

Safeguarding from Abuse Policy

Introduction

Grand Union Housing Group provides housing and services to customers, some of whom may require additional support to manage their home and live as independently as possible. This in accordance with our customer service values.

Grand Union is required, through its regulatory and funding frameworks, to ensure that a comprehensive policy and procedure is implemented for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults from abuse.

This policy sets out the relevant framework to ensure that all relevant personnel are able to implement this policy effectively, to promote wellbeing, prevent harm and respond effectively if concerns are raised.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the Safeguarding from Abuse procedure guide.

Policy statement

Grand Union takes the detection, prevention and cessation of abuse of children, young people and adults very seriously and believes that every person has the right to live free from abuse. All staff have a responsibility for safeguarding and protecting individuals from abuse and Grand Union incorporates the awareness of abuse through all aspects, roles and responsibilities of its operations.

For the purposes of this policy, The Care Act 2014 is the relevant act of parliament. The local authority is obliged to comply with the Care Act 2014 which also places a requirement on housing associations to assist local authorities in their safeguarding obligations. The local authority has a duty to liaise with housing associations in this respect. Grand Union will work in partnership with social services, the police and other agencies to achieve the best outcome for those affected.

Our safeguarding duties under this policy apply to all customers and visitors to any of our premises. Any contractor, organisation or individual employed by, or using, Grand Union premises or working directly with Grand Union customers will be required to have their own safeguarding policies and procedures or be willing to adhere to those used by Grand Union.

All colleagues that come in to contact with children, young people and adults have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare and should be adequately trained to identify indicators of abuse and raise concerns.

This policy focuses on what colleagues should do if they believe abuse is taking place and also how Grand Union can enable and empower their customers to better protect them.

Policy objectives

- To define the different types of abuse.
- To have clear and robust procedures in place for dealing with incidents.
- To promote a multi-agency approach in the identification, investigation and longer-term impact of suspected abuse for an individual, to help promote the protection of children, young people and adults. This will include contributing to the appropriate safeguarding board and forums.
- To maintain a register and report on all safeguarding incidents to Customer Experience Committee members on a quarterly basis.
- To monitor and maintain employee's training and compliance to ensure quality of safeguarding is maintained.

Regulatory and legal compliance

There is no one specific piece of legislation that provides a framework for action to protect an individual from abuse. Legal powers to assess and intervene are contained in a wide range of legislation. Some of it is contained in criminal law, civil law which imposes on a local authority's statutory duties and/or legal frameworks for assessment and provision of services.

Protection is available through criminal and civil courts, both to prevent a person being abused and to take action against an abuser.

Key legislation is listed below:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- General Data Protection Regulation 2016
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Mental Health Act 1983 and 2017 (England and Wales)
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Offences against the Person Act 1861

- Family Law Act 1996
- Equalities Act 2010
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Key principles of safeguarding

Adults

The following six principles will underpin Grand Union's adult safeguarding work:

- **Empowerment:** being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions
- **Prevention:** take action before harm is done
- **Proportionality:** to take the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk
- **Protection:** support and representation to those in greatest need
- **Partnership:** working with other professionals and the customer
- **Accountability:** transparent in delivering safeguarding.

Children

The following four principles will underpin Grand Union's children and young people safeguarding work as per Every Child Matters.

(Every Child Matters (ECM) is a UK government initiative for England and Wales, that was launched in 2003, at least partly in response to the death of Victoria Climbié.)

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing impairment to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcome.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action occurring within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes significant harm or distress.

There are many varied types of abuse which are outlined in our Safeguarding Procedure.

Grand Union aims to ensure that staff providing services to children, young people and adults receive regular training in how to identify and report suspected cases of abuse. Robust procedures are in place to follow when abuse is suspected. Grand Union staff will work with the emergency services, local authority adult or children services and other agencies as appropriate to deal with instances of abuse. This policy will link into the relevant local

authority safeguarding policy and procedure within the locality in which the person resides.

Definition of adult at risk

We have moved away from the term “vulnerable adult” to “adults at risk of harm” or “adult with additional care and support needs”. The Care Act 2014 makes clear that abuse of adults is linked to circumstances, rather than to the characteristics of the people experiencing harm.

An adult at risk is anyone aged 18 years and over where there is a need to keep them safe from abuse and neglect and who is, or maybe, unable to take care of, or unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Definition of child and young person

As stated in the Children’s Act 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Children, therefore, means children and young people throughout. When a child has reached 16 years of age, they may be living independently or in further education, be a member of the armed forces, be in hospital or in custody for children, it does not change their status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.

Confidentiality

Grand Union colleagues will always respect a person’s confidentiality, however, they must not promise to keep a secret which could relate to either an incident of abuse and/or a criminal offence which may have been committed against a person.

Empowering people with support and care needs

Further to some extensive consultation, Grand Union has identified ways it can deliver an empowering and informative programme around the area of abuse:

- training delivered to colleagues
- structured discussion sessions about what process we will work to if someone reports abuse
- information made available about how a person can report abuse to an outside agency i.e. the Safeguarding from Abuse team
- abuse concerns and issues raised as part of support planning
- regular discussion about abuse with colleagues and customers
- publish clear information about colleagues’ conduct and professional boundaries to be maintained
- publish clear information around expected service standards to be delivered
- use other formats for information delivery around abuse, such as

- picture cards, leaflets, open days and training information
- links with other agencies to utilise training/information
- information sharing protocols developed to enhance co-ordination with other agencies.

Roles and responsibilities

The Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding is the designated safeguarding lead for Grand Union.

Ensuring Colleague competence and compliance

Grand Union will undertake regular training of staff and Board members and is included as part of a new employee's induction programme, along with regular monitoring of competence and compliance to maintain a high standard of professional practice and knowledge.

Developing an understanding of safeguarding practices outside of the immediate service delivery aimed at customers with support and care needs, (for example safer recruitment practices) and raising staff awareness amongst all teams who may come into contact with any customer within Grand Union, would also be good practice measures. Grand Union has developed a training programme to ensure that all colleagues have an awareness of safeguarding:

- All colleagues and Board members will complete online training to cover safeguarding children and adults from abuse via Skillsgate.
- All colleagues will have training delivered by the Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Team. This will be tiered to ensure relevant training is delivered to visiting colleagues and managers.

The full training will be scheduled to take place when necessary to capture new colleagues as they join the organisation.

Colleagues must still report their concerns where there is a risk of harm, even if they are unable to gain the consent of the person first. Colleagues must be considerate to additional diversity needs taking an intersectional approach and this should not influence safeguarding decisions, particularly when relating to children.

All safeguarding alerts will be raised with the local authority as soon as possible.

There may be occasions where the child, young person or adult is not willing to report the suspected abuse, and where the level of risk does not necessitate overriding the individuals' decision not to report. If there is any level of risk or concern then we will encourage the person to report it. In such circumstances, and where colleagues have thoroughly explored the reasons why the person is not willing to report a concern, there may still be safeguards which can be implemented, to minimise the occurrence of such things happening in the

future, as guided by the local safeguarding team who will be happy to provide advice even without disclosure. It is an important principle of this policy to work with the individual to find out what being safe means to them and how best to achieve it.

Any such safeguards discussed and implemented should be done in partnership with the person with care and support needs and any other involved agencies where possible.

All safeguarding incidents relating to children must be reported regardless of the parent/guardians or child's wishes. It is considered best practice for colleagues, where possible, to advise parents/guardians that they will be making a safeguarding referral so to remain transparent, if by making the parent/guardians aware of the referral will place the child at a greater risk, they should not be informed.

Colleagues will ensure that all existing and potential customers, and where possible, other family members, are aware of our approach towards safeguarding.

Grand Union works in partnership with the local authorities and other agencies to safeguard those who are vulnerable to radicalisation or grooming into extremism.

Colleagues are expected to adhere to a comprehensive protocol with regards to professional boundaries, and the code of conduct, as part of their terms and conditions of employment. This is designed to both safeguard the customer and colleagues who could themselves otherwise be subject to false allegations of abuse.

Other related policies/documents

Safeguarding from Abuse Procedure Guide
Domestic Abuse Policy
Data Protection Policy
Tenancy Support Procedure
Equality, Diversity and Customer Care Policy
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Protocols and guidance
Professional boundaries guidance
Social Media Protocol

Responsibility for implementation

The Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding will assume overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy as Grand Union's designated safeguarding lead.

Consultation: **staff from across Grand Union**

Equality Impact Assessment carried out: initial screen

Person responsible for review: Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding

Supported in the review by: Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Team Leader

Ratified by: Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding

Date of review: December 2022

Date of next review: December 2025