



## **SAFEGUARDING TENANTS FROM ABUSE POLICY**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC believes that tenants must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse. We recognize that we must attempt at all times to protect tenants from abuse and to identify and deal with specific instances of abuse if they occur.

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC is always aiming for the very best and will not be satisfied with anything that falls short of that high standard. It takes every possible action to prevent abuse and to deal with it as promptly and effectively as possible if it occurs.

The actions to be taken in the event of any report of abuse are set out in the following procedures.

### **Aim of the policy**

The aims of this policy are to lay down for all relevant parties:

- The principles and values underlying Ready4Home Housing Support CIC approach to the safeguarding of its tenants.
- The ways in which Ready4Home Housing Support CIC does this
- The steps taken to avoid abuse taking place
- The actions taken to deal with abuse if it occurs.

### **Legislation and guidance to be followed**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC seeks to work in accordance with national guidance such as contained in No Secrets, (Department of Health), and the local authority's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults protocols and multi — agency working guidelines, (which should be available from the local authority's Safeguarding/Protection of Vulnerable Adults unit).

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC recognizes that tenants who might lack mental capacity are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitations. It is accordingly mindful of the need to follow the principles and practice guidance that has accompanied the Mental Capacity Act 2005. These apply particularly to investigations of possible abuse in which it is important to seek means of



ascertaining the experiences and views of any victim or indeed alleged perpetrator who might lack capacity, for example by seeking the services of independent advocates. (See also the agency's policy on Working with Service Users who Might Lack Mental Capacity).

### **Defining Abuse**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC recognizes that abuse of service users may take the following forms:

- Physical abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Discriminatory abuse
- Self-harm
- Inhuman or degrading treatment
- Inappropriate or excessive restraint.

### **Identifying Potential Abusers**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC accepts that abuse may be committed by a range of possible people. Ready4Home Housing Support CIC therefore accepts responsibility for safeguarding its tenants from all possible sources of abuse, which include:

- The staff and management of Ready4Home Housing Support CIC
- Volunteers working in Ready4Home Housing Support CIC
- Visiting health and social care practitioners and other official visitors
- Tenants friends and relatives
- Provide tenants with the best possible support
- Refrain from any abusive action in relation to tenants
- Report anything they witness which is or might be abusive
- Co-operate in every possible way in any investigation into alleged abuse
- Participate in training activities relating to abuse and protection.



**Ready4Home Housing Support CIC Senior Management Team has a responsibility to:**

- Provide structures within which it is possible to deliver the best possible support and guidance
- Encourage a culture and ethos for each independent supported environment which is hostile to any sort of abuse
- Produce and regularly revise policies and procedures to combat abuse
- Provide training for staff in all aspects of abuse and safeguarding
- Investigate any evidence of abuse speedily and sympathetically
- Implement improvements to procedures related to abuse
- Collaborate with all other relevant agencies in combating abuse

**Preventing Abuse**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC takes all possible steps to prevent abuse from occurring by:

- Setting out and making widely known the procedures for responding to suspicions or evidence of abuse
- Operating personnel policies which ensure that all potential staff are rigorously checked, by the taking up of references and clearance through DBS checks and the Independent Safeguarding Authority register with equivalent checks for staff employed from overseas
- Incorporating material relevant to safeguarding from abuse into staff training at all levels
- Maintaining vigilance concerning the possibility of abuse of tenants from whatever source
- Encouraging among staff, tenants and other stakeholders a climate of openness and awareness which makes it possible to pass on concerns about behavior which might be abusive or which might lead to abuse
- Devising methods and procedures to minimize the risk of abuse of service users by other service user's particularly bullying, harassment and sexual abuse



- Maintaining robust procedures for regulating any contact the staff of each independent supported living environment need to have with tenants' property, money or financial affairs
- Communicating concerns to the Local Independent Safeguarding Authority unit in accordance with its requirements, and notifying the police where indicated.
- Helping tenants as far as possible to avoid or control situations or relationships, which would make them vulnerable to abuse.

### **Identifying Actual or Possible Abuse**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC aims to identify any instances of actual or possible abuse involving its tenants by all possible means including:

- Fostering an open and trusting communication structure within Ready4Home Housing Support CIC so that staff, tenants and others feel able to discuss their concerns with someone authorized to take action
- Ensuring that all staff and tenants know to whom they may turn for advice and action if they become aware or suspect that abuse is occurring
- Encouraging staff to recognize that a commitment to the highest possible standards of supported living environments must, when necessary, over rule loyalty to colleagues individually or corporately
- Making it clear to staff that not to report incidents or suspicions of abuse is, in its self abusive and may lead to disciplinary or criminal proceedings operating systems of management, supervision, internal inspection, and quality control which have the potential to reveal abuse where it exists.

### **Procedures for when abuse has occurred or is alleged to have occurred**

If abuse is clearly occurring or is alleged to have occurred, Ready4Home Housing Support CIC takes swift action to limit the damage to tenants and to deal with the abuse, along the following lines.

A staff member who witnesses a situation in which a tenant is in actual or imminent danger should use their judgment as to the best way to stop what is happening without further damage to anyone involved including themselves, either by immediately intervening personally or by summoning help.



Any staff to whom actual or suspected abuse is reported, or who is involved in a situation of abuse, has the responsibility either to institute action under this policy or to report the matter immediately to the manager on duty.

The allocated tenancy support worker will immediately take further action necessary to provide protection, support or additional care to a tenant who has been harmed.

The allocated tenancy support worker will, without delay, consult with the managing director who will decide how the situation will be investigated and what further action is required immediately.

When the managing director receives any report of abuse, from a staff member or for any other source, they will either take personal responsibility for the matter or appoint an appropriately senior staff member to investigate.

The managing director will decide whether the alleged abuse might constitute criminal action, which will involve reporting to the matter to the police and taking guidance from them as to the timing and conduct of any internal investigation, which may proceed alongside police action.

The managing director will take steps to ensure that any further contact between the tenant and the alleged abuser is terminated, suspended or at least rigorously monitored.

The managing director will ensure that the needs of the alleged victim of the abuse for any support or protection or for checks on health or wellbeing are met at the outset and subsequently throughout the proceedings.

If the alleged abuser is a staff member, the managing director will decide whether the person involved in the alleged abuse should be suspended from duty pending the outcome of the investigation, and in the event of their not being suspended should ensure that for the time being they have no further unsupervised contact with any service users.

The managing director will see that the situation is fully reported to the relevant officers of the Local Authority's Safeguarding manager, and will establish if they wish to be involved in investigating the matter or to take separate action, and when and how they are to be updated as the situation develops.



The investigating officer will then consult the person who may have been abused to hear their account of what has occurred and their views about what action should be taken, involving the service user's relatives, friends or representatives if that is appropriate and in accordance with the wishes of the service user.

The investigating officer will assure the person who may have been abused that they will be taken seriously, that the comments will as far as possible be treated confidentially, that they will be protected from reprisals and intimidation, and that they will be kept informed of action taken and of the outcome.

The investigating officer will consider whether the tenant needs independent help or representation in presenting their evidence and, in conjunction with the managing director if necessary, will arrange for the appropriate help or support to be made available, for example, from an independent advocate.

If the tenant expressly states a wish that no further action should be taken, the investigating officer will consider, in collaboration with the managing director, whether a danger to others exists from not investigating further. Then the person will decide whether or not in the light of that assessment it is possible to follow the service user's wishes, and whether in any case precautionary measures should be taken to protect others from the possibility of abuse from the same source. The tenant will be informed of what is to happen.

If it is decided that an investigation should proceed, the investigating officer will, as discretely and confidentially as possible, look into all aspects of the situation.

The investigation will include interviewing the staff involved in the incident up to that point, hearing and assessing evidence from any others who might be in a position to supply information, exploring every other possible source of evidence, maintaining appropriate contact with any other agencies involved, and if necessary seeking expert advice on any technical aspects of the situation which are outside the knowledge or expertise available within the organization.

Any staff from which evidence is taken will be assured that they will be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and informed of their employment, legal and procedural rights.

The alleged victim of the abuse, and where appropriate their relatives, friends or representatives, will at all times be kept as fully informed as possible of what is happening regarding the suspected abuse.



The investigation will be carried out as quickly as possible and the findings presented to the managing director or responsible person, who will then decide what further action to take.

If it seems from the investigation that on the balance of probabilities abuse did indeed take place, the registered manager will, if the abuser is a staff member, initiate and carry through proceedings according to Ready4Home Housing Support CIC disciplinary policy or, if the abuser is not a member of staff, take action to involve other responsible bodies.

If abuse is proven against a staff member, the managing director will initiate appropriate action, which might include dismissal, other employment sanctions, or retraining.

The tenant will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and of any further action to be taken. The tenant will be consulted about whether any redress or apology would be appropriate and helpful to them.

The managing director will take appropriate steps to inform the Local Authority's Safeguarding unit, any other relevant professional regulatory body, the police, the independent safeguarding authority, and any other relevant official bodies of the outcome of the investigation and any further action taken.

At all stages of the process, a careful record will be kept of all action taken, paying particular attention to the sensitivity of the abused person.

### **Planning Further Action**

At the end of an incident involving possible or actual abuse, managers should review what has happened with a view to assessing whether the supported living environment or its management has been in any way culpable, ineffective or negligent, to learning lessons for the way the company should operate in the future, and to passing on any appropriate information to other agencies. If necessary Ready4Home Housing Support CIC policies, procedures and training arrangements should be modified in response to any material which has emerged from the incident or the investigation.



## **Contacts and sources of assistance**

Manchester Adult Social Safeguarding Team – Tel 0161 234 5001

Email: [mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk)

Secure email: [socialcare@manchester.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:socialcare@manchester.gcsx.gov.uk) if you are sending sensitive information

If a person is in immediate danger, dial 999 and ask for the police.

## **Record-keeping**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC ensures that all details associated with allegations of abuse are recorded clearly and accurately. The records are kept securely and the organization's rules on confidentiality are carefully followed.

## **Referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC will always comply with its legal requirement to refer a tenancy support worker, where it has evidence that the staff member in question has been guilty of misconduct by harming or putting at risk a vulnerable adult, during the course of their work, to the independent safeguarding authority, even if they have left the employment of the organization (See Policies on independent safeguarding authority).

## **Recruitment Practices**

Ready4Home Housing Support CIC takes great care in the recruitment of staff, carries out all possible checks on recruits to ensure that they are of a high standard, and co-operates in all initiatives regarding the sharing of information on tenancy support workers who are found to be unsuitable to work with vulnerable people.

## **Related Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the several other policies of Ready4Home Housing Support CIC, which relate to aspects of abuse or protection of service users. They include Ready4Home policies on: complaints, the management of tenant's money and financial affairs, recruitment, induction, staff development and training, staff supervision and importantly whistle blowing.





## **Training**

All new staff receives training in recognizing abuse and carrying out their responsibilities under this policy as part of their induction programme.

All staff are expected to receive further training as provided or enabled by the local authority in accordance with its safeguarding of vulnerable adults' policies.

Policy review date May 2020

Signed:

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Director Ready4Home Housing Support CIC

Date:

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