

Safeguarding Strategy 2017-2018

What is Safeguarding?

- **Safeguarding** is the process of protecting vulnerable people from neglect or abuse. The Care Act 2014 introduced Adult Safeguarding as a statutory duty for local authorities, requiring them to make enquiries where an adult in their area:
 - Has care and support needs (not dependent on whether the local authority is meeting them)
 - Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
 - Is unable to protect themselves from that, due to their care and support needs.
- **Safeguarding Children**

Safeguarding Children is a term which is broader than child protection and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding is defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* 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

Why is safeguarding an important issue for housing professionals?

Adults and children who may be at risk (and their families) live in all forms of housing, not just specialist accommodation. Increasingly our tenants in general, as well as specialist, housing are older, or disabled, experience long term limiting illness, or have current or previous dependencies. Whilst not in itself making a person vulnerable, these things may increase the potential for abuse and/or neglect.

Housing professionals in contact with these tenants have a responsibility to be aware of how to identify them and how to raise any concerns they may have, in the appropriate way, with relevant authorities.

Expectations of Estuary - the Care Act 2014

- To have leadership on safeguarding from a senior member of staff
- To engage with Local Safeguarding Boards
- To have clear policies and procedures, including arrangements to work with other agencies. Both staff and contractors need to be aware of their role and the processes for reporting concerns
- To train staff to be able to identify the signs of abuse and respond to concerns appropriately

Features of Estuary's Safeguarding strategy

Leadership

Estuary has 3 senior members of staff leading on Safeguarding:

- Director of Support & Care
- Director of HR & Organisational Development (OD)
- Director of Housing & Communities

In this way we believe we are able to cover all elements of our service provision and staffing, and staff have the option to speak to more than one lead person.

Engaging with local safeguarding boards

Our Director of HR & OD is Vice Chair of the Essex Safeguarding Adult Board, and members of our Safeguarding Practice Group maintain links with the Southend Safeguarding Adult Boards and the Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board.

Our Family Centre and Nursery maintain links with the Southend Safeguarding Children Board and operate under their procedures for referral.

For 2017-2018 Local Southend, Essex and Thurrock Boards (SET) are intending to implement an Overarching Information Sharing protocol (OISP) and Estuary will work to this.

Policies and Procedures

Estuary has an overarching Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Statement of Intent. This outlines the Associations Policy and includes referral methods for reporting any concerns.

Each service area then has its own Safeguarding Procedures. Each service will have a different referral approach – for instance our Support Housing & Care service has specific requirements with regard to reporting concerns and alerting CQC (regulatory body).

Training for Staff

Training is provided for all staff on Safeguarding Awareness (Adult and Children). Specialist training is provided on Safeguarding Adults for staff within our Support & Care services. We operate several layers of training depending on the levels of interaction with residents and members of the public - one-day courses in basic safeguarding awareness for frontline staff, e-learning basic awareness and refresher training for all staff, and specialist safeguarding training for staff in residential, community and nursing settings. Our Nursery provision is regulated by Ofsted and undertakes training specifically for Early Years provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage (**EYFS**) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All Ofsted-registered early years providers must follow the **EYFS**. Within the Ofsted Framework and the EYFS Statutory Guidance, the nursery is expected to have an ongoing role in respect of child protection. Staff members attend child protection conferences, strategy meetings and core groups for children and provide reports and information as required..

Our Family Centre staff members also undertake relevant safeguarding children and adults training due to the nature of their daily interaction with families.

Contractors - Our contractors are required to provide training to their staff on Safeguarding Awareness and we ensure that our contractors are aware of our policy and procedures on referral

methods. Our Safeguarding Practice Group also involves a representative of our main contractor to ensure information is appropriately disseminated and access to information and training can be easily requested.

Getting Safeguarding Right

Effective safeguarding is not an add-on but needs to be embedded in our ways of working. However, it is a complex and sensitive issue to address, so it is important that there are clear mechanisms for staff to raise their concerns, robust recording and follow-up processes, and support from managers. The following checklist helps us to get safeguarding right:

1. Know your tenants and understand risk factors for abuse

Estuary collects appropriate information to generate a profile of our residents and their needs. We continually aim to develop this to support tenants, particularly those affected by welfare reforms. This tenant insight helps us to start to determine where there may be a need for our support.

However, people can develop safeguarding issues at any point in their life (for example after an accident or bereavement), so it is important that our staff are alert to this and aware of the value of updating information about our tenants as a normal course of events in their ongoing interactions with tenants (e.g. tenancy sign ups, tenancy reviews, arrears interviews, anti-social behaviour interviews in response to complaints, estate inspections).

2. Equip and empower front line staff to identify abuse and take a proactive approach to safeguarding.

Housing Officers, surveyors and repairs contractors are the staff most likely to visit people's homes and see things that give cause for concern. Our Support & Care staff engage on a daily basis in the support and care of people with varying levels of need. Training is provided for them in what abuse is and how to recognise it, and clear referral routes to help staff to confidently raise their concerns. Our nursery staff members engage with children and families with varying levels of involvement with Social Care, Health and Education. Clear procedures, recording and monitoring of safeguarding concerns enable staff to be proactive in the support offered to families.

3. Have senior management champions to ensure safeguarding is a high profile

Senior management champions help us to reinforce the priority that the organisation gives to this as part of its core purpose and values. Our 3 senior champions ensure that safeguarding is given the highest priority and that there is a link to other agendas (such as anti-social behaviour, hate crime, self-neglect, gangs and drug use, forced marriage, radicalisation and modern slavery and human trafficking).

4. Have policies and procedure for dealing with safeguarding

Our policies and procedures support staff to be confident in identifying abuse and having their concerns taken seriously. They also provide details of contact details for local safeguarding boards and social care teams or multi-agency hubs.

5. Work with tenants to raise their awareness of abuse and safeguarding

Tenants and local communities can play a key role in identifying and raising concerns about people at risk of abuse. Estuary works with the Federation of Estuary Residents (FER) and our street representatives to ensure that they are able to benefit from access to training and report their concerns appropriately.

6. Become an effective partner for Safeguarding Boards and build strategic and operational links

Housing Associations like Estuary are valuable partners for local safeguarding boards because of our local networks with communities that often extend beyond our own tenant base. We can help raise awareness of abuse and safeguarding measures as well as enabling better connections to work taking place on domestic violence, harassment and hate crime and more general identification of and support to adults and children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Estuary's vice chair position on the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board enables us to have a direct link into, and influence on, the work of the board and enables us to ensure that both the needs and the benefits of housing and support & care providers are highlighted.

7. Develop protocols for sharing information and make this work both ways, for the safety of the person

Effective information sharing is a two-way process. Although there are clear expectations for housing organisations, their role as a partner to local authorities can be more effective where

there is a useful sharing of information to enable them to put in place appropriate support and to participate in making enquiries. The requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 will be taken into account in any sharing of information and we will work under the Overarching Information Sharing Protocol adopted by the SET Boards.

Aligning Safeguarding with Legislation

Policies and advice for staff need to be clear about the interaction of safeguarding with key legislation including:

- The Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 1988
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

The Care Act 2014

The Care Act and statutory guidance set out clear expectations of partner organisations, including housing associations, like us and our staff, who are in contact with adults with care and support needs who are, or may be, at risk of abuse or neglect.

Mental Capacity Act (MCA)

People are assumed to have capacity unless there is clear evidence that there is a lack of capacity. Making an unwise decision is not, of itself, an indicator of lack of capacity. The adult should be able to understand the information and retain it sufficiently to make an informed decision which they can then communicate. When interacting with adults, our staff should make every effort to support and maximise a person's capacity.

We provide extensive training to our Support and Care staff on Mental Capacity (and Deprivation of Liberty) and basic awareness to our general front line staff. It is important that our general frontline staff do not make judgements themselves about lack of capacity but are able to recognise the need for referral to the appropriate person(s) for capacity to be assessed as appropriate.

Estuary core values of Excellence, Care and Innovation are a key part of our performance management process and staff members across the organisation are encouraged to work hard to

embody them and demonstrate them within the Appraisal process. Our 'Top Cookie' award underpins this and enables staff to give a 'cookie' reward to those they believe are living the values and 'going the extra mile'.

Data Protection Act 1998

There are clear requirements about how and when someone's personal information can be shared and how this should be done. Only information that is relevant and necessary will be shared and only with those who have a need to know. Estuary complies with restrictions on how data is stored and when it should be destroyed.

Human Rights Act 1998

The Act states that there is a right to respect for private life (Article 8). But even this can be passed over where intervention can be justified and for a clear purpose (e.g. the prevention of a crime or the protection of the rights of others).

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

This provides statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Statutory guidance is issued by law and our staff members are supported to follow it or seek advice and guidance if they believe here's a good reason not to.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 is a groundbreaking piece of legislation requiring the UK's commercial businesses to combat slavery and human trafficking on a global scale. The legislation aims to eradicate abuse in supply chains across the globe.

Commercial organisations with an annual turnover of at least £36m must publish an annual slavery and human trafficking statement in a prominent position on their website. The statements are therefore liable to scrutiny from employees, potential recruits, customers, business partners, the general public and the media, who play the collective role of regulator and become the judge of how businesses are tackling slavery and cleaning up their supply chain.

Estuary has published a statement which will be updated annually and includes the steps we have taken in the last financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking are not taking place in any part of our business or supply chain. This includes information on the perceived level of risk of slavery and human trafficking and the steps we are taking to assess and reduce risk. Estuary is also providing relevant policies and training for staff .

Summary

Estuary believes that safeguarding vulnerable people is a high priority for us, particularly given the types of service we provide.

Our Safeguarding Strategy is embedded in all we do and reflects:

- our corporate values of Excellence, Care and Innovation
- our mission to provide quality homes and services that meet local needs
- our Support & Care initiative to 'Make a Difference'
- our Equality & Diversity strategy to meet the needs and aspirations of our customers, whatever their diversity.

Linda Hollingworth

Director of HR & OD

April 2017

Related Documents:

- Corporate Safeguarding Policy – Statement of Intent
- Departmental Safeguarding Procedures
- Induction & Probation Policy
- Training Policy
- Recruitment & Retention Policy
- Volunteers – Recruitment & Retention Policy
- Criminal Records Check – DBS Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Confidential Report (Whistleblowing) Policy
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding Practice Group – Terms of Reference
- Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) Safeguarding Procedures (Adults and Childrens)
- Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement 2017