Commonweal's Safeguarding Statement

Scope

Commonweal Housing is committed to protecting all children and vulnerable adults (vulnerable groups) against all forms of abuse.

We expect everyone acting on or on behalf of Commonweal Housing, including employees, directors, agency workers, volunteers and self-employed consultants or contractors (referred to in this document as staff), as well as external delivery partners, to support our safeguarding commitment.

This document outlines the measures we take to identify, report and respond to safeguarding concerns.

Legal definitions:

- **Child**: anyone under 18 years' old.
- **Vulnerable adult:** An adult aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm, as defined by the Care Act 2014.
  Vulnerable groups: children and vulnerable adults.
- **Regulated activity:** activities involving work with children or vulnerable adults that are defined as regulated activity under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- **Safeguarding concerns:** a concern that an adult/child is at risk of or is experiencing abuse or neglect.
- **Abuse:** as defined in the section below.

What is abuse of vulnerable groups?

Abuse can take many forms, and here are some examples:

- financial or material abuse,
- physical abuse,
- mental abuse,
- sexual abuse,
- domestic abuse,
- threats of abuse or harm,
- controlling or intimidating conduct,

- neglect and failures to act,
- self-neglect,
- poor practices within an organisation providing care,
- modern slavery.

This list is not exhaustive. Abuse may happen as a one-off, or be something that carries on over a long period of time.

Safer recruitment

We will assess all roles to determine whether they involve regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults. We will ensure the correct level of Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is sought as part of our recruitment practice.

Working with external partners

Commonweal expects all external partners, including contractors, consultants, and third-party organisations engaged in projects or services involving direct or indirect contact with vulnerable groups to maintain appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

All external partners are required to comply with their own safeguarding policies and procedures, which must meet or exceed applicable legal and sector-specific standards. Partners must also comply with robust project-specific safeguarding and reporting requirements as part of project agreements laid out in the document below.

Access Commonweal's External Partner Safeguarding Policy here.

Reporting alleged or suspected abuse

We expect all staff and external partners to remain always on alert to the risks of abuse towards vulnerable groups, and follow the procedures and policies in place.

We will take any complaints, allegations or suspicions of abuse extremely seriously.

Where safeguarding concerns are identified, we will:

- investigate all reports of alleged or suspected abuse fully,
- investigate as quickly and as discreetly as we reasonably can, and

- gather the necessary evidence, usually using witness statements and any surveillance footage available.

Duties to refer information about alleged or suspected abuse

We will always discuss any safeguarding concerns we have with the local safeguarding team and any other relevant professional body, including:

- the local Children's Social Care Agency,
- the local Adults Safeguarding Authority,
- the Police (Child Protection or Adult Protection) Investigation Unit,
- the NSPCC
- the Care Quality Commission.

Record keeping and storage

We will always keep and store all safeguarding records in accordance with data protection rules, any statutory requirements and any relevant guidance of our relevant professional body and/or local safeguarding team.

Safeguarding Lead contact details

If you have a safeguarding concern, please contact us via any of the following methods:

By post: Designated Safeguarding Lead

Commonweal Housing Ltd
Unit 581-584, 3rd Floor
Salisbury House
29 Finsbury Circus
London EC2M 5SQ

By email: info@commonweal.org.uk