

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

May 2023

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Date effective from:	May 2023
Policy approved by:	Si Welch
Review Date:	

EIA Required?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
EIA Completed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Revision number:	4
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stockport Homes (SHG) is committed to supporting and working in partnership with Stockport Council (SMBC) and other partner agencies to ensure the safeguarding of children and adults at risk accessing Stockport Homes' services.

2 STRATEGIC LINKS

2.1 The SHG Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy sits within a wider legislative framework. It complies with national and local guidance, together with good practice on safeguarding the 'duty of care' obligations for all professionals working with children and vulnerable adults. Legislative and strategic level links include:

- The Children Acts (1989 and 2004)
- The Education Act (2002)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Care Act 2014
- Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual
- Stockport Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service
- Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Stockport Safeguarding Adults Board Multi-Agency Self-Neglect and Hoarding Strategy
- SMBC Adult Autism Strategy
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Stockport Prevent Strategy
- Stockport Dementia Strategy
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Stockport Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy
- Stockport So Called 'Honour' based violence / Abuse and Forced Marriage Strategy
- Equality Act 2010
- SHG Code of Conduct

3 KEY FEATURES OF THE POLICY

3.1 SHG believes that children and adults have rights as individuals and should be treated with dignity and respect.

3.2 SHG and its contractors will strive to provide a safe environment for any children and vulnerable people accessing Stockport Homes' services.

3.3 The welfare of children and adults at risk is of primary concern.

3.4 All children and adults at risk, whatever their age, culture, disability,

gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and / or sexual identity have the right to be safeguarded from abuse.

3.5 It is the duty and responsibility of **all** employees and contractors to use the Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk procedure to report any concerns about abuse to their line manager and to report to, and liaise with, Stockport Council and other agencies as appropriate.

3.6 All incidents of poor practice, misconduct and abuse perpetrated by SHG employees and contractors will be responded to swiftly and appropriately including initiating competency, disciplinary and legal proceedings where necessary and appropriate.

4 DEFINITIONS AND CATEGORIES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

4.1 Abuse can include:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect / Acts of Omission– persistent failure to meet basic physical and / or psychological needs
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional / Organisational abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Domestic Abuse
- Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- Radicalisation
- Self-Neglect
- Cuckooing

For further information and examples on these categories please see the **Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Procedure**

4.2 Significant harm (Children) – The Children Act 1989 introduced Significant Harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of the children. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect are all categories of significant harm. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes 'significant harm', it can sometimes be a single violent episode but more often is an accumulation of significant events. Any suspicion or allegation that a child is suffering or likely to suffer from significant harm may result in a Section 47 enquiry being completed by a Local Authority Social Worker, who will involve other agencies within the assessment as appropriate. Any such enquiry is led by the Local Authority and recorded within a Social Work assessment.

4.3 Harm and Significant harm (Adults at Risk) – These concepts help to determine the seriousness and extent of abuse and assist in determining the level of intervention. The impact of harm upon a person will be individual and

depend on each person's circumstances and the severity, degree and impact or effect on that person. The concept of 'significant harm' is therefore relative to each person concerned.

4.4 Adult at Risk¹ – Refers to a person aged 18 or over who:

- Is eligible for or receives any adult social care service OR
- Receives direct payments in lieu of Adult Social Care services OR
- Funds their own care and has social care needs OR
- Otherwise has social care and/ or health needs that are low, moderate, substantial or critical OR
- Falls within any other category prescribed by the Secretary of State OR
- Is a carer as a family member or friend and is subject to abuse by the cared for person OR
- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support¹ AND
- As a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from abuse and neglect

4.5 The vulnerability of an adult at risk is related to how able they are to make and exercise their own informed choices free from duress, pressure or undue influence and to protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 All SHG staff, volunteers and contractors are responsible for understanding, reporting and sharing information with regards to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

5.2 Managers and Safeguarding Champions have a particular responsibility to ensure staff understand safeguarding, receive appropriate training and are encouraged and supported through the safeguarding process. In addition Managers and Supervisors are also responsible for guaranteeing that safeguarding standards are adhered to in the delivery of services they are responsible for.

5.3 All necessary steps must be taken at a local level by Managers to ensure that they, their staff, volunteers and contractors are compliant with the requirements set out by SHG.

5.4 It should be noted that all employees, contractors and volunteers are in a position of trust, are often visiting people within their own homes; in particular those who support, guide or interact with children, young people or adults at risk.

¹ The definition of harm and significant harm and Adults at risk are taken from the Stockport Safeguarding Adults Board's Multi-agency Policy for Safeguarding adults at risk.

5.5 It is everyone's responsibility to document and report any concerns about abuse. Each front-line team will have a designated Safeguarding champion and / or Manager to whom all concerns should be reported. (For full guidance on reporting procedures please see the SHG Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk procedure).

5.6 In the event of any officers attending a multi-agency meeting they should have the confidence to professionally challenge any decisions made.

6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and has concluded that the Policy will have a fair and equitable impact.

7 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING & REVIEW

7.1 The policy is owned by the SKylight Directorate and will be reviewed in line with the Policy Review schedule or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.