

## CAUSEWAY IRISH HOUSING ASSOCIATION SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**Approved by Management Committee:** February 2020

**Review Date:** February 2023

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Tom Ferrie

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Causeway believes that no resident, whether a child, young person or adult should ever experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote welfare and protect all our residents from abuse and neglect. The wellbeing and safety of all our tenants is paramount.
- 1.2 Causeway's objective is:
  - to raise awareness of abuse, what is meant by abuse, its causes and symptoms;
  - to provide Causeway tenants, staff and volunteers with guidance;
  - to give to Causeway tenants, staff and volunteers clear guidance on how to respond to situations of suspected abuse.
- 1.3 This policy applies to adults, if your concern is for a child or young person please see our Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Safeguarding** means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Causeway safeguards residents by aiming to prevent the risks of abuse and neglect. Safeguarding applies to children, young people and adults, working with other organisations and local authorities, in line with the framework set out in the *Care Act 2014*.
- 2.2 A **child** is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.
- 2.3 A **young person** is a care leaver, who is 18 years or older but still receiving children's services.
- 2.4 An **adult at risk** (also called a vulnerable adult) is someone aged 18 years or over, who 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, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
- 2.5 **Abuse** is the violation of a person's human and/or civil rights by another person or persons which results in harm. *The Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2015* identifies ten main categories of abuse (see Appendix 1 and 2 for definitions):
  - Physical abuse;
  - Domestic violence;
  - Sexual abuse;
  - Psychological abuse;
  - Neglect;
  - Self-neglect;
  - Financial or Material Abuse;
  - Modern Slavery;
  - Discriminatory Abuse;

- Organisational Abuse.
- 2.6 **Neglect** is the failure to meet a child, young person or adult at risk's basic needs.
- 2.7 **Harm** is a physical and/or psychological injury.
- 2.8 The following 6 key principles, from the *Care Act 2014*, underpin Causeway's safeguarding policy and procedures:
- Empowerment: people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent;
  - Prevention: it is better to take action before harm occurs;
  - Proportionality: the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented;
  - Protection: support and representation for those in greatest need;
  - Partnership: local solutions through services working with their communities to prevent, detect and report neglect and abuse;
  - Accountability: accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

### 3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Management Committee members, contractors, and anyone working on behalf of Causeway.
- 3.2 Causeway considers abuse to be wholly unacceptable and recognizes the harmful effect that abuse has, not just on the victim but also on their families and the wider community.
- 3.3 We recognise and respect all people in Causeway accommodation and services as individuals and that everyone has the right to protection from abuse regardless of age, gender, physical disability, mental or sensory impairment, race, culture, class, economic factors, sexual orientation, marital status, politics, religion or other specific factor.
- 3.4 As a housing association, we have a key safeguarding role to play alongside colleagues in health, social care, police and other statutory and non-statutory agencies to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse and/or neglect. Whilst working to safeguard our tenants and promoting their wellbeing, we must simultaneously regard our tenants views, wishes and beliefs in deciding on any action.
- 3.5 Causeway views abuse or suspected abuse as extremely serious and we are committed to preventing, identifying, responding to and addressing suspected abuse. Causeway will work towards minimising the potential for abuse to occur.
- 3.6 Abuse or suspected abuse is a sensitive issue and we recognise the need for incidents to be dealt with confidentially and respectfully. Investigations are carried out impartially.

### 4. Preventing Risks of Abuse

- 4.1 We work towards minimizing the potential for abuse to occur by raising awareness amongst staff and residents through advice and guidance. We encourage our residents to report any suspected abuse to Causeway or a relevant authority and offer support in reporting concerns.
- 4.2 Causeway practices Safe Recruitment. Causeway's Director and Business Support Manager receive Safer Recruitment training.
- 4.3 Causeway undertakes full reference (minimum of two) and DBS checks as part of our safe recruitment for any member of staff that have regular unsupervised contact with our tenants. Enhanced level DBS checks are required for any staff who work directly with children and young people.

- 4.4 Details of staff DBS checks are stored on Causeway's DBS Staff Record Sheet, accessible to Causeway Management only. This records DBS numbers, issue dates and DBS levels. The Business Support Manager will monitor renewals for DBS checks and update the DBS Record Sheet accordingly. In line with GDPR legislation, Causeway does not keep staff DBS certificates or copies.
- 4.5 All staff receive training in Safeguarding Adults, Mental Health awareness, Drug & Alcohol Awareness and Health & Safety.
- 4.6 Causeway staff are aware of the signs that a tenant may be at risk or a victim of abuse. These signs may include, but are not limited to:
- Changes in appearance or hygiene;
  - Unexplained mood or behaviour changes;
  - Nervousness;
  - Inappropriate sexual language;
  - Attention seeking behaviour;
  - Running away / absconding;
  - Falling into sudden rent arrears;
  - Lack of correspondence with the housing association;
  - Untreated medical problems or injuries;
  - Behaviour resulting in the damage of the property;
  - Malnutrition from poor diet;
  - Inappropriate behaviour with peers;
  - Persistent fatigue;
  - Antisocial behaviour;
  - Complaints from other tenants.
- 4.7 Safeguarding is a regular agenda item in staff supervision sessions for front line staff/appropriate roles and also at team meetings, to enable staff to share and learn from experiences.
- 4.8 All of Causeway's contractors are encouraged to report their concerns to the office following visits to any properties. We aim to communicate with all our contractors on each visit they make in order to provide aid to those who are at risk at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.9 In properties where Causeway is the managing agent, Causeway informs and reports any safeguarding issues to the landlord in addition to the actions listed in section 7.

## **5. Code of Conduct**

- 5.1 Causeway staff and contractors, when working with tenants, must avoid placing themselves in positions that may cause tenants to feel uncomfortable and abide by the Code of Behaviour to avoid situations where their actions could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to allegations of abuse.
- 5.2 It is crucial that staff maintain the balance between appropriate care and respect for people's privacy and autonomy. Where possible the tenant should be consulted about the level of support offered and be at the centre of decision making.
- 5.3 Causeway believes that guidance and support are integral to good practice, as is the observance of dignity and mutual respect. With regard to safety and protection the following guidelines apply to all Causeway activities involving children or adults at risk:
- One-to-one situations (one staff/volunteer to one child, young person adult at risk) should only occur within sight or hearing range of other people – they should not occur in isolation;

- No one is expected to do something with which they are not comfortable or confident. If anyone is asked to do something that they feel uncomfortable with or lack confidence in, they have the right to refuse or ask for further guidance/support;
- All participants have the duty to report to a Causeway manager any incident or behaviour they feel is not in accordance with the policy and its guidelines;
- All activities specifically aimed at children, young people or adults at risk may only be run by staff and volunteers who have the appropriate Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check.

5.4 Causeway's Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the Anti-Harassment policy.

## **6. Whistleblowing**

6.1 It can be very difficult to report concerns about a member of staff but all staff and volunteers have a duty to do this. If it is difficult to approach a manager, or they are the alleged abuser, their line-manager must be contacted.

6.2 If the concern is about the Director, the Chair of the Management Committee should be contacted.

6.3 Allegations of abuse against a member of staff will be fully recorded, and referred to Social Services for investigation in the same way as any other such concern.

6.4 Concerns about a staff member's conduct will be dealt with through Causeway's disciplinary procedures. Causeway acknowledges that staff members who are the subject of allegations will have support needs. Information about their rights to representation and support will be provided. The Director or Chair of the Management Committee will ensure the time taken for the investigation is not unnecessarily protracted.

6.5 If a staff member or volunteer passes on a concern or allegation to their line manager, but feels this has not been acted on appropriately, they must contact the Director or Chair of the Management Committee, and follow the procedure for making a complaint, see also Complaints Policy & Procedure. If they feel that the inappropriate action is putting a child or adult at immediate risk of harm they should also report their concerns to the local Social Services office.

6.6 Please also refer to Whistleblowing in Causeway's Personnel Policy.

## **7. Responding to a safeguarding concern**

7.1 If an employee believes a child or adult to be at immediate risk of harm or abuse, and/or a criminal offence is taking place, they must take immediate steps to protect that person by calling 999.

7.2 Treat any disclosure and allegations extremely seriously and commit to exposing, investigating and addressing issues of abuse and suspected abuse.

7.3 Confirm with anyone raising an allegation or expressing a concern that they are right to report their concern and that their comments will, as far as possible and without causing risk, be treated confidentially.

7.4 All reports should be conducted, as far as is possible in a conversation with a member of staff, usually the Designated Safeguarding Lead, either in person, at Causeway's office, or on the phone.

7.5 Conversations regarding safeguarding concerns should be conducted in a private space and anyone disclosing a concern should be allowed the time and patience to express their concern at their own pace.

7.6 Appropriate support will be given to anyone reporting a safeguarding concern. Appropriate and specific support, by Causeway and/or external agencies will be given for the victims of abuse and neglect.

- 7.7 Clear and accurate records will be kept of a complaint or allegation of abuse. These records will state the facts and known opinions of professional and others. Differentiation will be clear between fact and opinion. Ensure written reports are signed.
- 7.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead, upon initial investigation, which should take no more than three days, may contact the necessary statutory agencies, including the local Adult Social Care Services, Children's Services and the Police.
- 7.9 The Designated Lead must decide on the next course of action, which may be no further action or recommend referring the case to the police.
- 7.10 If no referral is made then a record of concerns should be recorded and the situation carefully monitored.
- 7.11 If a referral is made, the Designated Lead will complete a referral form to the local Adult Social Care service within 24 hours of completing their investigation.
- 7.12 Do NOT make promises you cannot keep and do NOT ask leading questions.
- 7.13 Do NOT interrogate or investigate.
- 7.14 Do NOT do anything to cast doubt on what they tell you or make them feel they are to blame in any way.
- 7.15 Whatever you do – do NOT do nothing. Even if you are not quite sure about what you have heard or seen, if you have any concerns at all, tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director.
- 7.16 Investigation and records of alleged abuse will be reported to the Director, who will present the investigation to the Management Committee.
- 7.17 All reports will be stored on the relating tenant file, which is stored confidentially in a locked filing system. Copies will be kept in the Safeguarding file stored securely in the Director's office.
- 7.18 Anyone reporting a concern will be informed that action has been taken.

## **8. Confidentiality , Capacity & Consent**

- 8.1 Staff must adhere to Causeway's Data Protection Policy and Confidentiality Policy when working with tenants.
- 8.2 As per the Confidentiality Policy, tenants will be informed of the possibility that total confidentiality may not always be possible if a risk of harm is deemed possible, but that every step will be taken to ensure that confidentiality is maintained as far as is possible.
- 8.3 Where a tenant has been deemed to lack capacity to make decisions by a medical professional, and has a nominated advocate, Causeway will work with the nominated advocate, in line with s68 of the *Care Act*.
- 8.4 We only accept consent to share information with other agencies if it is given freely, informed and not provided under duress.
- 8.5 If consent is refused, information is only shared in the following circumstances:
  - There is a need to safeguard a person/people at risk;
  - There is a significant risk of harm to self or others;
  - We suspect a criminal offence has been or will be committed;
  - Legal provision requires it, i.e. under court order.
- 8.6 Staff must be aware of a tenant's capacity to make decisions as governed by the *Mental Capacity Act 2005* and its 5 main principles:
  1. We assume that an adult has the capacity to make an informed choice and decision, unless we have been formally advised otherwise by an appropriate health or social care professional, or have seen relevant documentation, e.g. power of attorney.
  2. Take practicable steps to support individuals to make their own decisions where possible

3. An individual has the right to make decisions even if their decision seems unwise or inappropriate.
4. A person making decisions on behalf of someone lacking capacity must do so in their best interests
5. Decision made on behalf of someone lacking capacity should always be the option least restrictive to their basic rights and freedoms.

## Appendix 1

### **Types of Adult Abuse –**

The following categories of safeguarding related abuse are identified in the Care Act 2014;

**Physical Abuse** includes assault, hitting, pushing, slapping, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

**Domestic violence** includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence.

**Sexual abuse** includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Psychological abuse** includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

**Financial or material abuse** includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Modern slavery** encompasses slavery; human trafficking; forced labour; and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

**Discriminatory abuse** includes forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

**Organisational abuse** includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

**Neglect and acts of omission** includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Self-neglect** covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It is important to note that these categories should not limit our view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as they can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered. Exploitation, in particular, is a common theme across the types of abuse and neglect listed above.

## Appendix 2

**Types of Child Abuse** - *The Children Act 1989* makes provision for the care and protection of children and young people at risk from significant harm. The definitions below are from “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018”

### Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

**Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Child abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Child physical abuse** is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Child emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Child sexual abuse** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.



**Child sexual exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Child neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## ***Addendum to the Safeguarding Policy***

### **Unauthorised guests, visitors & subletting in relation to safeguarding**

It is crucial that Causeway staff are aware of who is living, or staying temporarily, at our property in order to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff are required to be vigilant with regard to unauthorised residents, in particular:

Children & young people who we discover living at our premises for whom we have no record; and

Adults, particularly in shared housing, who we do not know but appear to be resident and therefore have access to young and/or vulnerable people.

### **Children & Young People**

Causeway staff may sometimes come across children or families living at a property of whom they were not previously aware. Common scenarios are:

The single person to whom we let the property has subsequently had a child / children.

The single person to whom we let the property as brought their children from elsewhere to live with them.

A partner with a child / children has moved in with the authorised tenants.

All tenants should be made aware of their obligation to seek permission to seek permission from Causeway for any additional resident, adult or child.

If a child is discovered living in our property, staff should make every effort to obtain and record their identity (i.e. name and date of birth) and their relationship to the tenant (e.g. birth cert, immigration documents, proof of child benefit, etc.)

Any doubts, suspicions or wilful non-cooperation should be reported to Social Services.

Action should be taken at the earliest opportunity to end the tenancy and to refer the tenant/family to the local authority for appropriate housing.

### **Unauthorised Adults**

In order to safeguard any young people or adults at risk living in our accommodation, it is important that non-residents or unauthorised residents do not have excessive access to communal areas and shared facilities.

All tenants should be made aware of their responsibility for their visitors, the need to be at home when their guests are presents, and the limitations to their guests (both quantity and duration) as per the tenancy, licence or any subsequent agreements.

Strangers or unauthorised guests discovered at shared properties should be challenged, if safe to do so, as to their identity and the person they're visiting (otherwise the police should be called). If the person they claim to be visiting is not present, they should be asked to leave and the tenant issued with a warning. If the situation persists, action should be taken to end the tenancy.

An unknown person who claims to be the tenant should be required to produce ID.