

# **HOMESDALE (WOODFORD BAPTIST HOMES) LTD**

## **PROTECTION FROM ABUSE POLICY**

This policy has been introduced to ensure the well being of vulnerable adults and children who visit the Complex. Our tenants and visitors have the right

- to live free from abuse, violence and fear
- be protected from harm and exploitation
- to independence, which may involve a degree of risk

Homesdale's employees' need to be aware of the signs of abuse and what action should be taken.

This policy should be read in conjunction with L.B. Redbridge's Policy & Procedures for Adult Protection.

### **PURPOSE & SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to

- Set out the values, principles and policies underpinning all work with vulnerable adults who may have been abused
- Define the procedure to be followed if abuse is suspected
- Define the different types of abuse
- Indicate the legal framework within which abuse can be tackled

### **FRAMEWORK**

The policy & procedures are based on the concept of working together to prevent, investigate and take necessary action in respect of all allegations of abuse against vulnerable adults and children.

- The policy has been implemented to protect tenants who live at and the children who visit Homesdale (WBH) Ltd
- To give clear guidance to all concerned in investigating complaints
- To provide a clear procedure which clarifies the roles and responsibilities of individuals.
- To respect and give regard to a persons gender, culture, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and communication needs
- To give the individual the right to a safe environment where they are treated with respect and dignity
- To empower the individual
- To be sensitive to the need of cares involved, but to recognise that there may be occasions when conflicting interest cannot be wholly reconciled.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Homesdale respects the individual's right to privacy and dignity at all times. The protection of all confidential information is recognised as good practise, but public interest can override the duty of confidentiality

- Information is shared only with those individuals whom it is necessary to involve when it is in the best interest of the tenant
- Confidentiality is never confused with secrecy
- Homesdale will always try to get informed consent. However, if this is not possible it may become necessary to override the requirement
- No assurance is given of confidentiality, no matter what the situation where there is a concern about abuse
- Anybody who has information as regards abuse of a tenant has a duty to report such incident in line with this procedure

## **DEFINITION OF ABUSE**

Abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring in a relationship, where there is an expectation of trust, and which causes harm or distress to a person (adapted from Action on Elder Abuse's definition)

## **DEFINITION OF VULNERABLE ADULT**

An adult who is in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness and who is unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

## **DEFINITION OF A CHILD**

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

## **TYPES OF ABUSE**

Abuse is about the balance of power which one individual exercises over another, particularly because one person is vulnerable.

**Physical Abuse** is the deliberate infliction of pain, physical harm or injury. This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, and misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions

**Psychological Abuse** is a pattern of behaviour by another that results in the psychological harm to a vulnerable adult, or child. This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal of supportive networks

**Sexual Abuse** is the sexual act carried out without the informed consent of a vulnerable adult. This includes rape, sexual assault, or any sexual acts to which the person has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.

**Financial Abuse** is the misappropriation of the funds of a vulnerable adult. This includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse of property, possession or benefit

**Neglect** may be deliberate or by default where the abuser is not able to provide the care needed and may not recognise the need for that care. This included ignoring medical or physical needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Discrimination** is the deprivation of rights. This includes racist, sexist behaviour, based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment or similar treatment

## **RECOGNISING ABUSE**

Abuse may manifest itself in a number of ways

- Unexplained injury
- Severe disturbance including withdrawal, distrust and anxiety
- Unusual behaviour
- Unkempt appearance, underweight
- Financial situation not in keeping with income
- Allegations of abuse

Abuse may be perpetrated by a wide range of people, including relatives and family friends, paid workers, professional staff, volunteers and other tenants as well as strangers. It may take place in a variety of settings, including the person's home, care home, day centre and hospital.

## **RISK ASSESS MENTS**

All tenants have a risk assessment carried out within 3 months of the start of their tenancy. This assessment is designed to highlight particular areas of vulnerability. In conjunction with this a Support Plan is produced, this is designed to address the need of the tenants and put in place support to minimise areas of vulnerability.

These are reviewed in response to change of circumstances or every 6 months.

## **ALERTING**

The aim of the procedure is to prevent the abuse of adults and children and to support people to come forward to report suspected abuse. It is important that all concerns about abuse however trivial are reported.

Staff need to be aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and be confident that in reporting abuse by a colleague it will be treated seriously and investigated. Staff need to be aware that they will be supported by an appropriate agency following the report of an incident made in good faith.

## **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ACTUAL OR SUSPECTED ABUSE**

### **STEP 1**

- Ensure the individual is safe and well and there is no immediate danger. This should take into consideration the person's age, race, cultural background, disability, gender and sexuality.
- If there appears to be immediate danger then the appropriate emergency services should be called
- Be sympathetic and listen
- Give reassurance, but do not make promises that cannot be kept
- Staff should be aware of their own and others safety

### **STEP 2**

- Clarify the facts, summarising what you have been told
- Explain that you cannot keep this information about alleged or suspected abuse confidential and that you must inform your Manager
- Try to get the person's consent to share this information
- Offer further support from yourself or others

### **STEP 3**

- A Manager should ensure the allegation is recorded on the POVA incident report pro forma and signed as soon as possible
- The report should be an accurate record of what has been disclosed and observed. Record facts not opinions
- Use the person's own words as much as possible.

#### **STEP 4**

- The manager must refer the incident immediately to the Community Care team at L.B.Redbridge by telephone on 020 8708 7333 (9am-5pm) or Emergency Duty Team on 020 8554 5000 (out of hours) and the Police when appropriate.
- It should also be referred to the Management Committee who will decide what investigations the organisation will complete
- An allegation by a vulnerable adult should always be believed
- Any further steps should be recorded
- The Manager should consider implementing the disciplinary procedure if appropriate when the alleged abuser is a staff member.

#### **STEP 5**

- If the person is able to make the decision, seek consent as to whether relatives should be informed
- If the person lacks capacity to make this decision then the decision as to whether to share information with relatives is made by the Manager in consultation with other agencies (eg Social Services, police)
- Information is to be shared on a need to know basis
- No assurances should be given of confidentiality.
- If the alleged abuser is a relative or friend they should not be contacted.
- If appropriate the person will be given support through the relevant agencies.

#### **REFERRAL DETAILS**

The referral should include the following information. This will already have been recorded on the POVA incident report pro forma.

- Personal details of the individual - name address, age, type of accommodation, family situation, physical and mental health, whether they are aware the referral has happened, details of carers
- Details of the abuse - reasons/incidents, the degree of immediate danger
- Details of the abuser - relationship to the individual, physical and mental health, risk to others
- The referrers judgement - action taken, action needed, perceived risk
- Agencies involved - information on others involved already
- Homesdale employees should co operate fully with all agencies involved in investigating the allegation

**TRAINING**

Training will be given to all employees as regards recognising all forms of abuse and the procedure for reporting any suspected abuse. This is carried out as a new employee starts work and annually after that.

**POLICY REVIEW**

A formal review of all cases reported should be undertaken annually in order to assess whether procedures were followed and to assess whether there is a need to review policy and procedures.

This policy should be reviewed every 12 months.

Signed .....

Printed .....

Date .....

October 2010  
Version 4