YMCA
NORTH TYNESIDE

# Safeguarding Residents and Tenants Policy

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| **Author:** | Nicola Hudspith |
| **Checked by relevant people with appropriate expertise and responsibility:** | Safeguarding Working Group |
| **Approved by:** | Safeguarding Working Group |
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## 1. Purpose

Your safety, wellbeing and right to live free from harm and abuse are our highest priorities. The purpose of this policy is to explain how we protect our residents, tenants, their children and visitors from abuse and neglect.
We want you to feel safe in your home and our community. This document outlines what safeguarding means, how we actively protect you and exactly what you should do if you feel unsafe or are worried about someone else.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to;

- You as a resident or tenants living in our property
- Your children and visitors
- All staff members, support workers and management.
- All volunteers, students and agency workers.
- All contractors and maintenance teams working in our buildings.
- Visitors and guests.

## 3. Definitions

**What is Safeguarding?**
Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.
**What is a Child?**
A child is a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday
**What is an Adult?**
A person aged 18 years or over
**What is an Adult at Risk?**
An adult who has care and support needs (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); AND is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; AND as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.
**What is Abuse?**
Abuse is when someone does something to another person that causes them harm, distress or fear. It can be a single event or a repeated

pattern. It can be intentional or accidental. Abuse can happen anywhere, including online and it can be done by anyone (a stranger, a friend, a family member or a staff member).

**Types of abuse include;**

- **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, pushing, or causing physical pain.
- **Domestic Abuse:** Controlling, coercive or threatening behavior, or violence between people who are or were family members or intimate partners.
- **Psychological or Emotional Abuse:** Bullying, name-calling, threats or ignoring someone to make them feel worthless.
- **Financial or Material Abuse:** Stealing money, forcing someone to pay for things or taking control of someone's benefits.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Unwanted sexual attention, grooming, touching or forcing someone to do or watch sexual acts they do not want to do or do not understand.
- **Neglect:** Not providing the basic care, food, warmth or medical help that someone needs.
- **Self-Neglect:** When a person is unable to care for their own health, hygiene, or home environment to the point it puts them at risk, including hoarding behaviours
- **Discriminatory Abuse:** Treating someone badly because of their race, gender, sexuality, age, disability, or religion
- **Organisational Abuse:** Neglect or poor professional practice within an institution or setting or via support delivered within one's own home.
- **Modern Slavery:** Forcing someone to work for little or no money, or holding them against their will
- **Radicalisation/Extremism:** When someone is groomed, influenced, or encouraged to adopt extreme views or beliefs that promote violence, terrorism or hatred against others.
- **Cuckooing:** a form of criminal exploitation where gangs take over the home of an adult at risk to use as a base for illegal activities.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

Keeping everyone safe is a team effort. Here is who is responsible for what:

- **The Board of Trustees:** Ultimately responsible for ensuring our safeguarding policies are strong, legally compliant and effective.
- **The Head of Safeguarding and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs):** Specially trained staff members whose jobs are to manage safeguarding concerns. They provide safeguarding processes to follow, training to staff, advice to staff, speak with outside agencies (like the police or local council) and ensure residents are supported.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** Responsible for completing mandatory safeguarding training, listening to residents, spotting the signs of abuse and reporting any concerns immediately to the Head of Safeguarding and DSLs.
- **Residents and Tenants:** You are encouraged to look out for yourself and your neighbours. You are never expected to solve a problem yourself, but we ask that you tell a staff member if you are worried about your safety and wellbeing, or someone else's.

**Signs of Abuse can include;**

- **Physical signs** (eg bruising, burns, change in physical appearance, weight loss)
- **Mental Health Difficulties** (eg Low mood, depression, lack of interest in life, self harm, suicidal thoughts)
- **Behavioural Changes** (eg Fear of people or places, changes to personality, changes to usual behaviours, increasing risk taking, avoidance of support work or home visits)
- **Substance Use or Addiction problems** (eg Using more drugs or alcohol or gambling)
- **Financial Issues** (eg Debt, lack of money, rent arrears, no money for food)
- **Grooming/Exploitation:** (Initially having more money than usual, new clothes, expensive new items, a new friend or group of friends)

# 5. Main body of policy

## Our Commitment to You

We believe that everyone has the right to live safely, with dignity and

respect. We commit to:

- Promoting the safety and wellbeing of everyone
- Acting in a way that promotes individual choice wherever possible
- Recognising that the right to make individual decisions can involve some element of risk
- Protecting people who are not able to protect themselves, acting in a legal and best interest manner
- Listening to you carefully and taking your concerns seriously.
- Making sure our staff are thoroughly trained to recognise and respond to harm and abuse.
- Completing thorough safer recruitment processes for all staff and volunteers before they start working with us (including DBS background checks)
- Working closely with local authorities, social services and the police when necessary to keep you safe
- Identifying and understanding vulnerability and those at increased risk of abuse and neglect

## How to Report a Concern

If you are being abused, or if you think another resident or a child is being abused, tell us. **Reporting a concern will never put your tenancy or housing at risk.**

- **Speak to any staff member:** You can tell your support worker, housing officer or your support provider's Designated Safeguarding Lead
- **Contact a YMCA Designated Safeguarding Lead:** You can ask to speak directly to a YMCA Designated Safeguarding Lead if you do not get a satisfactory response from your support worker (contact details are in the Appendix).

## What Happens When You Report a Concern?

1. **We Listen:** We will talk to you and listen. We will not judge you.
2. **We Record your Concern:** As part of the reporting process we record your concern and your information will remain secure in our internal systems.
3. **We Ask What You Want:** We will ask what you want to happen next. Your wishes are incredibly important to us and we will try to

follow them whenever possible.

4. **We Take Action:** We will create a safety plan with you.
5. **We May Share Necessary Information:** Sometimes we need to ask outside experts for help, like the Local Authority Social Care team or the Police

### Confidentiality

We will respect your privacy and keep your information confidential. We will only share your story with the people who absolutely need to know to keep you, or others safe (like Social Services, Support Providers, Police ).
*Important Note:* If we believe that you or someone else is in immediate, life-threatening danger, we are legally required to contact the emergency services, even if you ask us not to. We will always try to tell you before we do this.

## 6. Related Policies

This Safeguarding Policy works alongside our other organisational policies, including:

- Whistleblowing Policy (for staff and residents to report bad practice safely)
- Recruitment Policy
- Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Professional Boundaries Policy

## 7. Relevant UK Legislation

Our policy is guided by UK laws designed to protect people. The main laws we follow are:

- **The Care Act 2014:** Sets out the clear legal framework for how local authorities and other parts of the system should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **The Children Act 1989 and 2004:** Outlines the duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

- **The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006:** Ensures that people who are known to be a risk to vulnerable adults and children are barred from working with them.
- **The Equality Act 2010:** Protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.
- **The Human Rights Act 1998:** Guarantees basic rights including the right to life and the right not to be subjected to degrading treatment.
- **Mental Capacity Act 2005:** Protects adults who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves about their care and treatment due to disability, mental illness, brain injury or dementia.
- **The Housing Act 1996:** Governs how we allocate housing and manage homelessness.
- **Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023:** Sets out the mandatory quality and safety standards for providers of supported accommodation for 16 and 17-year-olds.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR:** Sets the rules for how we must keep your personal information safe and secure. It also clearly states that data privacy rules should never stop us from sharing information if it is necessary to protect an adult or child from harm or abuse.
- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021:** Expands the legal definition of domestic abuse to include emotional, controlling, coercive and economic abuse, not just physical violence. It also officially recognises children who see or hear domestic abuse as victims in their own right.
- **Crime and Policing Act 2026:** Strengthens police powers to tackle anti-social behaviour and violence. Makes "cuckooing" a specific criminal offence and creates new protections against the exploitation of vulnerable people.

## 8. Monitoring and Review

We want to make sure this policy always works well. The Housing Working Group and Head of Safeguarding will review this document **every 12 months**, or sooner if there is a change in UK law or if a safeguarding incident shows us we need to improve how we do things.

# 9. Appendix

## Appendix A: Important Contacts

**YMCA North Tyneside Contacts:**

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Nicola Hudspith
- **Phone Number:** 01912575434 (YMCA Main Reception)
- **Email:** nicola@ymcanorthtyneside.org

**External and Emergency Contacts:**

- **Emergency Services (Police, Ambulance):** Dial **999** (If you or someone else is in immediate danger)
- **Police Non-Emergency:** Dial **101**
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline:** 0808 2000 247 (Free, 24/7)
- **Mind (Mental Health Support):** 0300 123 3393
- **Shelter (Housing Advice):** 0808 800 4444

## Appendix B: What to do if you are worried (Quick Guide)

| Step | Action |
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| **Step 1: Notice** | Are you feeling unsafe? Have you noticed a neighbour looking frightened, injured, or acting differently? Are you worried about how a staff member is behaving?<br><br>If someone is in immediate danger, call 999. |
| **Step 2: Act** | Do not wait. Do not try to investigate it yourself. |
| **Step 3: Report** | Tell your support worker or a member of staff immediately. If you do not get a satisfactory response form them, you can contact YMCA North Tyneside's Designated Safeguarding Lead (contact details above). |
| **Step 4: Support** | We will take over the situation, offer support, create a safety plan, and ensure the right authorities are involved if necessary. You will be supported throughout the whole process. |

**Revisions**

This section details all significant changes and updates made to this policy document.

| Revision Number | Date of Revision | Description of Change |
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