

	CLIENT SERVICES Providence Row Housing Association	Safeguarding Children & Young People at Risk Policy & Procedure VERSION: 4
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Safeguarding Children & Young People at Risk Policy & Procedure

General Statement

Providence Row Housing Association (PRHA) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children who are either service users or who visit our supported services.

PRHA recognises that it has a duty to promote the welfare of children and safeguard them from harm. We aim to work in collaboration with other agencies and professionals to ensure that we have effective child protection procedures in place to report any allegation or suspected abuse promptly. We have taken appropriate steps to ensure all staff members are adequately trained and work in accordance with the procedures.

Safeguarding is a relatively new term which encompasses '**child protection**' but it also includes prevention. As such PRHA undertakes to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised. Where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare PRHA will take appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies (Safeguarding Children Act 2005). Having safeguards in place not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but also enhances the confidence of the staff, board members, volunteers, parent/carers and the general public. PRHA's Safeguarding Children & Young People at Risk Policy & Procedure includes '**Child Protection Procedures**' for dealing with issues of concern and abuse and includes external visitors to young person schemes and projects.

Under the Children Act 1989 organisations have a duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people under 18.

The Children Act 2004 requires that agencies work co-operatively to protect the welfare of children. Guidance which followed Lord Laming's report into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié made it clear that although social services and the Police have the responsibility of investigating in the area of child abuse and neglect, all those who come into contact with children and young people have a duty of promoting and safeguarding children.

This document outlines the policy and procedures which reflect the PRHA's responsibility in relation to legislation and guidance.

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This policy also reflects our commitment to the government national framework for change to build services around the needs of children and young people. This is outlined in Every Child Matters: Change for Children, where one of the five key outcomes identified is that children and young people are supported in staying safe. The framework reinforces the need for and duty for agencies to co-operate for the purposes of safeguarding children.

NB Children and Young People

References to children and young people in this document refer to any young person under the age of 21 years, in accordance with the Children Act

1. DESIGNATED AND NAMED PROFESSIONAL

All statutory organisations have a designated and a named professional to take a strategic and professional lead in relation to all aspects of child protection. All local procedures must contain details of the professionals and Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) members of the boroughs in which the services are provided. The Assistant Director of Client Services will keep an up to date list of the members of the ACPC.

PRHA has appointed a designated person and a named professional to ensure that measures are in place to safeguard children within our services.

1.1 Designated Professional

- PRHA has appointed the Chief Executive as the designated professional for child protection who takes the following responsibilities:
- Strategic lead in safeguarding children within PRHA's services.
- Ensure that child protection is part of PRHA's risk management strategy; promote good practice and effective communication.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for adequate training.
- Monitor that supervision is in place for all staff that work with children or are likely to come in contact with.
- Lead on conducting internal case reviews and allegations of abuse where children are involved.
- Support the named professional in meeting child protection specifications.

1.2 Designated Safeguarding Children and Young People Officers

The Assistant Director Client Services will take on the role of named professional and have the following responsibilities:

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- Source of advice and expertise on child protection issues.
- Point of contact for all child protection matters.
- Supervise and monitor reports made to Social Services by named staff member.
- Promote good practice and effective communication on all matters relating to Child Protection with PRHA.

He / She / They will act as the source of support, advice and expertise on Safeguarding Children and Young People issues for staff, attend appropriate training, liaise with the Principal where needed, and make referrals to external agencies – see **Child Protection Procedures** Section of this Policy.

They will maintain links with the borough of Tower Hamlets and other boroughs *Safeguarding Children Board* in order to ensure they are kept up to date with local changes in policy and procedure.

They are responsible for ensuring that staff receive appropriate training and refresher training on Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

2.0 STATEMENT OF INTENT

PRHA demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children involved with our organisation from harm. The essential inclusions for our **Child Protection Policy** are outlined below:

- the welfare of the child is paramount;
- all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs;
- the policy is approved and endorsed by the Board;
- who the policy applies to (i.e. all the Board, staff and volunteers);
- children and parents are informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate;
- all concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by the Board, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately - this may require a referral to children's services and in emergencies, the Police;
- a commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting;
- reference to principles, legislation and guidance that underpin the policy;
- arrangements for policy and procedures review;
- reference to all associated policies and procedures which promote children's safety and welfare e.g. with regards to:
 - health and safety

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- anti-bullying [Harassment & Bullying Policy & Procedure **CS32**]
- protection of children on line [Harassment & Bullying Policy & Procedure **CS32**]
- and photography

3.0 CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

PRHA's procedures and systems provide clear **step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances** and they clarify roles and responsibilities. Systems for recording information and dealing with complaints are in place to ensure implementation and compliance. PRHA's **Child Protection Procedures** should be linked with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures.

The procedures and systems include:

- Clearly defined role and responsibilities for the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director in relation to child protection, appropriate to the level at which s/he operates.
- A description of what child abuse is, and the procedures for how to respond to it where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare or concerns about the actions of a trustee, staff member or volunteer. Relevant contact details for children's services, police, health and NSPCC helplines should be available.
- A process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals and storing these securely in compliance with relevant legislation and kept for a time specified by your insurance company.
- Guidance on confidentiality and information sharing, legislation compliant, and which clearly states that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.
- A code of behaviour for the Board, staff and volunteers. The consequences of breaching the code are clear and linked to disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- Safe recruitment, selection and vetting procedures that include checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all the Board, staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect (e.g. helpline, email) contact with children. In the case of the Board, because of their position within the charity, we take the view that whenever there is a legal entitlement to obtain a DBS check in respect of

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such a trustee, a check should be carried out. This goes beyond circumstances where the trustee comes into contact with children.

- A complaints procedure which is an open and well publicised way in which adults and children can voice concerns about unacceptable and/or abusive behaviour towards children.
- Systems to ensure that all staff and volunteers working with children are monitored and supervised and that they have opportunities to learn about child protection in accordance with their roles and responsibilities.
- Requirements for the Board, staff and volunteers to learn about child protection in accordance with and as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities
- PRHA contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance "Working together to Safeguard Children 2013"
- PRHA ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority and Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- PRHA has a staff code of conduct which are given to all staff on their induction, reviewed annually and made available publicly e.g. on the PRHA website

4. DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

PRHA adopts the following definition from the London Child Protection Procedures:

'Child abuse and neglect is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or '

The categories of abuse are:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Domestic violence

These categories of abuse overlap and a child may suffer more than one form of abuse.

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Children may be abused or neglected through the infliction of harm or failure to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place in a family or an institutional or community setting. The perpetrator may or may not be known to the child.

What is a 'Child in Need'

Children who are defined as 'being in need' are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services.

(Section 17 Children Act 1989).

The critical factors are what will happen to a child's health or development without services, and the likely effect that the services will have on the child's standard of health and development.

What is 'Significant Harm?'

Some children are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The local authority is under a duty to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm.

(Section 47 Children Act 1989).

Decisions about significant harm are complex and will be decided after assessment and discussion between the statutory authorities and the child and family.

There are no absolute criteria to judge what constitutes 'significant harm':

The Children Act defines 'harm' as:

- Ill treatment including sexual abuse, and ill treatment which is not physical
- Impairment of physical or mental health
- Impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development

Child abuse or neglect can involve any one or more of the following: Physical injury, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect

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Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger.

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health of a child.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, causing children frequently to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. This may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's' basic emotional needs.

Domestic Violence is not a specific statutory offence. The term is used to describe a range of criminal offences - and sometimes sub-criminal behaviour – occurring in particular circumstances. There are therefore many different definitions.

For the purpose of police force returns of reported incidents to HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, the definition of **Domestic Violence** used is: “any violence between current or former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever and whenever it occurs. The violence may include physical, emotional or financial abuse”. The offence of “Domestic Violence” is due to be included in the pending Children and Young Persons Bill 2008.

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Appendix 1 provides further detailed definitions, symptoms, and risk indicators of recognising abuse.

5. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS

If a child discloses abuse or makes allegations, the member of staff must respond by listening carefully and sensitively without pressing for information.

The response must be limited to the following:

- Clarify the concerns
- Offer reassurance on how s/he will be kept safe
- Explain what action will be taken
- Seek medical attention for any serious injuries.

The child must not be pressed for further information, asked leading questions or crossed examined under any circumstances as this may jeopardise police investigations. The Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) and Children's Social Care (CSC) have responsibilities for investigation and making enquires in child protection matters.

6. SUSPECTED ABUSE

- PRHA must make a referral to Children's Social Care if there are signs that a child under the age of 18 years or an unborn baby:
- Is likely to suffer significant harm in the future
- Is experiencing or may already have experienced abuse or neglect.

7. REFERRALS

Referral must be made to Social Services promptly following the correct procedures. This can be made verbally and must be followed up in writing within 48 hours.

Where possible and appropriate the following actions are to be taken before referrals are made to Children's Social Care:

- Discuss concerns with line manager or Chief Executive
- Inform the child of the referral and ask them about their view if they can understand the significance and consequence.
- Where possible concerns should be discussed with the parents or family member and agreement sought to refer to Social Services unless this places the child at risk of significant harm.

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In some situations decision might be taken to refer to Social Services without parental consent. Details of reasons why this decision was taken must be fully recorded following the recording procedure.

7. RECORDING

The following written records **must** be kept:

- Detailed notes of any discussion with the child, parent and manager
- Detailed notes of Information provided to Social Services.
- Decisions taken, which must be timed, dated and signed.

The records should be:

- Clear, concise and accurate.
- Use straightforward language.
- Differentiate between Fact, Observation, Allegation and Opinion.

Listening

- Listen carefully without judging them – remember you are not investigating, only receiving the information.
- You should always communicate with the child or young person in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference. This is especially important for disabled children and young people and for those whose preferred language is not English.
- Do not ask leading questions e.g. Did she hit you? These can jeopardise any future police investigation. Keep questions to a minimum – just enough to understand what is being alleged
- Do not attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse. This is in case the allegation leads to a criminal investigation and you must not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation.
- Inform the young person that you will be reporting the allegation and make sure you have their name and contact details.

8. INFORMATION SHARING

For the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children it is essential for information to be shared amongst professionals working with Children and Families. All information sharing must be done in accordance with the following legislations:

- Common Law Police Disclosure Act
- Human Rights Act 1998

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- Data Protection Act 1998
- Children Act 1989

9. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

It is important for professionals working with children to have knowledge of the following legislations:

- The Children Act 2004
- The Local Government Act 2000
- The Children Act 1989 mainly Section 17, 27, 38, 44 and 47

10. INVESTIGATIONS AND ENQUIRES

Children's Social Care and the Child Abuse Investigation Team of the Police are responsible for carrying out all investigations. The Chief Executive will take a lead in internal investigation by assisting CSC and CAIT.

PRHA will take the following actions where allegations are made against:

a) Services User

If an allegation is made about a services user, PRHA will investigate alternative accommodation is found while the investigation is taking place where appropriate/ possible.

b) Visitors

If the allegation is about a visitor to PRHA residential services we will seek agreement to exclude them from the property pending the outcome of the investigation.

c) Staff Members

If an allegation is made against a staff member they will be suspended whilst the investigation is taking place.

Please refer to the following policies for more details.

- *Disciplinary Procedure* **ES05**
- *Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy & Procedure* **CS48**

11. TRAINING, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

All staff members that work directly or come into contact with children will receive adequate training and support to ensure that they have clear understanding of the child protection procedures. Staff members also receive

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regular supervision in accordance with PRHA policies, which ensures that all **'Child Protection'** issues are discussed.

12. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY.

PRHA recognises different social and cultural upbringing of children and works to ensure that staff members are sensitive and tolerant of diverse customs and views. However the safety and welfare of child is paramount and therefore PRHA will not tolerate any practices, customs or view that are illegal and/or puts the child at significant harm. Some examples of this are exposure to pornography, female genital mutilation or forced marriage.

PRHA aims to promote equality and diversity within its services and will not tolerate any form of abuse or discrimination.

Please refer to the following for more details

- *Equality and Diversity Policy C4*

13. MONITORING

As the designated professional, the Manager is responsible for reviewing and monitoring all child protection issues and outcomes and forwarding reports to the Chief Executive and Management Committee.

14. RECORD KEEPING

Records will be kept according to PRHA's File Keeping & Salesforce Records Guidelines **CS28**.

15. LONDON CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

In addition to PRHA's own procedures, the London Child Protection Procedures are accessible.

Related Policies

- Disciplinary Procedure **ES05**
- Equality and Diversity Policy **C4**
- File Keeping Guidelines **CS28**
- Harassment Policy & Procedure (Client Services) **CS32**
- Incident Reporting & Serious Incident Inquiry Procedure **CS33**
- Internal Incident & Missing Person Reporting Procedure **CS73**

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- Missing Young Persons Procedure **CS71**
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy & Procedure **CS48**
- Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure **ES15**

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'Child Protection Procedure'

Appendix 1

RECOGNISING ABUSE

Definition

PRHA adopts the following definition from the *London Child Protection Procedures*:

'Child abuse and neglect is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or '

Children may be abused or neglected through the infliction of harm or failure to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place in a family or an institutional or community setting. The perpetrator may or may not be known to the child.

Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse which are:

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse.

These categories of abuse overlap and a child may suffer more than one form of abuse. These categories of abuse are used for child protection registration.

Safeguarding is

- Protection children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of health and development
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best possible outcomes

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It includes

- The child's health and safety
- The use of reasonable force
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- Providing first aid
- Intimate care
- Internet or e-safety
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure security, taking into account the local context

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The link below provides definition, impact and risk indicators of abuse. **The London Child Protection Procedures** should be used for more detailed information.

It is important to ensure facts are established before coming to any conclusion about the abuse. In certain cases such as neglect and emotional abuse, it can be subtle and long term. It is crucial that staff working with children remain alert and records any observations that may indicate suspicion of abuse.

https://www.londoncp.co.uk/responding_concerns.html

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