

The Accent logo, featuring a stylized white 'A' followed by the word 'Accent' in a white sans-serif font.

Accent

Safeguarding Policy

Accent Housing: Safeguarding Policy 100724 v3.1

ACCENTGROUP.ORG

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| 3.1 | N/A | 10/07/24 | 19/12/26 | Transfer to new template (inc. Exceptions section). | Fi Whitworth |

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all colleagues in the organisation when dealing with any incident of actual or suspected abuse, threat of abuse or neglect of children and adults at risk.

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1. Introduction

We believe that every person has the right to live in a home where they are free from harm and feel safe. As a landlord we have a duty of care to respond, protect and support people who may find themselves in vulnerable / high risk situations and circumstances, this is known as safeguarding. Safeguarding means protecting the health, wellbeing and human rights of adults and children at risk, enabling them to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and reduce both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect.

This policy is supported by a safeguarding procedure, which provides our colleagues with the guidance they need to identify, support and report safeguarding concerns.

2. Scope

This policy relates to all our customers in all of Accent's homes as well as those we come into contact with, in the course of our operations.

3. Definitions

Child (Young Person)

'Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, is a member of the armed forces or is in hospital' (The Children Act, 1989).

Adult at Risk

'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' (Safeguarding Adults, NHS England)

Safeguarding

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) defines safeguarding as 'the protection of a person's health, wellbeing, and right to live in safety, free from harm, abuse, and neglect'.

Abuse and neglect

The Care Act (2014) identifies ten categories of abuse and neglect;

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

4. References

This Policy will also be consistent with and mindful of the following Accent policies and procedures:

- Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Procedure
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Safeguarding Procedure
- Accident and incident procedure

Accent Policies and Procedures can be found in the [Corporate Library](#).

5. Key legislation and guidance

Adults at Risk

- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Care Act 2014
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 2008
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019

Children and young people

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Every Child Matters Guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Child Protection System in England (NSPCC)

6. Safeguarding Commitments

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

The Accent Safeguarding procedure details the reporting process for all Accent representatives to follow.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Registered Housing Providers are expected to comply with Section 11 of the Children Act (2004) that specifies 'organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children'.

The Care Act 2014 emphasises the importance of effective multi-agency partnership working and taking a person-centered approach that actively involves individuals in safeguarding risk assessments and risk management plans.

Accent works with external agencies to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. In order to do this effectively Accent will be required to share information between partner agencies. The need to balance confidentiality and information sharing principles should be in line with safeguarding procedures, information sharing protocols and data protection legislation.

The consent of individuals should be sought before sharing information, however if consent is not received information can still be shared where there is a legitimate purpose such as preventing serious harm to an individual, providing urgent medical treatment or in the detection or prevention of a crime.

Consent and capacity

It will always be assumed that a customer has the capacity to make decisions about their personal safety unless information or advice received suggests otherwise. In such cases, any actions required will be taken within the requirements of legislation and the input of the relevant local authority.

In the case of a child or young person the professional should seek to discuss concerns with the family and, where possible seek the family's consent to making a referral unless this may, either by delay or the behavioural response it prompts or for any other reason, place the child at increased risk of significant harm.

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) and Safeguarding

It is recognised that cases of anti-social behaviour and/or hate incidents may also include evidence of other types of abuse that can have an effect on victims at risk. Arrangements are in place for dealing with anti-social and hate incidents in a separate policy. Any safeguarding concerns noted in an ASB case will be reported in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and associated procedure.

Recruitment and colleague selection

Accent follow the Safer Recruitment principles and use the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust and fully comply with DBS guidance. We carry out enhanced DBS checks prior to an individual starting employment when the role involves direct provision to people at risk.

Colleague responsibility

Statutory guidance under the Care Act 2014 and Children's Act 1989 and 2004 makes specific reference to responsibility or 'Duty of Care', which is shared by colleagues at all levels, to take appropriate action where there is a suspicion, concern or allegation of abuse or neglect. It is everyone's responsibility to be mindful of and report safeguarding concerns.

Training

All colleagues and Board members are expected to complete mandatory e-learning (level 1) training on an annual basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) are expected to complete a relevant e-learning (level 3) on an annual basis.

Records of all safeguarding training are stored and managed on an internal management system.

Procurement and Projects

Specific content has been included in all contracts, tender and procurement documents, to outline minimum requirements relating to safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk. Failure to meet these requirements will result in ineligibility.

Governance and Performance

The Board will receive an annual update in relation to Accent's approach to safeguarding as well as a trend analysis.

The Customer Experience Committee review the Safeguarding Policy every three years.

7. Exceptions

There may be certain circumstances under which the terms of this policy may be reconsidered. Colleagues should be mindful of customer vulnerabilities and their specific needs. Extenuating circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and exceptions may be applied that require empathy and flexibility, to ensure that customers are treated fairly, compassionately and with respect.