informed and confident responses to safeguarding issues

We aim to ensure our staff and agents can respond effectively by:

- raising awareness throughout Knightstone;
- actively encouraging good practice amongst all Knightstone's agents;
- creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, to minimise or manage situations where abuse/neglect or allegations of abuse/neglect may occur;
- respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and adults at risk;
- minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies;
- recruiting, training, supervising and supporting staff and Knightstone's agents who work with vulnerable groups to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable people from abuse and neglect;
- ensuring staff and Knightstone's agents know how to protect themselves against false allegations;
- responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures;
- reporting abuse or possible abuse/neglect that is observed during the course of our work;
- requiring staff and Knightstone's agents to adopt and abide by Knightstone's safeguarding policy together with procedures and good practice that may be published from time to time;
- identifying those individuals and Knightstone agent posts that require Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

In all cases a safeguarding concern form will be completed and an agreement reached on involving Children's or Adult's Social Care, or going directly to police if there is immediate danger. If agreement is not reached, the relevant service manager will make the decision and follow Knightstone's procedures and the local authority's safeguarding escalation policy/procedures.

If the concern or allegation is about a staff member or Knightstone agent then Knightstone will fully support and protect anyone who reasonably believes that they are making a disclosure in the public interest and reports his/her concern that a child or adult may be at risk (further detail can be found of the process to be followed in the whistle blowing policy).

Where an allegation or suspicion of abuse is reported against a member of staff:

- the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development and the relevant Department Director will be informed of the situation immediately, so that Knightstone's specific disciplinary process covering allegations of abuse of vulnerable groups may be followed in tandem with external investigations (the safeguarding procedures give further information on this process);
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed within 1 day of the allegation/suspicion coming to light;
- where allegations involve agency workers, the relevant agency will be informed and involved where necessary;
- the member of staff concerned will be treated fairly and honestly, and be supported throughout the process;
- they will be clearly informed of the process to be followed, the implications and outcome, as long as doing so does not prejudice the external investigation or the right to confidentiality of the victim or a concerned party;
- the member of staff will have the rights set out in Knightstone's disciplinary procedures. If the member of staff chooses to resign, Knightstone's safeguarding procedures will still be observed. This will include a referral to the DBS.

4 :: Recruitment, training and supervision of staff

All Knightstone staff members who have a specific role and regular contact with vulnerable groups will only be employed subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced checks being carried out. This requirement will also apply to their direct line managers and to those staff who have a Safeguarding Coordinator role. Until these checks have been completed satisfactorily, the member of staff must not work alone with children or other vulnerable individuals but may work under the direct supervision of an existing staff member who has been checked.

A list of all posts that are subject to DBS checks, whether standard or enhanced, can be obtained from Human Resources. To ensure the list of posts remain appropriate, a review will be undertaken by the HR Department on an annual basis and upon job evaluation of new roles.

There is a similar process to follow to establish the level of safeguarding training required for specific posts.

Knightstone will make training available to all customer facing staff on safeguarding children and adults at risk which will include information on the policy and procedures. Those staff who may be more likely to have a vulnerable person confide in them will receive more specialised training.

The line manager of new staff who will be working with children or adults at risk as part of their role will ensure those new staff receive an introduction to the safeguarding policy and procedures, Whistle Blowing policy, Code of Conduct and professional practice/boundaries policies during their induction period.

We will inform our primary partner organisations of our safeguarding policy and procedures.

Observing this policy and the related procedures will safeguard staff and Knightstone from any malicious or incorrect suspicions or allegations, as well as safeguarding vulnerable groups.

5 :: Monitoring and review

Knightstone will appoint annually one or more senior managers as Safeguarding Coordinator(s) who will be responsible for receiving reports of suspected abuse; they will check how each case has been handled, and annually to review the effectiveness of the policy. This will form a subset of the annual report to the board or devolved subcommittee.

In the case of services provided directly to vulnerable groups, service managers should also ensure that local work instructions are regularly reviewed including amendments to reflect relevant changes in procedure and personnel within local authority social services teams.

Knightstone works in several different Local Authority areas and provides its staff with contact details of lead professionals in each relevant service such as safeguarding children, safeguarding adults and community mental health teams. It is essential that staff raising concerns know which department and which person to contact. Supported housing team managers will check the lists of Local Authority leads at least every 3 months and update as necessary.

6 :: Service standards

Staff and Knightstone's agents will treat all people with respect in attitude, language and actions at all times, and encourage other adults and children to do the same.

Visits: when visiting tenants and residents, staff and Knightstone's agents will show their ID (Knightstone, agent or contractors photographic identification badge) before entering the home. They 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. Where the tenant is under the age of 18, Knightstone's staff and agents should take extra care to ensure their conduct does not cause any concern. Depending on the circumstances this may require the tenant's trustee/guardian to be in attendance.

Activities with children: activities with children will be properly risk assessed. Staff and Knightstone's agents taking part will be DBS checked and parental/carer consent in writing will be obtained for every child taking part. We run activities for children within our communities following specific policies and procedures including clear guidance on safeguarding children. Any activities run by others on our behalf will be checked to ensure they have proper policies and procedures in place. Any youth work carried out by any dedicated community development or youth worker will adhere to relevant youth service or Dreamscheme guidelines in respect of risk assessment, supervision and accident/incident reporting. See reference section for further practical guidance on community activities.

Photography and filming: Staff and Knightstone's agents will ensure they have the verbal or written permission of the person or parent /carer of a child before taking photographs or recordings of individuals. The subsequent use of any such images or recordings is reliant upon the completion of a photography consent form by the relevant person, parent or carer. The staff member or Knightstone's agent carrying out or organising the activity will explain how the images will be used (for example for general publicity, use in promotional publications) and will not identify the individuals in the picture by surname or disclose/publish any of their contact details.

Internet: Staff and Knightstone's agents may not access any inappropriate or offensive illegal materials. If done by staff this constitutes gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal. If Internet access is being provided for children's use as part of activities organised by Knightstone the children are to be supervised at all times or restrictive software used to ensure the children's safety.

Consent to information sharing, Confidentiality and Data Protection requirements:

It is good practice to try to obtain informed consent to sharing information. However this can be overridden if there is a vital interest or serious risk of harm. Further detail is provided in the safeguarding procedures including reference to clients who lack mental capacity.

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes decisions to share information with the following people:

- a child or adult protection officer
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- children's or adult's social care /police/community mental health teams
- the line manager of the person making the allegation
- the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection requirements (for example that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Information sharing protocols will be jointly drafted and signed by Knightstone and relevant partner agents to ensure appropriate sharing of information where necessary.

7:: Legal considerations

Knightstone aims to carry out the policy in line with:

- relevant good practice including that published by the National Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Sport England, the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), the National Housing Federation and Chartered Institute of Housing;
- the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
- specific legal obligations and regulatory requirements including the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Homes and Community Agency regulatory code as it applies to vulnerable groups
- The Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (amendments to Mental Capacity Act)
- Children Act 1989, 2004
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Disclosure and Barring service (DBS)

8:: Linked/associated policies and other references

Policies

- Domestic abuse
- Hate related incidents
- Whistleblowing
- Disciplinary
- Knightstone Group Code of Conduct for staff
- Professional boundaries
- Professional practice
- Deliberate self-harm
- Vulnerable customers

Procedures:

- Safeguarding children and adults at risk
- Code of behavior for adults working with children
- Safeguarding escalation
- Domestic abuse
- Confidentiality & data protection
- Compliments & complaints
- Disciplinary & grievance
- Equality & diversity
- Health & safety and risk assessment

Resources

- Children and Young peoples' strategy
- Photography consent form
- Safeguarding concern form
- Local Authority safeguarding teams contacts
- Local Authority leads by department

Other references:

- Safetycheck (NSPCC)
- Child protection and best practice guidelines (FA)
- Working together to safeguard children 2015 and updates¹

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

- Pre-assessment checklist
- CAF form
- Guidance on when to use CAF

Other Guidance and information sources

- For information and guidance, see '[When to Suspect Child Maltreatment](#)' issued by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, December 2009.
- Childline www.childline.org.uk.
- National Society for the Protection of Children www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/
- 'Safeguarding Adults national framework of standards for good practice' published by the Association of Directors of Social Services www.adass.org.uk/adassmedia/stories/publications/guidance/safeguarding.pdf
For Local Authority safeguarding policy and procedures, visit the relevant LA website or contact them directly for information.