

Safeguarding policy

VERSION [1.5]

Version Control

Note: minor updates increase version number by 0.1, major updates increase version number by 1.0.

| Version Number | Sections Amended | Date of update | Approved by |
|----------------|--|----------------|--|
| 1.0 | Combined relevant legacy policies from Radian and YHG to create one Abri policy | December 2020 | SLT |
| 1.1 | Updated renewal date no changes | 04/11/2021 | |
| 1.2 | Reviewed | 20/12/2022 | Director of Housing & Community Investment |
| 1.3 | Updates - internal audit action to include referencing to Anti trafficking & human slavery | 28/06/2023 | PerCo |
| 1.4 | Update to confirm policy applies to all customers and households | 26/07/2023 | Director of Housing & Community Investment |
| 1.5 | Review-minor re-write to show action where 'lessons learned' and include 'retail' | 06/08/2025 | Regional Managing Director (South) |

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Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to ensuring the safeguarding of adults with care and support needs and children in all areas of our operation. We operate a policy of zero tolerance of abuse, neglect and exploitation and are committed to preventing and reducing the risk of harm whilst supporting individuals in maintaining control of their lives.
- 1.2 It is every person's human right to live a life free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Through implementation of this policy, we will recognise the needs of everyone. Everyone has an equal right to support and protection, irrespective of their individual differences or circumstances. This policy and associated procedures apply equally to all adults and children at risk and all recognised forms of abuse. We will not discriminate on the grounds of any protected characteristic. Due regard will be given to individual differences including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

2. This policy applies to...

- 2.1 Abri refers to the parent company and all its subsidiary companies.
- 2.2 All the staff employed by Abri directly, board members and those working with us and for us. For example agency staff members, volunteers, apprentices, retail workers have a responsibility to work within this policy and associated procedures. Failure to do so would result in disciplinary action.
- 2.3 All Abri customers and members of their households, irrespective of tenure, are covered by the duties outlined in this policy.

3. Policy

- 3.1 Safeguarding is about protecting adults with care and support needs and children's rights to live safely, free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This policy outlines our commitment to do everything reasonable to identify and report abuse, or the risk of abuse, with no delay, to protect the people who receive our services and their children.
- 3.2 Statutory duties and power rests with Local Authorities and we must cooperate with them in the discharge of their duties and powers. We must ensure that we have the mechanisms in place to enable early identification and assessment of risk through timely information sharing and targeted multi-agency support.
- 3.3 Wherever possible we work to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation from happening by raising awareness, understanding, and making early, positive interventions with individuals and families and so preventing the deterioration of a situation. It is about working together, including with other agencies, to support people to make decisions about the risks they face

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in their lives and protecting those who lack mental capacity to make those decisions.

- 3.4 We support residents and their children to safeguard themselves from abuse and neglect and, where appropriate, keep their interests at the centre of any safeguarding activity.
- 3.5 This is in line with recruitment checks, data protection policies and procedures, whistle blowing policies and Local Authority multi-agency agreements, risk management frameworks and information sharing protocols and confidentiality agreements to ensure we avoid and respond to actual or suspected abuse and acts of neglect or omission. We will take appropriate steps to ensure our services are provided in a way that complies with both the law and published best practice. We have a separate Anti-slavery and human trafficking Policy which should be referenced regarding recruitment, allocating property and be alert to whilst operating our daily duties.
- 3.6 We fully recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, which means we will have:
- a commitment at the governance and strategic level;
 - a strong culture that if we **see something, we will say something**;
 - operational arrangements in place to cover relevant guidance and best practice;
 - each one of us understanding our individual contribution and responsibilities for achieving the best outcome for our customers and their families.
 - Train and involve new roles in teams that 'champion' safeguarding and can support other team members.
- 3.7 We raise awareness of abuse and neglect and safeguarding through a variety of mechanisms with our customers (and their family and advocates, where appropriate) and our communities. We are committed to involving residents in designing and providing information about safeguarding in terms of understanding what abuse is and how to report this. Information is provided in a range of formats to meet the communication needs of individuals and which recognises their unique perspectives.
- 3.8 We ensure members of staff have the confidence to deal with concerns, to speak up and, where necessary "blow the whistle". We recognise that findings from Serious Case Reviews will find areas that we can improve and be better at. We will review all lessons learned by these reviews and implement changes where possible. Everyone has a responsibility to prevent, recognise and act on abuse and neglect. We will promote an organisational culture of openness so that staff, volunteers and residents and their advocates can raise their concerns.

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- 3.9 We make sure that all staff, retail and volunteers understand their role in relation to safeguarding adults with care and support needs and children and are competent in recognising and acting on abuse and neglect. They will receive adequate awareness training on how to identify and report suspected cases and are able to access advice.. The level of awareness and training is relevant to different roles and levels of responsibility.
- 3.10 We are committed to multi agency working with all stakeholders and to ensuring that we cooperate with Local Authorities, including effective links with Safeguarding Leads, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), Safeguarding Adult Boards (SABs) and Safeguarding Children Boards (SCBs). We take the lead and hold others to account through multi-agency risk management (MARM).
- 3.11 We aim to recruit high quality staff, board members and volunteers following our recruitment and selection procedure. All staff that who provide support to, or work directly with, adults with care and support needs and children are subject to a valid enhanced disclosure undertaken through the Disclosure and Barring Service. This includes a check against the Adults' Barred list.
- 3.12 All managing agents and partners of our supported housing schemes must have and follow their own adult and children safeguarding policy and procedure. Verification that these are in place is included in the monitoring visits undertaken by our Partnership Living team. This is not a substitute for the commissioners need to assure themselves of the safety and effectiveness of the commissioned services, or the regulators ensuring that regulated providers comply with the expected standards of care and taking enforcement action where necessary.

Adult safeguarding

- 3.13 Our policy and procedure are underpinned by the six principles of adult safeguarding, as enshrined in the Care Act and its statutory guidance, as follows:
- **Empowerment** - adults should be supported to retain control of their own lives, with their wishes, feelings, values and beliefs fully considered. The professional's role is to support the person to make informed decisions throughout the process and to engage and participate in the management of the risks they are experiencing. This means we focus on involving the person from the very beginning, asking the person what they want to happen, helping the person make informed choices to achieve the outcomes they want and ensuring the person's voice is heard. Acting without consent should only be done if there is a clear justification to act contrary to the person's wishes e.g. if the person lacks capacity, if they and/or others are in danger, if a serious crime has been committed.
 - **Protection** - the safeguarding framework should support people to safeguard themselves from abuse or be protected if they are unable to make their own decisions about their safety.

- **Prevention** - is the primary goal and includes increasing understanding, promoting awareness and supporting people to safeguard themselves. Arrangements should be in place to minimise the risk of abuse.
- **Proportionality** - responses to concerns must be proportionate to the assessed risk and the nature of the concern. Responses must reflect the five key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in which an adult is assumed to have capacity and, therefore, be able to make their own decisions (even unwise ones). Where a person is assessed and found to lack mental capacity, in any area of decision making, any decisions made on their behalf must be made in their “best interest” and take into account their views and wishes in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice and be least restrictive to their rights and freedoms, as possible.
- **Partnership** - working collaboratively to prevent and respond effectively to concerns of abuse. This includes with the person, other partners, relatives, friends, informal carers and advocates to achieve positive outcomes.
- **Accountability** - decisions made should be transparent, recorded and defensible. We must understand what is expected of us, fulfil our responsibilities and work collaboratively with others.

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3.14 Effective child safeguarding arrangements should be underpinned by two key principles:

- **Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.** For services to be effective each organisation and each member of staff should play their full part. No one person can have a full picture of a child's circumstances and needs and everyone who meets them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.
- **A child-centred approach.** The child’s needs are of the greatest importance, and the needs and wishes of each child should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before the problem escalates.

4. Legal & Regulatory Framework

- Regulator of Social Housing - Regulatory Standards
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Children & Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- Mental Health Act 2007
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Code of Practice
- Human Rights Act 1998

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- Safeguarding/Adult Safeguarding (Local Authorities own policies and procedures)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015

5. Related Policies

- Anti-social behaviour and harassment
- Anti-slavery and human trafficking
- Code of conduct
- Procurement
- Data protection
- Disciplinary
- Domestic abuse
- Equality
- Complaints
- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Recruitment and selection

6. Related Procedures

This policy does not detail the practical advice and assistance that should be provided, nor the actions to be taken by staff and volunteers, when dealing with the issues of safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. Any such advice, action and assistance will be covered in specific procedures, which should be used in conjunction with this policy.

- Safeguarding a person with care and support needs
- Antisocial behaviour and harassment
- Third Party Authority to discuss
- Data security
- Disciplinary
- Domestic abuse
- Capability
- Fraud, theft, bribery
- Mental capacity
- Anti-Money laundering
- Complaints

7. Appendices

None