

M.H.D.A

Merseyside Housing & Debt Advice

www.MerseysideHousing&DebtAdviceCIC.co.uk

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Safeguarding Policy

1. Purpose of This Policy

This policy sets out how the organisation safeguards **adults** and **children**, prevents abuse, responds to concerns, and meets its legal duties under the **Care Act 2014**, the **Children Act 1989/2004**, and local safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff; volunteers, contractors and partners must follow this policy.

2. Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding means:

- **Protecting** a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- **Promoting welfare**, preventing harm, and taking action to keep people safe.
- **Empowering** people to make choices and remain in control of their lives.

Under the **Care Act 2014**, safeguarding duties apply to adults who:

- Have care and support needs
- Are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect
- Are unable to protect themselves because of those needs

Children's safeguarding applies to **all children under 18**, regardless of care needs.

3. Types of Abuse (Care Act 2014, Sections 14.17–14.24)

Adults

The Care Act identifies the following types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** – assault, hitting, misuse of medication, restraint
- **Domestic abuse** – controlling behaviour, violence, coercion
- **Sexual abuse** – rape, sexual assault, sexual acts without consent
- **Psychological/emotional abuse** – threats, humiliation, intimidation
- **Financial or material abuse** – theft, fraud, misuse of property
- **Modern slavery** – trafficking, forced labour
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – ignoring needs, withholding care
- **Self-neglect** – inability or unwillingness to care for oneself
- **Discriminatory abuse** – harassment or unequal treatment due to protected characteristics
- **Organisational abuse** – poor care practices within services

Children

Types of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**
- **Child criminal exploitation (CCE)**
- **Online abuse**
- **Domestic abuse exposure**

4. Aims of Safeguarding (Care Act 2014, Section 14.11)

Our safeguarding aims are to:

- **Prevent** abuse and neglect wherever possible
- **Promote wellbeing** and protect human rights
- **Identify** concerns early and respond quickly
- **Support** individuals to remain in control of decisions
- **Work in partnership** with local safeguarding bodies
- **Provide safe, high-quality services** that minimise risk

5. The Six Principles of Safeguarding (Care Act 2014, Section 14.13)

All safeguarding activity within the organisation follows these principles:

1. **Empowerment** – People are supported to make their own decisions.
2. **Prevention** – Acting early to stop harm before it occurs.
3. **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk.
4. **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
5. **Partnership** – Working with local services and communities.
6. **Accountability** – Clear roles, responsibilities and transparency.

6. Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) (Sections 14.14–14.15)

We adopt the **Making Safeguarding Personal** approach, meaning:

- The person is at the centre of all safeguarding decisions.
- We ask **what outcomes the individual wants**, not what services think should happen.
- We work **with** people, not **to** or **for** them.
- We ensure people feel listened to, respected, and involved.
- We support individuals to understand options and make informed choices.

7. How to Raise a Safeguarding Concern

Internal Reporting

All staff and volunteers must:

- Report concerns **immediately** to the organisation's Safeguarding Lead – Ann Norris 077749130565 ann.norris@mhda.co.uk
- Record information clearly and promptly.
- Never promise confidentiality—explain that information may need to be shared.

External Reporting – Knowsley

If a child or adult is at immediate risk, call **999**.

For non-emergency safeguarding concerns:

Knowsley MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Telephone: 0151 443 2600 (Monday–Friday, office hours)

Out of hours: **Knowsley Emergency Duty Team – 0151 443 2600**

Additional Contacts

- **Police non-emergency:** 101
- **NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000
- **Adult Social Care (Knowsley):** via MASH number above

Staff must escalate concerns without delay if:

- A person is at risk of harm
- Abuse is suspected or disclosed
- There is a conflict of interest
- They believe a concern has not been acted upon appropriately

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Safeguarding Lead:** Oversees safeguarding practice, reporting, training, and liaison with MASH.
- **Deputy Safeguarding Lead:** Acts in the Lead's absence.
- **All staff and volunteers:** Must follow this policy, attend training, and report concerns.

9. Training

All staff and volunteers will receive:

- Induction safeguarding training
- Regular refresher training
- Specialist training where required (e.g., domestic abuse, CSE, self-neglect)

10. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

We follow GDPR and the Care Act guidance:

- Information is shared **only when necessary** to protect someone.
- We share with consent where possible, but **can share without consent** if:
 - Someone is at risk of serious harm
 - A crime may have been committed
 - It is required by law

11. Policy Review

This safeguarding policy will be:

- **Reviewed annually**
- Updated sooner if legislation or local procedures change
- Approved by the organisation's leadership team

Next review date: **12 months from adoption of this policy**

12. Approval

Policy Approval This policy was approved by all the Directors on 31/03/2026 and is endorsed by the senior management team.

- **Date:** ____31/03/2026____
- **Directors Signature:** ____
- *C Roach,*
- *Ann Norris*
- *, Ajit Choudhury.*
- *Sonia Price*

Name: Ann Norris **Role:** Designated Safeguarding Lead

Date: 31st March 2026

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