

DHA Safeguarding Policy - August 2018

The Deddington Housing Association (DHA) manages the Holly Tree Cottages (HTC) accommodation at Earls Lane in Deddington, Oxfordshire. The purpose of the DHA Safeguarding Policy and subsequent procedures is to provide clarity about the intentions of the DHA to -

- *Protect HTC residents and visitors – both children and adults - from the risk of harm*
- *Demonstrate the DHA's capability to comply with lawful requirements and effectively discharge the DHA's duty of care*
- *Set out how the DHA will discharge its responsibilities to deal quickly and effectively with any concerns about physical, sexual or emotional abuse*

Safeguarding is defined in the context of the DHA housing provision at the HTC as –

- *Protecting adults and children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to health or development and ensuring the provision of safe and effective care.*
- *The action taken to promote the welfare of adults and children and protect them from harm.*

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' 2000 report outlines the main types of abuse -

- **Physical abuse** - including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** - including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** - including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - including race, sex, culture, religion, politics, that is based on a persons disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment and hate crime.
- **Domestic abuse** - Home Office Definition 2004 - 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.'

All forms and types of abuse are unlawful and the DHA will refer any abuse allegation to the relevant authority through the Oxfordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

DHA Safeguarding Procedures

The DHA will handle any safeguarding allegation with sympathy and sensitivity whilst ensuring that no commitment or agreement is given at the outset. From the initial report the DHA will comply with any statutory requirement or duty of care to protect residents and visitors from harm or future harm. Any allegation is to be immediately referred to the clerk who will inform the chair and trustees. The DHA will accept responsibility for implementing its policy and procedures, in conjunction with other agencies. The DHA has a designated safeguarding lead and together with the chair will agree the DHA response, including an initial investigation to establish the facts.

The DHA trustees and employees acknowledge that all residents, staff, volunteers and visitors have the right to a safe and secure environment including respect for their dignity, privacy, independence and individuality.

This safeguarding policy has been developed to protect those who live, work and visit the Holly Tree Cottages to ensure any safeguarding concerns about physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

The clerk is the first point of contact and will contact the chair and designated safeguarding trustee as soon as possible. If unavailable, any of the trustees should be informed immediately of any safeguarding issue that has arisen. Details of the clerk and trustees are in the personally issued residents booklet.

Procedure to be followed if abuse is suspected

Depending upon the circumstances of the individual case:

- *Ensure the individual is safe from further harm*
- *If necessary seek medical assistance*
- *Ascertain the basic facts including*
 - *nature of alleged abuse*
 - *date, time and place of alleged abuse*
 - *name and details of complainant (include date of birth and gender where known)*
 - *where different, name of person who has allegedly been abused*
 - *description of any injuries observed*
 - *account of the incident which has been given*
 - *name and details of alleged abuser (include date of birth and gender where known)*
 - *make a written record including the time of all observations and action taken*
- *Inform the clerk / chair / trustees immediately*
- *Inform the individual that the DHA has a duty of care to inform the local safeguarding authorities regardless of their wishes*
- *Should a complainant request the information is kept secret, they are sensitively advised that whilst this matter will only be known locally to the clerk, the chair and the designated safeguarding lead, all cases of alleged abuse will be referred to the appropriate agencies.*
- *The individual will be told who will be available to offer ongoing support and reassurance.*

This policy has been approved for issue by the DHA trustees; this is recorded in the DHA minutes and will be shared with all residents and staff.

Chair of Trustees Name and Signature: Stella O'Neill

Date approved: 16 August 2018

This policy is approved for three years. Next review date - August 2021