

Sutton Housing Partnership Limited

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Company Registration Number: 05589014

OUR VISION

“By listening to and involving our residents and others, Sutton Housing Partnership will create and maintain **neighbourhoods where people feel at home**”



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Policy statement	Sutton Housing Partnership aims to ensure that abuse of vulnerable residents is not tolerated within its services. Sutton Housing Partnership believes all vulnerable older tenants have a right to live in safety and security free from harassment, coercion, intimidation, aggression, and physical, emotional or sexual harm. It is believed that in adopting a clear policy, Sutton housing Partnership will reduce the risk of abuse within its services, and where abuse does occur it will be managed appropriately.
Objectives	The objective of the policy is to ensure that Sutton Housing Partnership adopts a consistent, fair and transparent approach in the way it deals with alleged or actual abuse of its vulnerable service users.
Scope	<p>This document explains how Sutton Housing Partnership will manage actual or alleged abuse taking place within its sheltered housing schemes including extra care as well as within other services that it provides for vulnerable adults and in particular older people. These services may include emergency mobile response services and services provided within the wider community.</p> <p>The procedures for reporting and identifying abuse situations will follow those issued by London Borough of Sutton Social Services within their policy, 'Sutton Multi-agency, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2008' and in particular will use either the Citizen Reporting Toolkit¹ if reporting on behalf of a relative, friend or as a victim or in the case of a staff report, the Staff and volunteer Reporting Toolkit².</p> <p>When considering abuse, in respect of vulnerable older adults, domestic violence (insofar as it meets the definition below), situations will be included.</p>
Definitions	<p>Sutton Housing Partnership has adopted for the purpose of this policy, the definition of abuse quoted by Action on Elder Abuse, the organisation leading on this area nationally and defines Elder Abuse as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action,

¹ Appendix 1

² Appendix 2

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	<p>occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person</p> <p>This definition may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Abuse • Psychological abuse • Financial abuse • Sexual abuse • Neglect <p>In most incidences, 'abuse' will be defined as a criminal act and will therefore also be subject to criminal proceedings.</p>
<p>Legal Context</p>	<p>Abuse of any vulnerable adult in any form is a criminal act, and will as such be where allegations are made be reported to the Police who will take responsibility for undertaking a criminal investigation and action where this is in their view appropriate.</p> <p>However, independent to this, all allegations or suspicions of abuse of vulnerable adults will be investigated in full as outlined within this policy.</p>
<p>Who is at risk of abuse?</p>	<p>Any older person may potentially be at risk of abuse where they are dependent upon another person for support or assistance, or where there is a relationship of trust.</p> <p>Both women and men may be abused, and abuse is not limited to any one social group be it by race, religion, sexual orientation, or class.</p>
<p>Where does abuse happen?</p>	<p>Abuse may happen anywhere. It can happen in the victim's own home, or somewhere else that they may be visiting. Abuse may also take place whilst vulnerable people are staying in institutional care situations, for example in hospital or in a care home for a short period.</p>
<p>Who Abuses?</p>	<p>The abuser is usually (though not exclusively), well known to the person being abused, the abuser could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A partner, child or relative • A friend or neighbour • A paid member of staff (both staff of Sutton Housing Partnership and staff of other organisations) • A paid or volunteer care worker • A health or social care worker

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone that the abused person is caring for
<p>Why does abuse happen?</p>	<p>Abuse can happen for a number of reasons and can range from a one off spontaneous action as a result of frustration, through to systematic and premeditated acts. Reasons can include (though not restricted to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality long term relationships • The abuser's inability to provide the level of support required to the victim • The abuser themselves suffering from a mental or physical health problem • Inadequate training • Poor supervision of staff • Isolation
<p>What signs might suggest that an older person is being abused?</p>	<p>Signs of abuse can be many and in some cases difficult to see but may include the victim showing signs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained or frequent injuries • Unexplained weight loss • Withdrawal • Changing habits • Unexplained changes to available income • Reluctance to receive visits from staff • Depression or anxiety • Confusion <p>It should be noted however, that many of the above signs may also be normal consequences of illness or medical conditions.</p>
<p>If abuse is suspected what should you do?</p>	<p>Any concern in relation to a resident or service user in respect of a possible abusive situation should be reported immediately to either one of the Sheltered Housing Managers or the head of Older persons Services who will instigate the 'Sutton Multi-agency, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2008'.</p> <p>In the event that no managers are available you should not delay in making the report but should report your actions to one of the Sheltered Housing Managers on their return to the workplace.</p> <p>You can make a report by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephoning First Contact on: 02087706080 • Faxing a report to First Contact on: 02087704347

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emailing a report to safeguardingadults@sutton.gov.uk <p>NB if after 5pm or on a weekend please telephone the above number and ask for the Emergency Duty Team. In all cases, DO NOT WAIT for the next working day.</p> <p>In the event that a resident or service user is considered to be in immediate risk of serious harm, they should be protected through a temporary move to a place of safety.</p> <p>In the event that the alleged abuser is a member of Sutton Housing Partnership staff, the allegation should be immediately reported to The Human Resources Department, who will arrange for the immediate suspension of the staff member from duties and contact with residents and service users pending full investigation.</p> <p>Wherever possible the victim of the alleged abuse should be kept informed of steps being undertaken and wherever possible their permission to investigate should be sought, however if this permission is not forthcoming this should not delay or preclude investigation.</p> <p>In the event that an allegation of abuse is following investigation found to be actual abuse this will result in the immediate dismissal of any staff member involved and where appropriate the findings will be reported to the police.</p>
Support for Victims of Abuse	<p>In some cases the perpetrator of abuse may be a close family member or a carer, or may provide services for the victim. Victims of abuse may frequently be reluctant to report or take steps to report abuse. There are many reasons for this which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A fear of reprisals or further harm from the alleged perpetrator• A fear that the alleged perpetrator may be punished or harmed in some way• A fear that in the event that the alleged perpetrator is reported they may end contact with them• A fear that they will not be able to manage without the assistance of the alleged perpetrator• A fear that people will not believe them if they make a complaint or report• A fear that they will be deemed unable to manage and will have to face major changes to their life (eg. Admission to institutional care etc.)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fear that they will be forced to take steps that they are unwilling to make • A fear of involvement of external agencies • A fear that they will lose control of their lives. <p>To support victims of abuse it is vital that their wishes are taken into account, however this should not defer from the overriding responsibility to report such incidences.</p> <p>The victim should be given every opportunity to express their concerns and wherever possible to retain control of the situation. All actions should be explained to the victim so that they remain informed and their opinions should be taken into account when deciding actions to be taken.</p> <p>Victims should be given the opportunity to access support services such as Action on Elder Abuse Helpline, victim support etc., where they are able to discuss the issues in confidence with an impartial professional.</p> <p>Where abuse is taking place within the home, steps should be taken to ensure that the victim is safe, in some circumstances this may lead to an offer to move the individual to temporary accommodation as a place of safety.</p> <p>Where the alleged perpetrator of the abuse is someone known to the victim and they are concerned as to the well being of the alleged perpetrator it should be recognised that the alleged perpetrator may themselves be a vulnerable individual acting and that their actions may be unintentional.</p>
<p>Support for Perpetrators of Abuse</p>	<p>It is well recognised that in some cases, perpetrators of abuse are themselves vulnerable or that their actions are the result of a lack of ability to cope with the strain of caring for the victim.</p> <p>Whilst legal and statutory services will take responsibility for investigations, Sutton Housing Partnership will seek to support the perpetrators and treat them with respect.</p> <p>Referrals to support agencies will be made where appropriate to enable the perpetrator to seek and receive appropriate support from impartial professionals</p>
<p>Prevention of Abuse</p>	<p>In an effort to prevent abuse or minimise the impact of abuse within Sutton housing Partnership sheltered schemes and other service users, a number of steps have been undertaken. These include:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory regular training in Elder Abuse Awareness for all Older persons Services staff and any other staff in front line roles where they may have significant contact or relationships of trust with older residents or service users • Mandatory Enhanced Criminal Records checks of all Older persons Services staff and any other staff in front line roles where they may have significant contact or relationships of trust with older residents or service users • Availability of information for all older residents living with sheltered housing schemes managed by Sutton Housing Partnership about help and support for victims of abuse • The collection of data relating to Elder abuse within Sutton Housing Partnership services
Equality and Diversity	<p>This policy and associated procedures will apply to all.</p> <p>SHP is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief, class, financial status and any other difference that can lead to discrimination or unfair treatment.</p>
Related Documents	<p>The following documents are available to support this Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered Housing Procedure Guide • 'Sutton Multi-agency, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2008' • What is Elder Abuse? by Action on Elder Abuse • SHP Staff Disciplinary Procedures