

1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

- 1.1 This policy details how Ipswich Housing Action Group (ihAg) operates to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 1.2 ihAg staff recognise and respect the fundamental right for people to live their lives free from abuse and neglect.
- 1.3 ihAg has a duty of care for the protection and safety of everyone who comes in to contact with the organisation including children, young people and adults at risk whether involved as service users and their families, as participants in all of our activities or as visitors both on and off site. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our staff, volunteers, contractors and Trustees.
- 1.4 The policy and procedures are in place for staff to work to prevent abuse and know what action to take if a concern is raised. They will enable ihAg to:
 - 1.4.1 Promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm and abuse occurring.
 - 1.4.2 Ensure that any allegations of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.

2 Definitions

2.1 The policy and procedures relate to both the safeguarding of adults and to children.

2.2 Adults

2.2.1 An adult at risk is defined in the Care Act 2014 (S. 42) as an individual aged over 18 who:

- has a need for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs).
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those (care and support) needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

2.3 Children

2.3.1 A child is defined in the Children Act 2004 as:

“Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or are in hospital”

2.3.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government Inter-Agency Guidance, July 2018, pgs 6-7) summarises safeguarding children as

- Protecting children and young people from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children and young people’s mental and physical health and development
- Ensuring children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2.4 Abuse

2.4.1 Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. It may be a single act or repeated acts. People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be people in positions of trust; they may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

2.4.2 Abuse and neglect can take many forms and ihAg will always consider the circumstances of an individual case.

3 Persons affected

3.1 This policy affects:

3.1.1 All staff, paid and unpaid, including volunteers and Trustees

3.1.2 All service users

3.1.3 All visitors and contractors

4 Related Policies

4.1 This policy will need to be read in conjunction with:

Safeguarding Procedures, and Appendices I – III

Gen 51 Equality & Diversity Policy for Service Provision

HR 9 Whistle Blowing Policy

HR 20 Equality and Diversity at Work Policy

Gen 14 Data Protection Policy

HR 21 Employment Procedure

Gen 52 Complaints Policy

HR 26 Volunteers Policy

HR 41 Confidentiality Policy

5 Safeguarding Commitments

5.1 ihAg has a zero tolerance approach to abuse. ihAg recognises that under the Care Act 2014 it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. It also recognises its responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

5.2 ihAg is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised. Adults will be included in swift and personalised safeguarding responses.

5.3 ihAg is also committed to inter agency collaboration on the development and implementation of procedures for the protection of adults vulnerable from abuse

5.4 ihAg has a duty and responsibility for making arrangements to ensure all its functions are discharged having regard to safeguarding and promoting the adults at risk of abuse. The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

5.5 There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk of abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and mistreatment. All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1998. People who

are eligible to receive health and community care services may be additionally vulnerable to the violation of these rights by reason of disability, impairment, age or illness.

- 5.6 ihAg is committed to following the six key principles of safeguarding adults¹: Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP²); and best practice in respect of capacity, consent and decision-making³;
- 5.7 In addition, ihAg is committed to:
 - 5.7.1 The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk
 - 5.7.2 The right of all children, young people and adults at risk to protection from abuse
 - 5.7.3 Everyone having responsibility for safeguarding: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part
 - 5.7.4 The proper reporting of all suspicions and allegations of abuse to the relevant internal and external authorities and to swift and appropriate action to deal with these
 - 5.7.5 Arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information procedures with other professionals and with the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.
- 5.8 **ihAg will work to:**
 - 5.8.1 Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs and children.
 - 5.8.2 Promote the wellbeing of any adults and children at risk in safeguarding arrangements.
 - 5.8.3 Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
 - 5.8.4 Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults and children concerned.
 - 5.8.5 Raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.
 - 5.8.6 Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult or child.
 - 5.8.7 Address what caused any abuse or neglect where appropriate if it occurred on ihAg property or in an ihAg workplace/office.
- 5.9 **ihAg will:**
 - 5.9.1 Ensure all staff are aware of the policy and procedures for the protection of children, young people and adults at risk through appropriate safeguarding training, supervision and support for staff and for creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in meeting their safeguarding role.

¹ These are embedded in the Care Act 2014, namely empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability.

² MSP is a project run by the Local Government Association(LGA) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS)

³ From the Mental Capacity Act 2005

- 5.9.2 Work with other agencies within the framework of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (Adults and Children).
 - 5.9.3 Act within the organisation's confidentiality policy and gain consent from service users before sharing information about them with another agency.
 - 5.9.3.1 The safeguarding of a child or an adult who is at risk or if a crime has been committed will override any need for consent, and this will be explained to the service user where it is safe to do so.
 - 5.9.3.2 In these situations, the Designated Lead(s) for Safeguarding must be notified of the case and will be the decision maker(s) regarding breaking confidentiality.
 - 5.9.4 Make a safeguarding referral to Customer First as appropriate. i.e. if there is an immediate danger or the child/adult is at risk of harm.
 - 5.9.5 Ensure that all staff, volunteers and trustees undertake training relevant to their role, which must include information regarding the Children Act 2004, the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, capacity, consent and decision making in safeguarding scenarios. Training will also be sourced on e-safety.
 - 5.9.6 Provide all staff with a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with safeguarding responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns.
 - 5.9.7 Support the Designated Leads for Safeguarding (Adults and Children) to access the necessary training to carry out this duty. The contact details of the Designated Leads for Safeguarding will be posted on ihAg notice boards.
 - 5.9.8 Understand how diversity, beliefs and values of people who use services may influence the identification, prevention and response to safeguarding concerns.
 - 5.9.9 Maintain training records and send reminders for annual refresher courses.
 - 5.9.10 Ensure that all staff, volunteers, trustees who have regular contact with service users, have a DBS check in line with the requirements of the Independent Safeguarding Authority Vetting and Barring Scheme. This will include undertaking a DBS check on any potential trustee as well as all existing trustees.
 - 5.9.11 Ensure that all staff have the opportunity to review their own practice to ensure they improve over time in their work with children, and adults at risk. This will form part of the formal supervision process.
- 5.10 **All ihAg staff must:**
- 5.10.1 Follow the safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, particularly if concerns arise about the safety or welfare of an adult or child who may be at risk
 - 5.10.2 Participate in safeguarding training and maintain current working knowledge of Core legal safeguarding requirements and their responsibility to keep children and adults at risk safe.
 - 5.10.3 Always discuss any concerns about the welfare of any service user with their line manager. If the line manager is unavailable, staff must go direct to another Designated Lead for Safeguarding.
 - 5.10.4 Work collaboratively with other agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of people who use ihAg services.
 - 5.10.5 Remain alert at all times to the possibility of abuse.

5.11 Trustees' additional duties

5.11.1 Trustees have a duty of care to prevent risks to ihAg's reputation and resources as well as the people it supports.

5.11.2 Any Trustee who is barred from working with children and adults with care and support needs will be assessed by the Chair of Trustees as to whether it is appropriate for them to become, or continue to be, a Trustee.

5.11.3 A Trustee will be appointed to lead on Safeguarding responsibilities, and support the CEO in ensuring ihAg reviews its Safeguarding policy and practices appropriately.

5.12 Service user responsibilities

5.12.1 ihAg service users have a responsibility to act responsibly when on ihAg premises and to be aware that they have a duty to report any abuse, neglect or risk to other service users seen on ihAg premises.

6 Overall Responsibility for Safeguarding

6.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation complies with best practice and legislative requirements for Safeguarding, including Safer Recruitment practices.

6.2 The CEO is also responsible for ensuring there is a clear line of accountability for the provision of safe services.

7 Designated Leads for Safeguarding

7.1 The CEO is the Designated Lead for Safeguarding Children and Young People.

7.1.1 In the absence of the CEO, the Deputy Designated Lead is the Housing Services Manager.

7.2 The Housing Services Manager is the Designated Lead for Safeguarding Adults.

7.2.1 The CEO is also trained as a Designated Lead for Safeguarding Adults and is the Deputy in the absence of the Housing Services Manager.

8 The roles and responsibilities of the Designated Leads for Safeguarding are to:

8.1 Ensure that all their staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they have concerns that an adult or child at risk may be experiencing or has experienced abuse or neglect.

8.2 Ensure that concerns are acted on, clearly recorded and referred to Customer First and/or the allocated social worker where necessary.

8.3 Follow up any safeguarding referrals and ensure the issues have been addressed.

8.4 Manage and have oversight over individual cases involving allegations against an employee, volunteer or Trustee, paid or unpaid.

8.5 Consider any recommendations from the safeguarding process.

8.6 Reinforce the need for confidentiality and ensure that staff, volunteers and trustees are adhering to good practice with regard to confidentiality and security.

- 8.7 Ensure that staff working directly with service users who have experienced abuse, or who are experiencing abuse, are well supported and receive appropriate supervision.
- 8.8 Ensure staff are given support and afforded protection, if necessary, under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and they will be kept informed of any action that has been taken and its outcome.
- 8.9 Maintain up to date Safeguarding knowledge and training, and support the CEO in reviewing ihAg policy and procedures as necessary.

9 **Allegations made against a Member of Staff**

9.1 If a member of staff has information which suggests another member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed an adult/child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, an adult/child.
- Behaved towards an adult/child in a way that has indicated she/he is unsuitable to work with adults/children.

then that member of staff should immediately report this to their line manager or another Designated Lead for Safeguarding, in line with the procedures set out in the ihAg Whistleblowing & Sharing Concerns policy.

9.2 If appropriate, the Designated Lead for Safeguarding will consult with and/or make a referral as follows:

9.2.1 for allegations of abuse against people who work with children, refer to Suffolk County Council Customer First and/or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) or consult the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

9.2.2 for allegations of abuse against people who work with adults, refer to Suffolk County Council Customer First or consult the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

9.3 If the allegation is made about a Designated Lead for Safeguarding, staff must inform the CEO of ihAg or the appointed Trustee (if the allegation involves the CEO).

10 **Recording and Managing Confidential Information**

10.1 ihAg is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information regarding safeguarding issues should be shared only with those who need to know.

10.2 ihAg is committed to its requirement to share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children's and adults' social care.

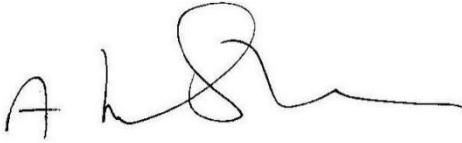
10.2.1 For further information, see ihAg's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies.

10.3 All allegations/concerns will be recorded on the Safeguarding Tracker. The information recorded should be factual and not based on opinions.

10.4 Safeguarding will be a standing agenda item at all ihAg Team Meetings, Senior Management Meetings and Executive Trustee Meetings.

11 **Dissemination and Review**

- 11.1 All Safeguarding documents will be held electronically in a centralised system, and be accessible to all staff, volunteers and Trustees.
- 11.2 The policy and procedures will be reviewed annually, and any updates and changes will be communicated to the staff team. In house training will also be amended to reflect any changes.

Signed by Executive Member on behalf of the Trustees :		Date: 23 September 2021
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Review carried out on behalf of the Trustees by: CEO	Review Frequency: 1 Year	Next Review: September 2022
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