

# **RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

## **SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

### **Statement of Intent**

The Association is committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children from abuse and exploitation. Although the Association does not provide services to children, the principles of this policy extend to children who are the dependants of service users.

The Association aims to respond promptly and sensitively to the needs and rights of an individual, taking account of his/her racial and cultural background, gender, religious belief, sexuality, age and disability.

Abuse can be difficult to recognise or accept and can be complex to address. There is a need to strike a balance between an adult's rights to choice and independence, and their equal rights to protection and security. However, the Association is fully committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults and dealing with abuse as robustly as necessary.

### **Definitions**

Abuse is defined as "a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to a vulnerable person" Or "the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons". (No Secrets: Department of Health March 2000)

There are a number of ways in which a person can be mistreated, harmed or distressed. This may include physical, sexual, emotional, financial or material, neglect or discrimination.

A vulnerable adult:

- Is someone of 18 years or over
- Is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who
- Is or may be unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation  
(Who Decides: Lord Chancellors Department 1997)

A vulnerable child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

### **Implementation**

Abuse can occur within settings where elderly, frail or otherwise vulnerable service users live or receive services. The Association aims to prevent abuse by encouraging staff awareness and ensuring that staff are properly trained to recognise abuse and potentially abusive situations. When abuse is suspected, prompt action will be taken and staff will work with other agencies to safeguard the vulnerable person from further harm.

## **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

### **Implementation**

The victim's wishes will always be taken into account at all times. If a vulnerable person does not have the capacity to make informed decisions, judgements of what is in the best interests of the person will be made, where appropriate through discussions with relatives, carers and other agencies.

If the alleged perpetrator is a member of the Association's staff then consideration will be given to suspending that person from their duties pending the outcome of the investigation.

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following policies: Confidential Reporting, Code of Conduct, Criminal Records Bureau Checks, and Complaints.

### **Disclosure of Information**

Confidential information will only be passed to other organisations with the individual's consent except in the case of exceptional circumstances as detailed in the Data Protection Act 1998.

These circumstances would include

- where there is clear evidence of fraud
- to comply with the law
- in connection with legal proceedings
- to protect the health and safety of the individual, where the health and safety of the individual would be at risk if the information were not disclosed, or there is a legal requirement to do so
- anonymously for statistical or research purposes

### **Staff Recruitment**

Staff who will be working with vulnerable people will be recruited subject to satisfactory references, including criminal record bureau checks. They will complete a 6 months probationary period during which their ability and commitment to working with vulnerable people will be assessed. Staff will receive regular structured supervision and appraisal.

### **Responsibility**

The Head of Housing Services is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

### **Monitoring**

Incidences of abuse will be reported to the next meeting of the Housing Services Committee.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis, including consultation with residents.

This policy applies to the beneficiaries of The Sir James Reckitt Village Haven and Joseph Hornby Stockdale Almshouses.

**October 2007**

**This policy can be made available on request in other languages, large type, Braille or in audio format.**