

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

1. Introduction

Safeguarding is a term for protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This policy outlines Citizen's approach to Safeguarding children.

Citizen aims to take all reasonable measures to provide safe accommodation and services for all children living in our homes. This includes safeguarding children with additional care and support needs.

Anyone can carry out the safeguarding of a child and it is more likely abuse will be carried out by someone the person being abused knows, especially if they trust them. People who carry out abuse or neglect can include:

- parents or other care givers
- other family members
- local residents
- acquaintances
- neighbours
- friends

There are many types of abuse and neglect and they include any kind of behaviour towards a child that deliberately or unintentionally causes them harm. These include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- child sexual exploitation
- female genital mutilation
- honour-based abuse
- children witnessing domestic abuse
- psychological abuse
- financial or material abuse
- modern slavery
- forced marriage
- neglect and acts of omission including self neglect
- coercive control
- discrimination
- organisational
- child sexual exploitation
- mate crime

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- grooming
- criminal exploitation and gangs
- child trafficking

The abuse of children can happen anywhere, however it can be more common in the home. It can also occur in the organisations, schools or communities the child interacts with. Abused children may experience different forms of abuse and are often abused over a period of time.

Citizen recognises that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, and colleagues across Citizen play a key role in preventing, identifying and reporting neglect and abuse to protect children. We have a specialist Safeguarding training partner and have developed a specific training plan which allows our colleagues to identify and report any safeguarding concerns that they have.

All colleagues undertake mandatory Safeguarding training and this clearly defines the duty each colleague has to report any concerns for the well-being of children as detailed in the Safeguarding procedure.

The training is supported by clearly defined procedures as well as Citizen's own Safeguarding Leads.

Citizen recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of those who are at risk. This requires us to:

- Have clear operational procedures for identifying and dealing with concerns about possible abuse and ensure their implementation
- Maintain effective information sharing with statutory services and other agencies as appropriate
- Work in partnership with local safeguarding children's boards who are the main agency responsible for Safeguarding children.
- Recruit safely to achieve safer services for our customers, children and employees, including a stringent checking process
- Ensure contractors working in our properties and partners managing schemes on our behalf have appropriate Policies and training in place and that this policy is shared with them.



- Ensure that all colleagues are:
 - Trained in recognising the symptoms of abuse and neglect
 - Vigilant and be able to respond to safeguarding concerns
 - Familiar with the six principles underpinning adult safeguarding as defined in the Care Act 2014; empowerment, prevention, protection, proportionality, partnerships and accountability.
 - Have a clear Communications Plan in place to ensure the Policy is shared effectively

2. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all colleagues in contact with children, young people and their families, take all reasonable measures to minimise the risks of harm to the welfare of children; and where there are concerns, appropriate actions are taken to address these concerns.

The approach of this policy is based on and reflects the principles of both UK legislation and guidance and international agreements. Citizen will abide by existing regulatory requirements and legislation. In summary the Children Act (1989) emphasises that the welfare of the child is paramount and that a child wishes must be taken seriously. The Working Together to Safeguard Children a guide to inter agency working 2015, contains statutory and non-statutory guidance, introduced a national frameworks for policies and procedures and outlines the responsibilities of Local Children's Safeguarding Boards.

Citizen will act in accordance with the procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Boards who are the lead agency responsible for Safeguarding. Each Board publish an escalation process where an initial referral has been rejected. This is reflected in our processes.

3. Policy purpose

All children, regardless of disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, faith or belief and sexual identity have a right to protection from harm or abuse. This is of paramount concern to us.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all areas and covers Citizen customers, their household members, and Citizen's workforce. Citizen's workforce includes permanent and temporary colleagues, agency staff, apprentices, volunteers, contractors, Board and committee members.

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

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5. Roles, responsibility and authority

Board is accountable for the overall Policy. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Committee to ensure that this Policy is successfully implemented, and the procedures followed.

A statement of assurance in relation to Safeguarding is presented to Citizen Board annually. Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that all colleagues understand the importance of this Policy and the related procedures and comply with them. It is essential to the implementation of this Policy that colleagues know how to deal with emergencies and to express concerns to the appropriate person in the Organisation.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Chief Operating Officer and their Deputy the Director of Housing, Care and Support.

6. Policy management and delivery

In reviewing this policy, customers, colleagues and stakeholders have been given the opportunity to comment and shape our approach to Safeguarding Children.

All relevant colleagues will be appropriately trained in using our Policy and procedures and will also be made aware and receive training on the procedures of their local safeguarding boards. The level of training they receive will be considered in proportion to the role within the Organisation, clients they work with and risk they are potentially dealing with.

Citizen will ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that contractors who work in properties on behalf of Citizen and who meet children are aware of and have had training on this policy and the related procedure.

Everyone working on behalf of Citizen is expected to behave towards customers and colleagues in a way that demonstrates their commitment to this policy. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action or termination of contracts.

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7. Policy monitoring and review

We will:

- Undertake a Safeguarding Assessment and report the outcome to the Citizen Board and Safeguarding Committee.

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- Ensure that all colleagues will have mandatory training on our Safeguarding Children policy and procedure and we will monitor its implementation
- Ensure that all partners and contractors evidence they have completed appropriate Safeguarding training and aware of our Safeguarding Children Policy and procedure
- Recognise the importance of mental health and ensure our designated mental health first aiders are clear on their Safeguarding responsibilities
- Report quarterly key performance information on areas of concern and trends in terms of Safeguarding.
- Ensure appropriate Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks are completed

Performance against the above measures will be monitored via our Safeguarding Committee.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier due to:

- significant changes to legislation or regulation
- deficiencies or failures in this policy, because of complaints or findings from any independent organisations
- changes in local government

8. Equality analysis

This policy reflects Citizen's values, and as such, our colleagues and others covered by the scope of this policy are committed to not discriminate against any individual or groups and will respect the diversity of the communities with which we work. We will adhere to our statutory obligations set out in the Equality Act 2010.

In framing this policy, our colleagues are committed to not discriminate adversely against any group and will respect the diversity of the communities we are working within.

The Belonging & Inclusion Strategy sets out our commitment to improving the lives of all our customers and making our society a better place for everyone. We want to ensure that all our customers have a meaningful voice, and that we provide them with the best customer experience. In line with our legal and regulatory duties we must ensure that the services we provide are accessible, and where possible are tailored to the individual needs of our customers.

9. VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENTS	APPROVED AT/BY	REVIEW
V 1.0	October 2021	Policy reviewed	n/a	
V2.0	April 2024	Following light touch review (MOT) reference to Section 11 assessments removed	Director of Housing, Care and Support	Nov 2025
V3.0 draft	December 2024	Full 3 year review	Board	Nov 2027

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