

Safeguarding Children/Young People Policy	
<b>Approved by</b> Chief Executive	<b>Issue number</b> 1.1
<b>Approved date</b> September 2023	<b>Review date</b> September 2025 - currently under review, extended to December 2025
<b>Previous Version</b> Safeguarding Adults & Children Policy - 1.0	<b>Responsible Officer</b> Director of C&SH

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
	<p>At Hightown Housing Association, the safety and wellbeing of the Children and Young People in our schemes is of paramount importance.</p> <p>We recognise our responsibility to protect Children/Young People from harm under the Children Act 2004 and The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 legislation, ensuring their rights are upheld, and create an environment where they can thrive and develop to their fullest potential.</p> <p>The Association will operate under a duty of candour and care, recognising the need for transparency and good information sharing to protect Children/Young People with care and support needs.</p> <p><b>This policy should be read in conjunction with Hightown's Safeguarding Children Procedure.</b></p> <p>Safeguarding Children and Young People is everyone's responsibility.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Aims and Objectives</b>
	<p>This Policy sets out the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of Children/ Young People across the Association.</p> <p>It outlines the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in safeguarding, including our frontline staff, managers, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DSL).</p> <p>It emphasises the importance of effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration to ensure a holistic approach to safeguarding Children/Young People.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Principles</b>

	<p>Hightown has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. Staff are required to report all cases of suspected abuse, regardless of who the perpetrator is.</p> <p>All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. Hightown recognises the importance of the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' agenda which places the wishes of the individual at the centre of Safeguarding activities.</p> <p>Hightown adheres to the following principles underpinning The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 legislation: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part.</li> <li>• A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of Children/Young People.</li> </ul> <p>We recognise that effective safeguarding requires a multi-agency approach, and we actively engage with external agencies and professionals to strengthen our safeguarding practices. This includes building strong partnerships with local authorities, the police, healthcare providers, and other relevant organisations to ensure coordinated and timely responses to safeguarding concerns.</p>
4.	<b>Definitions</b>
	<p>This policy/procedure recognises the following definitions under the Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018 legislation:</p> <p><b>Child</b> - defined in this document as anyone who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'Children and Young People' throughout.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding</b> – defined for the purposes of this document as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting children from maltreatment.</li> <li>• Preventing impairment of children's health or development.</li> <li>• Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.</li> <li>• Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Child Protection</b> - 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.</p> <p><b>Position of Trust</b> - People in a Position of Trust' (PoT) are defined as '<i>those who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, whether on a paid or a voluntary basis</i>'. Therefore, all staff working for Hightown are people in a PoT and staff should be aware that a breach of their position of trust could lead to disciplinary action and, in some instances, to criminal prosecution.</p>

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** - Hightown will ensure that there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead that will act as a source of advice to all staff at Hightown on all safeguarding matters. The current Designated Safeguarding Leads are Spiros Georgiou, Head of Homelessness & Mental Health and Francis Zvoma, Head of Regulated Services.

**The Care Act 2014's statutory guidance refers to ten types of abuse: -**

- **Physical Abuse** - including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic Abuse** – includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so, called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage (age range in England extended to 16 and includes relationships between all family members, not just intimate partners).
- **Sexual Abuse** – including 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.
- **Psychological Abuse** – including 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** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to a Child/Young Person’s financial affairs or arrangements, including 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** – including forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment, because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.
- **Organisational Abuse** – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to ongoing 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** – including ignoring medical, emotional, or physical 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** – this covers a wide range of behaviour from neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

**Other types of abuse:**

**Child sexual exploitation** - 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

	<p>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.</p> <p><b><u>Radicalisation / Extremism</u></b> - Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.</p> <p>Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.</p> <p>Hightown will work with partner organisations to contribute to prevention of terrorism, by Safeguarding and protecting vulnerable individuals and making safety a shared endeavour and providing appropriate training as necessary.</p> <p>Any concerns that an individual may be at risk of radicalisation or supporting terrorism will be dealt with in line with the Prevent Programme – <b>please see Safeguarding Children against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism available on MyTown.</b></p> <p><b><u>County Lines</u></b> - a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable individuals to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.</p> <p><b><u>Cuckooing</u></b> - when a drug dealer grooms the person at risk in order to use their home as a base for dealing drugs. The person at risk may be a drug user themselves, but not necessarily. Whether they are or not, once they've been cuckooed, they will be even more vulnerable to more types of abuse.</p> <p><b><u>Child criminal exploitation</u></b> - where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a Child/Young Person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.</p> <p>The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.</p> <p><b><u>Forced Marriage</u></b> - This is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties' consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse.</p>
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	<p><u>Discriminatory</u> - abuse that centre on a difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to race, gender, disability, or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act.</p> <p><b>See Appendix 1 – Signs of recognising abuse</b></p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Legislation and Guidance</b></p> <p>The Children Act 1989 provides the legislative framework for child protection in England.</p> <p>This is further strengthened by the Children Act 2004, which encourages partnerships between agencies and creates more accountability, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• placing a duty on local authorities and their partners to co-operate in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people.</li> </ul> <p>Both of these acts are amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.</p> <p>The Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018 provides statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children.</p> <p>This policy/procedure also recognises other key pieces of legislation, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1992.</li> <li>• The Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• The Children and Families Act 2014.</li> <li>• The Human Rights Act 1998.</li> </ul>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Scope</b></p> <p>This document outlines our commitment to safeguarding and sets out the framework for preventing, identifying, and responding to any concerns related to child abuse or neglect.</p> <p>Our procedure is guided by national legislation, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), and staff should also refer to relevant local safeguarding arrangements. It aligns with best practice and is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect emerging risks, changes in legislation, and lessons learned from serious incidents.</p> <p>This document applies to all members of Hightown’s staff: Trustees, Board Members, and all individuals and organisations who have a working relationship with Hightown, including volunteers, students, trainees, contractors, and temporary workers, including those working on a bank or agency contract.</p> <p>For ease of reference, all employees and workers who fall under these groups will be uniformly referred to as “staff” in this policy.</p>

7.	<b>Recruitment and Selection</b>
	<p>Hightown Housing Association recognises that the recruitment and selection process play a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of the Children and Young people in our care.</p> <p>We are committed to employing individuals who are suitably qualified, experienced, and have the right values and attitudes to work effectively with vulnerable children.</p> <p>The following guidelines outline our approach to recruitment and selection:</p> <p><u>Safer Recruitment Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All recruitment processes will adhere to relevant legislation, including employment laws and safeguarding regulations.</li> <li>• Job advertisements, job descriptions, and person specifications will clearly outline the expectation of working with Children/Young People and emphasise our commitment to safeguarding.</li> <li>• For Care &amp; Support applicants, application forms will include specific questions relating to the applicant's experience, qualifications, and motivation to work with Children/Young People.</li> <li>• Shortlisting will be conducted by a panel, ensuring consistency and objectivity in the selection process.</li> <li>• For Care &amp; Support applicants, interview questions will include scenarios and inquiries about the applicant's understanding of safeguarding, their approach to working with Children/Young People, and their awareness of potential risks and challenges.</li> <li>• Two satisfactory references will be sought and carefully verified prior to commencement of employment, including seeking references from previous employers or relevant individuals who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with Children/Young People where appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><u>Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All individuals applying for positions in care/support will be required to undergo an Enhanced DBS check. This will be updated every three years.</li> <li>• DBS checks will be conducted in strict accordance with DBS eligibility criteria and relevant legislation.</li> <li>• DBS disclosures will be reviewed by the relevant head of department to assess any relevant information that may impact the applicant's suitability to work with Children/Young People.</li> </ul> <p><u>Induction and Ongoing Supervision and Monitoring</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff will receive an introduction to this policy/procedure during their induction. This will be the responsibility of the line manager of the staff member.</li> <li>• All staff are subject to a six-month probationary period during which time a three and six-month review take place.</li> <li>• Regular supervision and performance management processes will be in place to monitor staff members' compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Any concerns or issues regarding staff conduct, professionalism, or adherence to safeguarding protocols will be addressed promptly and</li> </ul>

	<p>appropriately.</p> <p><u>Contractors</u></p> <p>Any contractor or sub-contractor, engaged by Hightown in areas where workers are likely to come into contact with Children and Young people must comply with the terms of this policy.</p> <p>By implementing robust recruitment and selection procedures, we aim to ensure that individuals working with Children/Young People in our organisation are committed to safeguarding and capable of providing the highest standard of care and support.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Training</b>
	<p>Hightown Housing Association recognise the critical role that training plays in equipping our staff members with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of Children/Young People.</p> <p>We are committed to providing comprehensive training opportunities that empower our staff to recognise signs of abuse, respond appropriately to concerns, and create a safe and supportive environment for those in our care.</p> <p>The following outlines our approach to training for Care &amp; Support staff:</p> <p><u>Induction Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new staff members undergo a thorough induction process that includes an introduction to our safeguarding policies, procedures, and staff code of conduct.</li> <li>• They receive an overview of relevant legislation, local safeguarding arrangements, and their specific roles and responsibilities in safeguarding Children/Young People.</li> <li>• The induction ensures that all staff members have a solid foundation of knowledge before starting their roles.</li> </ul> <p><u>Safeguarding Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide face to face /eLearning safeguarding training for all new staff members, tailored to their specific roles and responsibilities. Staff undertake refresher training every three years and undergo annual competency checks during supervision every year.</li> <li>• This training covers the signs of abuse, reporting procedures, responding to disclosures, and understanding the impact of trauma on Children/Young People.</li> <li>• Training also addresses topics such as online safety, radicalisation, and the prevention of child sexual and criminal exploitation.</li> </ul> <p><u>Specialised Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff members who work directly with specific groups or who have additional responsibilities, receive specialised training relevant to their roles</li> <li>• Hightown's dedicated Safeguarding Lead receives Advance Safeguarding Training which is renewed every three years.</li> </ul>



	<p><u>External Training and Partnerships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We actively engage with external agencies, such as local authorities, child protection services, and training providers, to access additional training opportunities.</li> <li>• Staff members are encouraged to attend relevant conferences, workshops, or seminars to enhance their knowledge and skills in safeguarding and child protection.</li> </ul> <p><u>Record Keeping</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We maintain accurate records of staff members' training attendance, including dates, topics covered, and any certifications or qualifications obtained. This enables us to monitor compliance, identify training needs, and demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding.</li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>Roles and Responsibilities</b></p> <p><u>Senior Management Team</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the overall strategic direction and policies related to safeguarding children.</li> <li>• Provide leadership and support to ensure effective implementation of safeguarding procedures.</li> <li>• Allocate necessary resources for training, supervision, and monitoring.</li> <li>• Establish and maintain partnerships with relevant agencies and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Regularly review and update safeguarding policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.</li> <li>• Foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.</li> </ul> <p><u>Managers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement safeguarding policies and procedures at the operational level.</li> <li>• Provide guidance, support, and supervision to staff.</li> <li>• Ensure all staff members receive appropriate safeguarding training.</li> <li>• Oversee risk assessments and develop risk management plans.</li> <li>• Conduct investigations into safeguarding concerns or incidents.</li> <li>• Collaborate with external agencies, such as social services and the police, when necessary.</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding measures.</li> <li>• Maintain accurate records and documentation related to safeguarding.</li> </ul> <p><u>Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise and respond to signs of abuse, neglect, or harm in children.</li> <li>• Report any safeguarding concerns or incidents to their immediate line manager.</li> <li>• Follow established safeguarding procedures when dealing with a safeguarding issue.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with colleagues and external agencies to ensure the child's well-being where appropriate.</li> <li>Document observations, incidents, and actions accurately and promptly.</li> <li>Participate in regular safeguarding training and continuous professional development.</li> </ul> <p><u>Others (Volunteers/Students/Trainee's/Contractors etc)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarise themselves with the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures.</li> <li>Report any safeguarding concerns or incidents to a manager.</li> <li>For Care &amp; Support schemes, follow instructions from care and support staff regarding their roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of the children.</li> <li>Provide assistance and support within their designated tasks or roles.</li> <li>Attend safeguarding training sessions as required.</li> <li>Comply with relevant staff codes of conduct</li> </ul>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Useful Contacts</b></p> <p><b>Hightown's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)</b> The designated safeguarding leads are responsible for providing support and guidance to all staff members at Hightown.</p> <p><b>Name:</b> Francis Zvoma <b>Position:</b> Head of Care &amp; Supported Housing (Regulated Services) <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:francis.zvoma@hightownha.org.uk">francis.zvoma@hightownha.org.uk</a> <b>Telephone:</b> 01442 292514</p> <p><b>Name:</b> Spiros Georgiou <b>Position:</b> Head of Care &amp; Supported Housing (Homelessness &amp; Mental Health) <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:spiros.georgiou@hightownha.org.uk">spiros.georgiou@hightownha.org.uk</a> <b>Telephone:</b> 01442 292349</p> <p><b>Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (HSCP)</b> Website: <a href="http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk">www.hertfordshire.gov.uk</a> Telephone: 0300 123 4043</p> <p><b>Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership</b> Website: <a href="http://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk">www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk</a> Telephone: 01296 383962 / 0800 999 7677 (Out of hours)</p> <p><b>West Berkshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership</b> Website: <a href="http://www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk">www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk</a> Telephone: 01635 503090 / 01344 351999 (Out of hours) 0118 908 8002 (Wokingham) / 01344 351999 ( Wokingham Out of hours)</p> <p><b>NSPCC</b> Website: <a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a> Telephone: 0808 8005000 (Child Protection Hotline) <i>Monday to Friday 9am – 6pm and 9am – 4pm at the weekend.</i></p> <p><b>Stop It Now! Helping Prevent Child Sexual Abuse</b> Website: <a href="http://www.stopitnow.org.uk">www.stopitnow.org.uk</a> Telephone: 0808 1000 900 (Anonymous/Confidential helpline for professionals)</p>

11.	<b>Policy/document References:</b>
	<p>This policy should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding Adults Policy, and the Procedure.</li> <li>• Safeguarding Children against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism</li> <li>• Mental Capacity Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Deprivation of Liberty</li> <li>• Professional Boundaries</li> <li>• Positive Risk-Taking Policy</li> <li>• Disclosure and Barring Service</li> <li>• Recruitment and Selection</li> <li>• Learning and Development</li> <li>• Confidential Reporting/Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>• Complaints Policy/Procedure</li> <li>• Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety Policy</li> <li>• Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure</li> <li>• Data Protection &amp; Privacy policy</li> <li>• Whistleblowing Policy/Procedure</li> </ul> <p>All of these are available on MyTown.</p>
12.	<b>Communication of policy</b>
	<p>Managers must ensure that all staff are made aware of their role and responsibilities under this policy. The policy will be communicated to employees through local induction, team meetings, supervisions, job descriptions and Hightown's intranet. Managers will ensure all staff have access to associated procedures and reporting forms.</p>
13.	<b>GDPR / Data Protection / Confidentiality</b>
	<p>Staff have a legal duty to breach an individual's confidentiality where they are deemed to be a risk to themselves or others. This must be made clear at all stages including at the point of a reported concern/disclosure. Staff should only share information on a need-to-know basis. If an allegation is made against another member of staff, full support will be given in line with <b>Hightown's Whistle Blowing Policy</b> which is available on MyTown.</p> <p>All service users should be made aware that Hightown operates an information-sharing policy with external partner agencies and that concerns may be passed onto to relevant agencies, even if they do not warrant a full child safeguarding referral.</p> <p>Staff should refer to Hightown's Data Protection &amp; Privacy policy.</p>
14.	<b>Equality and Diversity</b>
	<p>All Children/Young People will have the same protection, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or identity. Hightown is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognises that some of our service users may have additional needs and communication barriers.</p>

### **Disability**

- We are committed to providing an accessible safeguarding response that meet the needs of Children and Young People with disabilities. This includes making information, communication, and facilities accessible to Children/Young People with a variety of disabilities, whether physical, sensory, intellectual, or neurodevelopmental.
- We will collaborate with experts in disability care and advocacy e.g., children services to ensure that our safeguarding efforts are in line with best practices. This collaboration will help us provide the highest level of support to Children/Young People with disabilities.

### **Race**

- We acknowledge that some Children / Young People from racial minority groups may be more vulnerable to various forms of harm due to systemic inequalities. We will actively work to address these disparities by ensuring that our safeguarding efforts are equitable and responsive to the unique challenges faced by children of diverse racial backgrounds.
- Our staff will undergo training to enhance their cultural sensitivity and competency. This training will help staff better understand the cultural norms, practices, and sensitivities of children from different racial backgrounds, ensuring that safeguarding practices are effective and respectful.
- We recognise that children from racial minority backgrounds may have varying levels of English proficiency. We will ensure that safeguarding information is available in multiple languages and provide interpretation services to facilitate effective communication. We will make use of access to approved translation services, such as Language Line, where appropriate.
- We will actively engage with local community organisations and advocates that focus on racial equality and social justice. These partnerships will help us gain insights, build trust, and collaborate on strategies to address the unique needs of children from different racial backgrounds.

### **Gender identity**

- Our organisation is dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of all Children and Young People, regardless of their sex or gender. We recognise the importance of creating an environment where each child's safety, protection, and dignity are upheld equally, regardless of sex.
- Throughout this policy, we use gender-inclusive language to reflect our commitment to recognising and respecting the diverse gender identities of all children. We understand that Children and Young People genders may not align with the sex assigned at birth, and we are committed to creating a safe and inclusive space for everyone.
- We acknowledge and respect each child's self-identified gender, regardless of their sex assigned at birth. Our safeguarding measures are designed to

ensure that all children, regardless of gender identity, are equally protected from harm, abuse, and discrimination.

- We are committed to having gender-diverse staff members who can provide a safeguarding response to Children and Young People of all genders. This helps create an inclusive environment where children can find role models who reflect their identities.
- All staff members will receive training on gender diversity and inclusion. This training will help staff better understand the needs and experiences of Children and Young People of all genders, ensuring that safeguarding practices are equitable and respectful.

### **Religion/Belief**

- We acknowledge the rich tapestry of religious and belief diversity among children, families, and staff members. Our policy recognises the importance of respecting and accommodating these diverse perspectives.
- We acknowledge that some religious practices may influence safeguarding requirements. Our policy is designed to accommodate these specific needs while maintaining the safety and well-being of all Children and Young People involved.
- In situations where safeguarding practices intersect with religious practices, we are dedicated to addressing concerns and finding solutions that uphold the safety and rights of Children and Young People while respecting religious beliefs.
- Our policy is subject to regular reviews that consider changes in religious and belief contexts. This iterative process ensures ongoing alignment with the evolving needs of our diverse community.
- Central to our policy is the principle that every Child and Young Person, regardless of their religious or belief background, is entitled to the same level of safeguarding protection and care.

### **Sexual orientation**

- We embrace the diversity of sexual orientations present among Children and Young People. Our policy acknowledges that each individual's sexual orientation is an integral part of their identity.
- Our staff members undergo training that promotes understanding and sensitivity towards LGBTQ+ individuals. This training helps them create an environment that is welcoming, respectful, and free from discrimination.
- We recognise that LGBTQ+ children may face specific risks or vulnerabilities. Our policy ensures that these unique circumstances are considered when implementing safeguarding measures.
- Our policy firmly upholds the principle that every child, irrespective of their sexual orientation, deserves equal protection and support under our

	<p>safeguarding measures.</p> <p>An Equality and Impact Assessment has been considered for this policy.</p>
<b>15.</b>	<b>Policy / Procedure review</b>
	<p>This policy and procedure will be reviewed every three years and in accordance with relevant guidance/legislation, as well as taking into account feedback from staff and service users.</p> <p>Any changes to the policy will need the authorisation of the C/SH Senior Management Team. Until such authorisation is given the existing policy/procedure will continue to apply unless the existing policy/procedure contradicts any new legal requirements or responsibilities</p>

## Appendix 1 - Recognising signs of abuse

It is essential for all C&SH staff members at Hightown Housing Association to be vigilant and proactive in identifying potential signs of abuse or neglect in children and young people. By recognising these signs early on, we can take prompt and appropriate action to safeguard their well-being.

Every child/young person is unique, and it is difficult to predict how their behaviours will change as a result of their experience of abuse.

The presence of the below signs does not necessarily confirm abuse or neglect however they should be taken seriously and serve as indicators that further investigation and action may be required.

The following categories outline the key types of abuse and their associated signs:

Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unexplained or recurrent injuries such as bruises, burns, fractures, or welts in various stages of healing.</li> <li>Inconsistent or unconvincing explanations provided for injuries.</li> <li>Frequent visits to healthcare professionals for treatment but with little or no explanation of the cause.</li> <li>Fearful or anxious behaviour, particularly when approached by adults.</li> <li>Wearing clothing that is inappropriate for the weather to cover up potential injuries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persistent emotional or psychological maltreatment, including humiliation, threats, and intimidation.</li> <li>Frequent belittling, scapegoating, or rejection of the child.</li> <li>Developmental delays or regressive behaviours.</li> <li>Withdrawn behaviour, low self-esteem, or excessive fearfulness.</li> <li>Sudden changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or excessively compliant.</li> <li>Unexplained or chronic somatic complaints, such as headaches or stomach aches.</li> </ul>
Sexual Abuse	Neglect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disclosure or hints of sexual activity or inappropriate knowledge for the child's age.</li> <li>Frequent and unexplained genital infections or sexually transmitted infections (STIs).</li> <li>Difficulty walking or sitting, pain or discomfort in the genital area.</li> <li>Excessive or inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge.</li> <li>Self-harm or attempts at suicide.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently poor personal hygiene, unkempt appearance, or inappropriate clothing for the weather.</li> <li>Failure to thrive or meet developmental milestones.</li> <li>Constant hunger or stealing food.</li> <li>Frequent unexplained absences from school or irregular attendance.</li> <li>Inadequate supervision or being left alone for extended periods.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Withdrawn behaviour, sudden changes in behaviour, or fear of being left alone with specific individuals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living in an environment that is unclean, unsafe, or not suitable for children.</li> </ul>
<b>Bullying and Cyberbullying</b>	<b>Child sexual exploitation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>belongings getting 'lost' or damaged</li> <li>physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises</li> <li>being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school</li> <li>not doing as well at school</li> <li>asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)</li> <li>being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn</li> <li>problems with eating or sleeping</li> <li>bullying others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour.</li> <li>Being frightened of some people, places or situations.</li> <li>Being secretive.</li> <li>Sharp changes in mood or character.</li> <li>Having money or things they can't or won't explain.</li> <li>Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area.</li> <li>Alcohol or drug misuse.</li> <li>Sexually transmitted infections.</li> <li>Pregnancy.</li> </ul>
<b>Child Trafficking</b>	<b>Child criminal exploitation, county lines, gangs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spend a lot of time doing household chores</li> <li>rarely leave their house or have no time for playing</li> <li>be orphaned or living apart from their family</li> <li>live in low-standard accommodation</li> <li>be unsure which country, city or town they're in</li> <li>can't or are reluctant to share personal information or where they live</li> <li>not be registered with a school or a GP practice</li> <li>have no access to their parents or guardians</li> <li>be seen in inappropriate places like brothels or factories</li> <li>have money or things you wouldn't expect them to</li> <li>have injuries from workplace accidents</li> <li>give a prepared story which is similar to stories given by other children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being subject to threats, blackmail and violence</li> <li>being exploited and forced to commit crimes</li> <li>being arrested, including for crimes committed by the gang that they have not directly committed under the law of joint enterprise</li> <li>not being able to leave or cut off ties with the gang</li> <li>having their safety or the safety of friends and family threatened</li> <li>risk of physical harm, rape and sexual abuse</li> <li>risk of emotional abuse</li> <li>risk of severe injury or being killed</li> <li>abusing drugs, alcohol and other substances</li> <li>long term impact on education and employment options.</li> </ul>



<b>Domestic Abuse</b>	<b>Female Genital Mutilation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aggression or bullying</li> <li>• anti-social behaviour, like vandalism</li> <li>• anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts</li> <li>• attention seeking</li> <li>• bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia</li> <li>• constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers</li> <li>• drug or alcohol use</li> <li>• eating disorders</li> <li>• problems in school or trouble learning</li> <li>• tantrums</li> <li>• withdrawal.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Signs FGM might happen:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' visiting from abroad.</li> <li>• A special occasion or ceremony takes place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'.</li> <li>• A female relative, like a mother, sister or aunt has undergone FGM.</li> <li>• A family arranges a long holiday overseas or visits a family abroad during the summer holidays.</li> <li>• A girl has an unexpected or long absence from school.</li> <li>• A girl struggles to keep up in school.</li> <li>• A girl runs away – or plans to run away - from home.</li> </ul> <p><u>Signs FGM might have taken place:</u></p> <p>Having difficulty walking, standing or sitting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet.</li> <li>• Appearing quiet, anxious or depressed.</li> <li>• Acting differently after an absence from school or college.</li> <li>• Reluctance to go to the doctors or have routine medical examinations.</li> <li>• Asking for help – though they might not be explicit about the problem because they're scared or embarrassed.</li> </ul>
<b>Grooming</b>	<b>Online abuse</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online</li> <li>• having an older boyfriend or girlfriend</li> <li>• having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain</li> <li>• underage drinking or drug taking</li> <li>• spending more or less time online or on their devices</li> <li>• being upset, withdrawn or distressed</li> <li>• sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that's not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media.</li> <li>• seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting.</li> <li>• be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone</li> <li>• have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.</li> </ul>

<p>appropriate for their age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.</li> </ul>	
<b>Financial Abuse</b>	<b>Organisational Abuse</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained money loss</li> <li>• Lack of money to pay for essentials such as rent, bills and food</li> <li>• Inability to access or check bank accounts and bank balance</li> <li>• Changes or deterioration in standards of living e.g. not having items or things they would usually have</li> <li>• Unusual or inappropriate purchases in bank statements</li> <li>• Isolation and withdrawal from friends and family</li> <li>• Lack of things you'd expect someone to be able to afford e.g. TV, grooming items, clothing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An unsafe, unhygienic or overcrowded environment.</li> <li>• A strict or inflexible routine.</li> <li>• Lack of privacy, dignity, and respect for people as individuals.</li> <li>• Withdrawing people from community or family contacts.</li> <li>• No choice offered with food, drink, dress or activities.</li> <li>• No respect or provisions for religion, belief, or cultural backgrounds.</li> </ul>
<b>Modern Slavery</b>	<b>Forced Marriage</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person looks uneasy, unkempt, or malnourished. They may also have untreated injuries.</li> <li>• The person does not speak for themselves, and someone else pays for all their travel and food.</li> <li>• Have you noticed someone picked up and dropped off from work or another location at odd times?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• running away from home</li> <li>• self-harming or attempted suicide</li> <li>• depression, or becoming worried or withdrawn</li> <li>• poor performance at work, school or college or unexplained absence</li> <li>• a surprise engagement to a stranger you've not heard of before</li> <li>• a sudden holiday (some people are tricked into going abroad for a holiday or to see relatives)</li> <li>• no control over their own money</li> <li>• not returning from a visit to another country</li> </ul>