



manningham
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**SAFEGUARDING
(CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS)
POLICY**



SAFEGUARDING (CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS) POLICY

1. DEFINITION

- 1.1. Manningham Housing Association provides housing to a wide range of people some of which may, at some point, be vulnerable to abuse or neglect. We believe that everyone has the right to enjoy their homes and communities without fear, neglect or abuse.

We have a duty to tell the relevant bodies including Social Services or the Police if there are any safeguarding concerns about any of our residents, whether they are identified by our employees, our contractors or directly reported to them.

2. AIM

- 2.1. The aim of this policy is to protect and safeguard those children and adults who are subject to or at the risk of abuse and neglect and ensures MHA complies with its legal and moral duty to do so.

The policy ensures that MHA has systems in place to identify children and vulnerable adults at risk and takes appropriate action when suspected abuse or neglect is reported or identified. It covers all MHA customers, tenants/residents and/or users of our services, including children and vulnerable adults, who may be vulnerable to abuse at any time and for any reason. This covers those who may be vulnerable and already be in receipt of or in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disabilities, age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to safeguard themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

3. WHEN WILL THIS POLICY BE ACTIVATED?

This policy will be activated when any MHA employee, or sub-contractor suspects or is told, that an MHA customer or resident (child or vulnerable adult) is suffering from abuse or neglect.

4. UNDERSTANDING OUR CUSTOMERS

- 4.1. We will treat everyone fairly and work to eliminate discrimination through promoting equality of access and opportunity for everyone.

We will ensure that customers are treated in ways that meet their needs, and that they have equal access to services or activities within the association wherever possible. We promote their inclusion and will challenge discrimination against them.

Vulnerable groups could include:

- People with learning disabilities
- People with mental health problems
- Older people
- People with physical disabilities
- People with visual and sensory impairment



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- People who rely on others for care and/or support

This can also include people who are vulnerable themselves as a consequence of their role as a carer for such a person. They may need additional support to protect themselves, for example, in situations such as domestic violence, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drugs or alcohol problems.

5. DEFINITIONS OF 'CHILDREN' AND 'VULNERABLE ADULTS' AND 'ABUSE'

5.1. *Definition of a Child*

- 5.1.1. A “child” is any person under the age of 18 as defined by the Children Act 1989.

5.2. *Definition of a vulnerable adult*

- 5.2.1. A “vulnerable adult” is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services because of:

- a physical disability.
- a physical or mental illness.
- a learning difficulty.
- a reduced physical or mental capacity.
- a dependency on alcohol, illegal drugs, or medication.

- 5.2.2. A vulnerable adult may also be somebody who is or maybe unable to take care of themselves, or unable to safeguard themselves against significant harm or exploitation. Whether or not a person is vulnerable in these cases will depend upon surrounding circumstances, environment and each case must be judged on its own merits. (No Secrets Framework, 2000).

- 5.2.3. Local Authorities have a particular responsibility to vulnerable adults and are required to work with different specialist agencies to safeguard them from abuse. We will work with these different agencies where appropriate.

5.3. *Definition of abuse*

- 5.3.1. “Abuse” is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons and may result in significant harm to, or the exploitation of the person subjected to it. Friends, strangers, family members, and professional staff can all be guilty of abuse.

- Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts.
- May be physical, verbal, psychological or emotional.
- May be an act of neglect or an omission to act.



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- May occur when a person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they had not consented, or cannot consent.
- May be deliberate or unintentional or result from lack of knowledge.

The main categories of abuse are:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial or material
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory

6. RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED OR ALLEGED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

6.1. If an MHA employee, suspects abuse or has received a report of abuse they will:

- report it to the MHA Safeguarding lead who will be the Head of Housing Services. MHA employees will not investigate suspected abuse or neglect. Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is a complex area which must be dealt with by the appropriate agencies and channels.
- refer any concerns over the abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult to Social Services in the first instance 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 act through the relevant policies and procedures where appropriate.

6.2. If a customer witnesses or suspects abuse or neglect they will be supported to report it to their local Social Services Department, which has a dedicated safeguarding unit, or the Police. They can also report any suspected or identified abuse or neglect to us.

7. HOW ARE WE INVOLVED IN THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE

7.1. Our frontline housing and income management employees (including MHA repair contractors) may enter residents' homes to carry out maintenance inspections or repairs or at the resident's request. These employees may see evidence of abuse or neglect. They will report any concerns they have in the first instance to the MHA Safeguarding lead who will liaise with the appropriate agency, for example Social Services or the Police.

7.2. As a provider of social housing 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 ensure that our policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children



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and vulnerable adults is in line with our responsibilities. MHA will work with local authorities and agencies to make sure we link up with local procedures that are relevant for a social housing provider for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.

7.3. MHA employees will refer vulnerable individuals to support agencies where appropriate. We will also work with the resident's current support network such as family and other agencies wherever possible.

8. STAFF TRAINING, RECRUITMENT AND CONDUCT

8.1. MHA's recruitment and selection, support, supervision, and training of employees will take into account the need to promote the health and safety of residents and customers and safeguard them from abuse.

8.2. We will ensure that all MHA employees are appropriately trained, including induction training for new members of staff. As part of their induction into MHA, all appropriate employees will be required to read and understand all relevant policies and procedures, including this policy and its procedure.

8.3. We will ensure that all employees understand their roles and responsibilities and required actions and that housing staff have an adequate understanding of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA).

8.4. We will ensure that managers know when they should alert the Police if they think a serious crime has been committed or someone is danger.

8.5. MHA will ensure that all relevant employees have an annual reminder about safeguarding and how to identify abuse and neglect.

8.6. All appropriate employees will be trained in the implications and processes involved with the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children and will be trained in how to identify signs of abuse and neglect.

8.7. Where a person suspected of abuse or neglect is a member of staff, a disciplinary investigation will be carried out immediately. Appropriate action taken will be taken in line with our Disciplinary Policy.

8.8. To protect themselves from allegations of abuse, or situations that could be misunderstood, staff members will maintain strong professional boundaries.

8.9. If an MHA employee suspects that any other employee is involved in abuse or neglect, they should report this to their line manager or an Executive Director. Please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy if needed.

8.10. However, in some cases we will not need consent to share information if where doing so would:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm.



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- place an adult at increased risk of serious harm.
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime, or.
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm or serious harm

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

9.1. We will always treat any sensitive or personal information given to us as confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. We will only pass this information onto third parties such as statutory organisations, if:

- We are required by law to do so - either for the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.
- There is an information/data sharing protocol, contract or confidentiality agreement in place.
- The person who gave us the information is happy for us to share the information.

9.2. Our employees will always respect confidentiality and will not share any information given in confidence unless justified by the assessed risk to the vulnerable person or required by law.

9.3. Confidentiality will be discussed with the customer where there are safeguarding concerns or alerts and an explanation will be given that this information may need to be shared with other people in order for the situation to be resolved.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

As Bradford's only Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) housing association, MHA is actively committed to promoting and embedding a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion. MHA is an organisation that values differences and enables individuals to be their authentic selves.

Our aims are for the organisation to be a leading voice for BAME communities, to be truly representative of all sections of society and communities we serve, and for each member of our staff, residents, and other stakeholders to feel respected and valued.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW

We will monitor and review this policy in conjunction with residents to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the Association's stated aims and objectives.

The Assistant Chief Executive/Director of Operations has overall responsibility for the on-going monitoring of this policy through the work of frontline staff, particularly those engaged in Neighbourhood Management. The procedure will be reviewed every three years or sooner following significant legislative or regulatory changes or good practice requirements



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12. OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS/ RESOURCES

- 12.1.
- Disciplinary Policy
 - Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Whistle Blowing Policy

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| Policy Name | Safeguarding (Children and Vulnerable Adults) |
| Equality Impact Assessment | Completed |
| Date Approved by Committee | 12.12.2023 |
| Next Review date | 12.12.2026 |
| Lead Officer | Deputy CEO/Director of Operations |