

Safeguarding (Adult) Policy

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1. Our purpose

We're proud to be able to support tens of thousands of people across England by providing affordable housing and care to help people live independently.

Everything starts at home, and we are privileged to be able to do work which makes a real difference to the lives of people in our communities. Everything we do is about people – whether that's providing a good quality, safe home or providing care which helps someone to live an independent life.

We live and breathe this social purpose.

2. Introduction

All persons have the right to live their lives free from violence and abuse as underpinned by the Human Rights Act 1998.

Safeguarding adults is working with adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect.

It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, giving regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs when deciding on any action.

GreenSquareAccord (GSA) is committed to adult safeguarding. This will be achieved by policies and procedures that aim to:

- prevent the abuse/mistreatment of adults.
- increase the awareness and recognition of safeguarding.
- take proportionate and timely action, when abuse/mistreatment is suspected, to safeguard adults from further harm or exploitation.

This policy will be carried out through personalised and robust practices that ensure:

- the needs and interests of adults are respected and upheld.
- our practices enable and empower individuals to express what they want to happen in line with the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal.
- agencies work together effectively.
- appropriate preventative action is undertaken including ensuring we recruit colleagues appropriately, carrying out the necessary checks for their role □ we create safer communities.
- we are recognised by our stakeholders and regulator as an organisation that upholds safeguarding practice.
- we instil an organisational culture where safeguarding is recognised as everybody's business and colleagues demonstrate professional curiosity

3. Scope of Policy and Exclusions

The scope of safeguarding adults is defined by the Care Act 2014.

The Care Act 2014 identifies that the duty to safeguard adults applies to an adult at risk- please see definition below.

Safeguarding children applied to anyone under the age of 18 and is covered by a separate policy and procedure

4. Definitions

Adult at Risk	The Care Act 2014 identifies that the duty to safeguard adults applies to an adult at risk. An Adult at Risk is an adult who: □ has needs for care and support (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.
Safeguarding	Protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.
Safeguarding Adults	Applies to adults at risk who are over 18 years of age.
Abuse	When someone does or says something which harms someone and makes them upset and scared. It is always unacceptable; everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect. No- one has the right to abuse others. Section 14.7 of The Care Act statutory guidance describes the different types of abuse and neglect. The statutory guidance suggests that Local authorities should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as they can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered. Types of abuse and neglect include: □ physical abuse □ domestic abuse □ sexual abuse □ psychological abuse □ financial or material abuse □ modern slavery □ discriminatory abuse □ organisational abuse □ neglect and acts of omission. □ self-neglect. Further information on the types of abuse can be found in the Safeguarding Adult's procedure.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. The **Executive Board** has overall strategic responsibility for safeguarding across GSA. They are responsible for ensuring clear and effective safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and that monitoring information on safeguarding is appropriately scrutinised.

5.2. **Directors** are responsible for:

- Ensuring their teams are aware, and work within the framework of adult safeguarding and relevant regulatory frameworks.
- Instilling cultures that support identification, action and learning in relation to safeguarding.

5.3. The **Heads of Service** are responsible for:

- Ensuring safeguarding practices are known and embedded within service areas and that identified leads represent their service areas within GSA safeguarding groups and structures.
- Instilling cultures of professional curiosity where colleagues joint the dots and liaise appropriately with other agencies to maximise customer safety and well-being.
- Sharing learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews

5.4. **Departmental Managers** are responsible for:

- Overseeing safeguarding activity and ensuring appropriate reporting and monitoring of safeguarding concerns. This includes appropriate inter- agency working and information sharing.
- Ensuring colleagues undertake safeguarding training relevant to their role and that reflective practice is used to embed a culture of learning from safeguarding incidents.

5.5. **Contract Managers** are responsible for ensuring that Contractors who visit our homes and services have the required safeguarding arrangements in place.

5.6. **Contractors** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that colleagues are suitable for the capacity employed, including relevant background checks.
- Ensuring that colleagues receive suitable training on how to deal with residents, including how to report any concerns they have.
- Cooperate fully with any arrangements put in place by GSA for Contractors to report safeguarding concerns in GSA properties and services
- Co-operating with GSA regarding any concerns and allegations received.

Agency managed services are expected to have their own equivalent safeguarding policies in place. Their responsibilities in this regard will be managed through our contractual relationship with them. Agencies are required to report safeguarding concerns to the police and any other regulators relevant to the service type (e.g., CQC).

5.7. Operational Colleagues are responsible for:

- Working in line with GSA policies, procedures and training provided, to ensure the timely identification and reporting of safeguarding concerns.
- Raising any areas of concern, liaising with other agencies as relevant to ensure cases are appropriately reported.

5.8. The Safeguarding Lead Officers Group is a delegated sub-committee of Executive Board. It supports the Executive Board in discharging its responsibilities relating to safeguarding. The purpose of the GSA Safeguarding Lead Officers Group is:

- To lead on the development and review of safeguarding policies and practices across GreenSquareAccord providing an effective interface between organisationwide teams and departments.
- To ensure safeguarding awareness is embedded across the organisation through effective, appropriate and timely communication and updates to colleagues and creating a culture where safeguarding is recognised as everybody's business.
- To embrace and promote an active learning culture where we learn from adverse events and take steps to prevent recurrence.
- To use data to monitor and manage risk, escalating any areas of concern to Executive Board.
- To ensure that concerns and any recommendations for improvement are shared in the DSO sub-group meeting.
- To produce an annual report of safeguarding activity. This is reviewed by the GSA Board as part of assurance that safeguarding is being effectively managed.

5.9. The Director of Quality and Compliance is the Chair of the Safeguarding Lead Officer's Group and is responsible for escalating any issues or concerns to Executive Board. They act as the overall lead officer for safeguarding across GSA.

5.10. Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO's) are identified leads in operational teams who provide additional support, expertise and guidance to operational colleagues. DSO's meet in a safeguarding sub-group to:

- Review how safeguarding practices are being implemented
- Share good practice
- Work together to resolve any system or process issue that may impact on the delivery of effective safeguarding practice

In **Care and Support**, Registered Managers and Service Managers act as designated safeguarding leads for their service areas. Registered Managers in regulated care services have legal responsibilities in line with their CQC registration.

5.11. All Colleagues:

- have a moral obligation to report safeguarding concerns. Wherever colleagues have a concern that something may not be right, they should discuss it with a relevant Manager or safeguarding lead. See something. Say something. Do something.
- will also be made aware of whistleblowing procedures should they need to report any concerns through these processes. We encourage a culture of speaking up wherever a colleague has a concern.

6. Policy

6.1. Policy Statement

We aim to protect our customers' right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect through working with our partners and other organisations to reduce both the risks and the experience of abuse or neglect. At the same time making sure our customers' wellbeing is promoted and their beliefs and preferences considered.

6.2. Policy Outline

GreenSquareAccord will demonstrate the highest standards of safeguarding practice and will work within the legal and regulatory framework.

Our safeguarding procedures detail the actions that colleagues should take when a safeguarding incident is indicated or reported. We cannot work in isolation and must work within the relevant local authority safeguarding arrangements, reporting cases to the appropriate local authority teams using correct referral contact means and in required timescales. Effective multi- agency working is essential in delivering effective safeguarding practice.

All safeguarding work will be completed in line with the ethos of **Making Safeguarding Personal** and the **6 government principles**.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is about having conversations with people about how we might respond in safeguarding situations in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing, and safety. It is about seeing people as experts in their own lives and working alongside them.

Our approach to adult safeguarding will also be based on the 6 key principles identified within statutory guidance:

Principle	Outcome	Outcome Indicator
Empowerment:	Presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent.	I am consulted about the outcomes I want from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.
Protection:	Support and representation for those in greatest need.	I get help and support to report abuse. I get help to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want to and I am able.
Prevention:	It is better to take action before harm occurs.	I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.
Proportionality:	Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.	I am sure that the professionals will work for my best interests, as I see them and will only get involved as much as needed.
Partnership:	Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.	I know that people in the community will look out for me and raise any concerns.
Accountability:	Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.	I understand the role of everyone involved in my life.

GreenSquareAccord operate to the highest standards of openness and transparency. We have a culture of learning and will ensure that we take timely and responsive action wherever safeguarding incidents indicate a need to review processes or take other action to prevent a risk of recurrence.

6.3. Policy Requirements

The GSA Safeguarding Policy is aligned to statutory guidance as defined by the Care Act 2014.

For regulated care services, the policy also meets the requirement of Regulation 13 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

7.1. Data Recording

- Operational teams, supported by DSO's, are responsible for reporting safeguarding referrals to the relevant external organisations and reporting this through designated internal routes as documented in the safeguarding adults procedure.
- Case management records should be appropriately updated to include actions taken and case outcomes.

7.2. KPIs

- GSA Safeguarding referrals are monitored quarterly via the Safeguarding Lead Officer's group with a summary report provided to the Executive Board.
- For Care and Support, data is available monthly via the KPI reporting suite.

7.3. Monitoring Effectiveness

- The effectiveness of safeguarding practice is monitored both through the safeguarding lead officers' group, and at more operational level through the SubGroup meetings of Designated Safeguarding Officers, and Care and Support meeting structures.
- The Annual Safeguarding report to Board is the formal means by which the effectiveness of our safeguarding policy is monitored.

7.4. Reporting Fora and Frequency

- In addition to the KPI reporting described, an Annual Safeguarding Report is produced for the GSA Board who retain overall responsibility for safeguarding policy and practice within GSA.

8. Assurance

8.1. Internal Audit Programme

- GSA have an internal audit programme delivered by KPMG. At periodic intervals, this will include an audit of safeguarding.

8.2. Internal Quality Assurance Processes

- Within Care and Support services, regular service-based audits will include reviews of safeguarding activity and practice on an ongoing basis. Senior Managers and Quality Leads will also oversee cases and monitor that any learning outcomes are addressed.
- Across Operations, the Operations Quality Team will conduct periodic reviews of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and make recommendations for improvement
- Compliance with colleagues training in relation to safeguarding across GSA will be monitored through the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee.

8.3. External Audit / Validation

- For services in care and support, external validation and audit of safeguarding policy and practice is also undertaken by regulators and commissioners as part of wider service monitoring.

8.4. Service Standards

- All colleagues identified as in scope for a DBS check (taking into account DBS guidance and their work role) will have a DBS check that will be renewed every 3 years.
- All colleagues in GSA will undertake mandatory safeguarding training.
- An Annual Report on Safeguarding will be produced for the GSA Board.
- The GSA Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed as a minimum every 2 years.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

This policy will be applied to ensure that all our customers have a fair and equal access to our services, and it does not discriminate against any protected group.

Our approaches to safeguarding adults must reflect the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal and reflect that individual's values and beliefs will impact on the outcomes they want from the safeguarding process. People with care and support needs, such as older people or people with disabilities, are more likely to be abused or neglected. They may be seen as an easy target and may be less likely to identify abuse themselves or to report it. People with communication difficulties can be particularly at risk because they may not be able to alert others.

We aim to create safe and inclusive communities; a robust approach to safeguarding adults can achieve this. However, some communities may be more visible than others and more willing to seek outside assistance.

10. Data Protection Considerations

Consideration has been given to data protection by ensuring this policy adheres to data protection principles, including confidentiality, fairness, transparency and data minimisation.

The following principles will apply:

- Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis when it is in the best interests of the individual.
- Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy.
- Informed consent should be obtained before making a safeguarding referral but, if this is not possible and other adults with a care and support need are potentially at risk, it will be necessary to override the requirement for informed consent (see procedure for full details).
- It is inappropriate for colleagues to give assurances of absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse, particularly in those situations where other adults with a care and support need may be at risk.

In adult social care services, Caldicott principles will also apply in relation to the remit of information sharing, and specific reference should be given to **Principle 7 The duty to share information for individual care is as important as the duty to protect patient confidentiality.**

Professionals should have the confidence to share confidential information in the best interests of customers within the framework set out by these principles. They should be supported by the policies of their employers, regulators, and professional bodies.

The GSA Caldicott Guardian can offer further support and guidance on what information should be shared, where there are any queries in relation to information sharing in relation to safeguarding. The Director of Quality and Compliance (safeguarding lead) is also the designated Caldicott Guardian and can be contacted on:
caldicott.guardian@greensquareaccord.co.uk

The Data Protection Team can also be contacted on:
Data.Protection@greensquaregroup.com.

11. Training and Competency

- Safeguarding Adults training is mandatory for all roles within the organisation. The level, type and refresher frequency of this training will depend on the role undertaken.

- The Director of Quality and Compliance (as GSA Safeguarding Lead) has overall responsibility for ensuring that the safeguarding training programme is appropriate to individual roles and is being delivered.

12. Communication and Implementation

- For relevant colleagues 1:1 meetings with supervisors should be used to reflect on cases, the management of these and any learning outcomes.
- Any learning from cases will be effectively disseminated via meeting structures, including Safeguarding Lead Officer/ DSO meetings and operational meetings across the business.
- Corporate communications will be used to revisit key messages and to update colleagues of any policy and procedure changes.

13. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Care Act 2014 (and Care and Support Statutory Guidance Issued under the Care Act)

Sections 42-47 and 68 of the Care Act defines Safeguarding adults, provides a definition of adults at risk, details the roles and responsibilities of a range of organisations and how they must work together to respond to adult safeguarding concerns.

The Act sets out a statutory basis for safeguarding adults and the legal duties those local authorities will have to fulfil in their lead and coordination roles.

The Care Act 2014 requires each local authority to:

- make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, an enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom;
- set up a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)
- arrange, where appropriate, for an independent advocate to represent and support an adult who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) where the adult has 'substantial difficulty' in being involved in the process and where there is no other suitable person to represent and support them.
- Co-operate with each of its relevant partners in order to protect the adult. In their turn each relevant partner must also co-operate with the local authority.

The **Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA)** requires that people must be assumed to have capacity to make their own decisions and be given all practicable help before anyone treats them as not

being able to make their own decisions. It provides a statutory framework to empower and protect vulnerable people who may not be able to make their own decisions.

Where an adult is found to lack capacity to make a decision then any action taken, or any decision made for, or on their behalf, must be made in their best interests.

The consideration of mental capacity is crucial at all stages of safeguarding adults' procedures as it provides a framework for decision making to balance independence and protection. For example, this could mean determining the ability of an adult at risk to make lifestyle choices, such as choosing to remain in a situation where they risk abuse; determining whether a particular act or transaction is abusive, or consensual; or determining how much a vulnerable adult can be involved in making decisions in a given situation.

The MCA introduces a criminal offence of ill treatment or wilful neglect of a person who lacks capacity. This is intended to deter people from abusing, ill-treating or neglecting people who lack capacity.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 sets out the arrangements in relation to vetting and barring people working with children and vulnerable adults.

The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 13.

For services regulated by Care Quality Commission (CQC), safeguarding is covered within the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 13.

The intention of this regulation is to safeguard people who use services from suffering any form of abuse or improper treatment while receiving care and treatment. Improper treatment includes discrimination or unlawful restraint, which includes inappropriate deprivation of liberty under the terms of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

The **Modern Slavery Act 2015** introduces two main offences concerning holding a person in slavery, servitude or forced or compulsory labour and arranging or facilitating the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited.

The **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, recognising non-violent behaviours. The Act introduced the Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Orders to challenge re-offending and places a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation-based support and ensures secure lifetime tenancies for those who are experiencing domestic abuse and ensures a priority homelessness need. Further information is available in the GSA Domestic Abuse policy and procedure.

There are other government programmes and initiatives that interlink closely with safeguarding. This includes the **Prevent Agenda**. Prevent is one of the four main strands of the government's

counter terrorist strategy, CONTEST. Further information is available in the GSA Prevent policy and procedure.

In addition, the following legislation also has some specific provisions which can be related to safeguarding adults:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Public Interests Disclosure Act 2003
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Familial Homicide- s5 Domestic Violence, Crimes and Victims Act 2004
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 □ Mental Health Act 1983 and 2007

14. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

We will provide information as required in line with relevant law and regulation.

We collect information (personal data) to enable us to:

- manage and support our relationship with customers to comply with legal obligations
- improve our services
- achieve our legitimate business aims

We are committed to complying with data protection legislation when handling data.

Customers have rights including access to their data and to object to the way it is processed. For more information on how and why we process customer data and how customers can exercise their rights please view our full Privacy Policy on our website at [Privacy notice – GreenSquareAccord](#).