



# Northumberland County Council

## Northumberland Supported Tenancies

### SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

Version No:	1
Dare Issued:	March 2024
Previously Issued:	August 2023
Authorised:	
Review Period:	Every 3 years unless there is a change in legislation
Projected Review Date:	August 2027

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 These guidelines do not replace existing Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership procedures and therefore must be read in conjunction with the safeguarding partnerships policies and procedures

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding.aspx>

1.2 As a supported accommodation service we have a duty to plan to ensure that our functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people accessing the service. This policy also reflects Regulation 20 of the Supported Accommodation Standards as outlined by Ofsted.

#### 2.0 Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

2.1 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on agencies to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard children and promote their welfare; by safeguarding and promote welfare we mean:

- Protecting children from abuse or neglect;
- Preventing impairment of the child's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Creating opportunities to enable children to have optimum life chances in adulthood.

2.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 aims to break down professional boundaries and strengthen partnership working between agencies by placing children and young people at the centre of their care, building services around their needs.

### **3.0 Shared Responsibility**

3.1 Safeguarding children and helping them to achieve their optimum life chances requires a concerted effort by all agencies working with them and a culture where responsibility is shared and working relationships are open and respectful. All agencies and professionals should:

- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers may pose to children;
- share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances;
- contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare;
- take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans;
- work cooperatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.

### **4.0 Aim of the Northumberland Supported Tenancies Service**

4.1 The principal aim of the service is to provide young people aged between 16-21 years of age with safe and secure accommodation that meets their needs and provides a stepping stone to independence.

The service is including a team manager, a service lead and a number of accommodation support workers who also hold case responsibility for care leavers and offer a wide range of backgrounds and experience.

4.2 All staff members that are recruited by the service will follow local council procedures and are required to complete an enhanced DBS check.

4.3 The service policies and procedures are committed towards safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people living in Northumberland.

4.4 Staff within the service initiate tenancy outcome assessments with young people placed within the service and work in partnership with the young person and their wider care team to determine the most appropriate package of support to meet the individual needs of the young people. If the assessment highlights areas of concern these will be discussed through line management, supervision, and quality assurance arrangements. This discussion is to agree and record the appropriate level of support and to follow LSCB guidance if a referral is required. Concerns can also be discussed, without necessarily identifying the child in question, with senior colleagues in another agency to develop an understanding of the child's needs and circumstances. In relevant cases a referral can be made to the Northumberland Children's Triage and Assessment team using the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF)

4.5 A number of the children who are placed within the scheme may be cared for or care experienced young people or homeless 16/17-year-olds open on a child in need basis and some of whose needs will require safeguarding. It is necessary therefore for there to be clear links between the service and wider Children's Social Care, 14+ team and wider Northumberland Adolescent Services both at strategic level and at a child-specific operational level. These links are in place and are effective.

4.6 As a service (along with all other services and agencies) we have a duty to plan to ensure that our functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and to this end must ensure that the following arrangements are in place:

- A member of the management team will be nominated to take lead responsibility for child protection and safeguarding matters, although ultimate accountability for this work will lie with the Accommodation Team Manager as the registered manager for the service.
- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the service fulfils its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- All staff will be appropriately trained to ensure they are able to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities, including training in the identification

and management of child protection concerns as well as contextual safeguarding.

- Staff will also receive regular refresher training e.g. level two safeguarding. Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership will provide information and training across a range of themes for example, criminal and sexual exploitation.
- Clear arrangements are in place for information sharing with partner agencies, and these should include the transfer of information to the secure estate regarding young people's risk and vulnerability.
- HR procedures are in place which adequately reflect the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and all staff will receive enhanced DBS clearance.

## 5.0 Safety and Well-Being

5.1 It could reasonably be argued that all those young people who are placed within the service are potentially vulnerable because of the features that are present in their social landscape, be they indicators of deprivation or restricted life chances. For the purposes of service delivery and guidance, safety and well-being are defined as ‘... specific and direct risks that young people may face...’ These may arise from three sources:

- from the individuals themselves through e.g. self-harm, suicide mental health needs, physical health needs, suicide, substance abuse, acting out and other potentially harmful behaviours, inappropriate responses to stress
- from others e.g. bullying, abuse which may be physical, emotional, or sexual, neglect, intimidation, criminal and sexual exploitation
- from events or circumstances e.g. familial criminality, inadequate housing / accommodation, family separation, anniversary of loss, other significant life events, change of care arrangements, experience of custody, economic deprivation

5.2 When completing the outcome assessments with young people, staff should ensure that the safety and well-being elements that have been identified and are included within the young person’s plan.

### Levels of Safety and Well-Being

Level	Threshold	Action
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<b>Low</b>	No specific behaviours, events or people currently indication risk	No further action required at this stage, but continue to review as part of the young person's placement within the service
<b>Medium</b>	Some specific safety and well-being issues which can be addressed as part of the normal supervision process	The outcome plan and safety plan should be reviewed with the young person and their allocated worker
<b>High</b>	Clear indications of specific Safety and Well-being requiring attention in the near future, and which may require involvement by other agencies or people. The case may need additional supervision and monitoring (registration, oversight by middle/senior management)	Discuss the same day with a manager. Ensure all professionals are informed and immediate safeguarding needs are met.  Consider the need to complete further MSET Checklist for referral into Children's Services MSET Group.
<b>Very High</b>	Statutory thresholds (child protection) or immediate action needed to prevent imminent harm to the young person. Immediate action is required and may involve intensive multi agency support and monitoring.	As above.  The allocated worker from children social care may at this point convene a strategy meeting to consider the risks and any safety planning adjusted accordingly

## 6.0 Section 47 Enquiries and Strategy Meetings

6.1 Where a safeguarding concern has been identified, the registered manager or the service lead in the absence of the registered manager, will have a discussion with the relevant team manager for the young person (providing a statutory safeguarding response) to the concerns raise.

6.2 If it is felt that the young person is suspected or if likely to be suffering significant harm, then the time manager for the young person will look to arrange for a strategy meeting to be held to discuss the concerns and to determine if the threshold for a Section 47 enquiry has been met

6.3 As a service we are not responsible for calling a strategy meeting but will attend and share any information that may be pertinent to the on-going enquiries and may as a result of the meeting be given tasks to progress that will support the safety and well-being of the young person in placement

## **7.0 Missing, Slavery, Exploited, Trafficked (MSET)**

7.1 The MSET Group is a multi-agency forum chaired by a Senior Police Officer from Northumbria Police and attended by Managers and practitioners of all relevant agencies. The aim of this group is to monitor risk management arrangements (and devise disruptive strategies) for those young people who present as high / very high risk (vulnerability). Children's Services and other agencies deal with a variety of young people who may pose certain risks to themselves or others. The various teams and professionals that make up Children's Services identify and manage these risks in different ways and use a range of risk assessment tools.

7.2 MSET provides a framework that should be used when individual agency risk assessments indicate high levels of concern regarding a young person's vulnerability and safety and well-being. It provides a Risk Assessment Tool to be completed by the professionals involved and if the subsequent score is medium or high, a nomination is made to this group. MSET meets on a four weekly basis and the relevant Team Manager attends the group.

7.3 The purpose of the procedure is to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken when considering the level of vulnerability of individual young people who are deemed to be at high or very high risk and a multi-agency plan developed. This will assist front line staff to evidence their decision making in respect of individuals. Individual workers who are concerned about the safety and welfare of a child or young person should undertake a risk assessment using their individual agency's risk assessment processes. The procedure is not intended to replace individual agency procedures nor replace other actions that workers may take to safeguard young people.

## **8.0 Domestic Abuse**

8.1 The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference is the process for managing risks associated with domestic abuse (Available on Staff Intranet > Children, Schools and Families > Information for Professionals > Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences). Domestic Abuse accounts for nearly a quarter of all violent crime. Research suggests that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men will suffer Domestic Abuse at some stage in their lives and that 2 people a week are unlawfully killed by their partners or ex-partners in the UK. The MARAC process provides a structured response to those very high-risk cases of

domestic violence and provide a foundation for a Domestic Violence Homicide Reduction/ Prevention Strategy within the Northumbria Police area.

8.2 If there are young people involved with the service who are victims of domestic abuse, please discuss with a Team Manager or Service Lead regarding possible referrals into the MARAC process. If young people are perpetrators of Domestic Abuse workers can complete the Change Star programme to reduce risk of this behaviour, referrals to MAPPA should also be considered. If young people are perpetrators of CPVA they can be referred into the CPVA team using the Risk Indicator Checklist, referrals into adult safeguarding should also be considered.

## **9.0 Serious Incident Reporting**

9.1 The service has a duty and responsibility to report on serious incidents. The Service will therefore follow the appropriate process along with any relevant process in line with Northumberland Safeguarding procedures.

9.2 A significant incident would include one or more of the following:

- Death of a child
- A serious self-harm incident
- A child involved in or subject to sexual or criminal exploitation
- A referral about a member of staff - including allegations of abuse
- An incident requiring police involvement in relation to a child, and this is a serious incident
- An incident involving the use of restraint on a child
- Any other incident involving a child that is considered to be of a serious nature
- The instigation of a child protection inquiry under Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989
- An incident of public, parliamentary or media interest
- The absence of the registered manager for a period of longer than 28 days

## **10.0 Historic Abuse**

10.1 Whilst the focus of the safeguarding procedure is on current risks and safeguarding concerns as a means of promoting the safety and well-being of young people accessing our service; management and staff should be conscious that some young people may have experienced historic abuse and may choose at a later time in their life to make a disclosure in respect of this abuse

10.2 Where a young person open to our service makes a disclosure of historic abuse, the worker should be supportive of the young person making the disclosure recording the information that is being shared in order to seek further advice and guidance from their manager.

10.3 The current safeguarding procedures will remain applicable to historic abuse disclosures and normal processes and practices should be observed

## **11.0 Conclusion**

11.1 As a Service we must see Safeguarding in its widest sense, and we must do everything we can to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Workers must be familiar with the guidance in the Safeguarding Procedures on Working with Hostile and uncooperative Families and must:

- Be persistent, insistent and consistent when sharing concerns with other agencies and demand to know when action will be taken.
- Follow up phone calls in writing and pursue a response.
- Do not assume – assess. Use your risk assessment skills and substantiate with evidence.
- Be constantly vigilant, analyse what you see and what you are told. Do not simply record.
- Ensure that all relevant information is shared appropriately and in a timely fashion
- Ensure that vulnerability and risk management procedures are always followed.
- Seek out consultation, supervision and support from line managers
- Liaison with NAS social work team and social work locality team and reading Children services database ICS.

11.2 The Safeguarding Procedures are available on Tri.x, all staff should be aware of these procedures and training should be updated on a regular basis.

11.3 This procedure should also be considered in conjunction with the Policy on reporting a serious incident as outlined in Regulation 27 of the Supported Accommodation Regulations



