Safeguarding Policy

Summary

We are committed to keeping our residents, staff and communities safe from harm.

This policy explains how Portsmouth Homes will help prevent harm, recognise concerns and respond when a child or adult may be at risk. It also explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

This policy applies to all Portsmouth Homes services and anyone working on our behalf.

Effective date

22 February 2024

Review

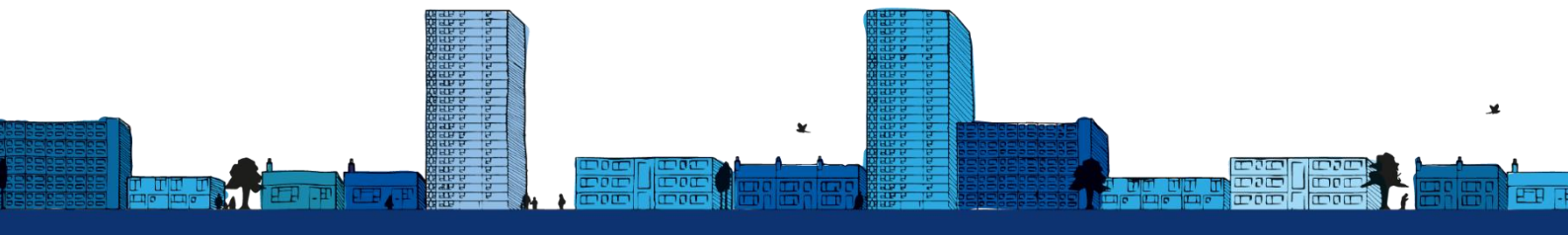
Latest Review Date: 4 November 2026

We will review this Policy every 3 years or earlier if there are changes in legislation, regulation, or best practice.

Version

Version 1.1

This policy was written with the help of residents of Portsmouth Homes



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Who this policy applies to

This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding across all Portsmouth Homes services.

It applies to:

- All staff and those working on our behalf
- Residents, leaseholders, and shared owners
- Anyone interacting with our services

Any reference to ‘we’, ‘our’ or ‘us’ refers to Portsmouth Homes, and any reference to ‘resident’ includes tenants, leaseholders and shared owners.

Why we have this policy

This policy explains how we will:

- Help prevent abuse, neglect and harm
- Recognise and respond to concerns as early as possible
- Listen to people and involve them in decisions about their safety
- Take action that is suitable for the level of risk
- Work with safeguarding services and other organisations
- Make sure safeguarding responsibilities are understood across our services

It supports our safeguarding responsibilities under relevant legislation, including the Care Act 2014 and Children Acts 1989 and 2004.

Safeguarding Principles

Our approach to safeguarding adults is guided by the six following principles:

Principle	What this means
Empowerment	Supporting people to make their own decisions and give informed consent
Prevention	Taking action before harm occurs
Proportionality	Responding in the least intrusive and most appropriate way
Protection	Supporting those most at risk
Partnership	Working with other organisations and communities

Accountability	Being transparent and responsible in our safeguarding actions

These principles guide how we work with adults. When a concern involves a child, we will take a child-centred approach that puts the child's safety, needs and views at the centre of our response.

Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
Safeguarding	Protecting people from abuse, neglect, or harm
Adult at risk	An adult who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and may be unable to protect themselves from it.
Child	Anyone under the age of 18
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	The person who oversees safeguarding arrangements within a service
People in a Position of Trust (PIPOT)	People whose work gives them authority, responsibility or access to children or adults with care and support needs. This may include staff, contractors and volunteers.
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	The person who oversees concerns or allegations about adults who work with children.
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	The organisation that helps employers make safer recruitment decisions.
Care Quality Commission (CQC)	The organisation that regulates health and adult social care services in England.

Our Responsibilities

We all have a role in protecting people from harm.

We will:

- Provide clear procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns
- Ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding training
- Work with local safeguarding partnerships and local authorities
- Share information appropriately where there is risk of harm
- Support residents in a way that respects their wishes and independence

Staff Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff must:

- Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect or harm
- Report concerns promptly and follow the relevant safeguarding procedure
- Seek advice from a manager or safeguarding lead if they are unsure what to do
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- Co-operate with safeguarding enquiries when asked
- Never ignore or minimise a concern

Those Working on Our Behalf

Contractors, volunteers and other people working on our behalf must:

- Report safeguarding concerns to Portsmouth Homes and follow their organisation's safeguarding procedures
- Contact the appropriate safeguarding or emergency service directly where their procedures require this
- Make sure their staff receive appropriate training
- Have suitable safeguarding arrangements in place
- Co-operate with safeguarding enquiries and investigations

Governance and Oversight

We follow safer recruitment practices. This includes obtaining appropriate references and carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service checks where required.

Staff receive safeguarding training when they join us and refresher training appropriate to their role.

When supporting an adult, we follow the Making Safeguarding Personal approach. This means listening to the person and working with them to achieve outcomes that matter to them.

When a concern involves a child, we take a child-centred approach. The child's safety and welfare are the priority, and their views will be considered in a way that is appropriate to their age and understanding.

We have designated safeguarding leads who oversee safeguarding arrangements within relevant services. Safeguarding activity is monitored at a senior level so that we can identify concerns, learn from experience and improve our services.

We cooperate with Social Care services and relevant Safeguarding Adults Boards and Safeguarding Children Partnerships.

Whistleblowing

We encourage staff and those working on our behalf to raise concerns about safeguarding or conduct. Concerns can be reported through Portsmouth City Council's Whistleblowing Policy and will be handled confidentially and appropriately.

How residents can help

You do not need to be certain that abuse or neglect has happened before raising a concern.

You can:

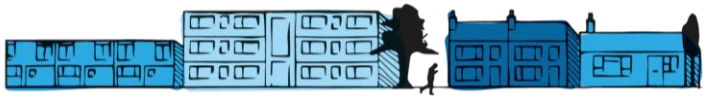
- Tell us if you are worried about your own safety or someone else's
- Share as much information as you can
- Contact Adult Social Care or Children's Services directly
- Call 999 if someone is in immediate danger

We will listen to your concern and help make sure it reaches the right service.

Recognising a Safeguarding Concern

Safeguarding concerns may involve:

- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Domestic abuse
- Modern slavery or exploitation
- Discriminatory abuse
- Self-neglect
- Forced marriage or honour-based abuse
- Radicalisation or extremism
- Online or digital abuse
- Criminal exploitation (including county lines)



Concerns about an adult

You should raise a concern if you believe an adult:

- Has care and support needs
- Is experiencing, or may be at risk of, abuse or neglect

You do not need to decide whether the adult is able to protect themselves. Adult Social Care will consider this when deciding what action may be needed.

Concerns about a child

You should raise a concern if you believe a child may be experiencing, or may be at risk of, abuse, neglect or harm.

You do not need proof before raising a concern. If you are worried, report it.

Raising a Safeguarding Concern

If you are worried that an adult or child may be unsafe, please tell someone. You do not need proof before raising a concern.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

You can:

- Report the concern directly to Adult Social Care or Children's Services in the local authority area where the person lives
- Contact us and we will help make sure the concern reaches the appropriate service

Residents can report an adult safeguarding concern using the public reporting options provided by Adult Social Care. Staff and professionals must follow the referral procedure for their role.

Concerns about a child should be reported to Children's Services. In Portsmouth, this is through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

When raising a concern, share as much information as you can, including:

- What happened and when
- Who was involved
- Why you are worried
- What the person has said
- Whether anyone is in immediate danger
- Any action already taken

We will record concerns accurately and securely in line with our procedures.

Staff who are concerned about a safeguarding decision or response from another organisation must seek advice and use the relevant escalation or professional challenge procedure.

You can find information about how to report a concern using the links below:

- **Report a concern about an adult**
- **Report a concern about a child: information for professionals**
- **Report a concern about a child: information for members of the public**

Consent and Information Sharing

We will handle personal information carefully and only share what is relevant and necessary to help keep people safe.

When a concern involves an adult, we will usually speak to the person and seek their consent before sharing information. However, we may share information without consent where this is lawful and necessary. This may include where:

- Someone is at immediate or serious risk
- Other people may be at risk
- A serious crime may have been committed or prevented
- The person may lack mental capacity to make the relevant decision
- The concern involves a member of staff or another person in a position of trust
- The risk is so serious that we need to act as part of our duty of care

When a concern involves a child, consent is not required before information can be shared to protect the child. Where it is safe and appropriate, we will explain that a concern is being raised and involve the child and their family. We will not do this if it could place the child or someone else at greater risk.

Any decision to share information without consent will be considered carefully and recorded. Where relevant, we will consider the person's mental capacity in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Concerns About Staff or People in a Position of Trust (PiPOT)

Staff, contractors and volunteers may hold a position of trust because of the authority, responsibility or access connected with their role. They must never use this position to exploit or take advantage of another person.

We take all concerns about staff, contractors, volunteers or other people in a position of trust seriously. Where appropriate, we will:

- Take immediate action to protect anyone who may be at risk
- Make a safeguarding referral
- Follow relevant safeguarding and employment procedures
- Assess and manage any ongoing risks
- Share relevant information with organisations such as the Disclosure and Barring Service or Care Quality Commission
- Co-operate with any safeguarding enquiry

Where a concern involves someone who works with children, we may refer it to the Local Authority Designated Officer in line with local procedures.

Partnership Working

Safeguarding works best when organisations work together. Depending on the concern, we may work with:

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Services
- The Police
- Health services
- Safeguarding Adults Boards
- Safeguarding Children Partnerships
- The Court of Protection

The relevant safeguarding authority decides what enquiries or other action may be needed. Portsmouth Homes will cooperate with these enquiries and may support or carry out agreed enquiries when formally asked to do so.

Prevention and Early Help

We aim to prevent harm wherever possible by:

- Identifying risks early
- Supporting residents with advice and signposting
- Promoting wellbeing and independence
- Work with residents and partner organisations to reduce risks and prevent harm

Depending on the person's circumstances, we may offer advice, practical support or signposting relating to tenancy sustainment, hoarding or self-neglect, anti-social behaviour, financial hardship or social isolation.

Training and Awareness

Staff will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role when they join us, followed by ongoing or refresher training where required.

Training will help staff:

- Recognise signs of abuse, neglect or harm
- Understand how and when to report a concern
- Follow the relevant adult or children's safeguarding procedure
- Understand consent and information sharing
- Know where to seek advice if they are unsure

Staff must keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date and follow the procedures relevant to their role.

Learning and Continuous Improvement

We will review safeguarding practice and learn from incidents, feedback, and partnership working to improve our services. This includes identifying trends, sharing learning, and making changes to services and training provided to staff where required.

Your voice

We provide residents a wide range of meaningful opportunities to engage, influence and scrutinise the Landlord Strategies, policies and services, to include participation in regular resident meetings and give feedback on services and policies.

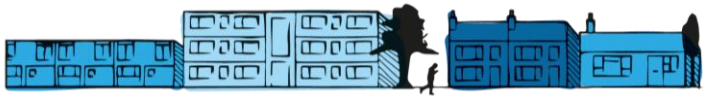
If you would like to be included in future resident engagement focus groups and would like to know how to get involved, please contact us for more information:

You can contact our team by:

- Email: **housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**
- Phone: 02392 834835
- Website**:** visit the **Resident engagement and community resources on our website**

What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

We completed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the **Equality Act 2010**. This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.



Regulation and legislation

We recognise the variety of legislation, and we will continue to monitor relevant legal guidance. The list below reflects some of the existing legal framework and relevant publications:

- **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023**
- **Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance**
- **Children Act 2004**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**
- **Mental Capacity Act 2005**
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**
- **Modern Slavery Act 2015**
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
- **Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003**
- **Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014**
- **Prevent duty guidance**

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **Portsmouth Homes policies, strategies and reports**
- Tenancy Agreement / Leasehold Agreement
- **Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services**
- Guidance for safer working practice for people working with children and young people
- **Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership Threshold and Continuum of Need document**
- **Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton safeguarding children procedures manual**
- **Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership reporting a concern to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub page**
- Relevant adult safeguarding concern guidance
- Relevant escalation and professional challenge procedures

How to feedback

If you have any questions around the policy or would like to know more about its application, please contact the relevant service in the first instance.

You can get this policy in large print, braille, audio or in another language by contacting your Housing Office. More information is available **translation, interpreting and audio information**.

Compliments

To help us provide the best service we can. We would like to hear customer views on the services that they use. If the customer is pleased with a member of staff or service, please let us know.

- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: **HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Complaints

If a customer is unhappy, they can refer to our Landlord Complaints Policy.

- Online complaint form at **Make a housing complaint**
- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: **HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Housing Ombudsman Service

If a customer is unhappy, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice and guidance at any time.

- Online complaint form on **the Housing Ombudsman Service website**
- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- For more information, visit **Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code**