



Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults Policy

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Responsible Officer: Head of Housing & Customer Services

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Regulatory Standard:



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Providing homes, supporting communities

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1.0 Hjaltland Values

Our Vision

Providing homes, supporting communities

Our Values

Teamwork

Working together as one team, to the benefit of our customers. To demonstrate and extend trust in each other.

Open, Honest & Inclusive

We offer a people focused service that is centred in fairness and integrity. We believe in being open, honest and respectful in everything we do.

Ownership

We expect our staff to take responsibility for their actions and give them the freedom to do their job in a positive working environment.

Quality

We value quality in everything we do from the standard of our product to the level of service we provide. We take pride in making a difference in communities and providing continuous improvement.

Innovation

We seek to ensure we have sustainable housing, fit for future generations, maintained and developed to the highest possible standard.

2.0 Introduction

This policy has been established to ensure consistency of all Hjaltland Housing Association ('The Association') activities.

The purpose of this policy is to outline The Association's standards with regards to Child Protection and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Each employee is an important contributor to The Association's vision and each employee is needed at work to assist in the accomplishment of Hjaltland Housing Association's values.

To ensure effective and efficient operations and to provide the best possible work environment to employees, The Association expects employees to adhere to the standards as outlined in this policy.

The Association is committed to ensuring that staff is aware of their responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and adults and recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse and exploitation. The Association acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to all allegations, reports and suspicions of abuse.

Through the implementation of this policy, The Association aims to do everything it can to protect children and vulnerable adults, and to ensure that all concerns for the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult are reported to the appropriate authorities.

The Association will liaise with, and refer to, the Shetland Islands Council Social Work department where required, and is aware of the link between this policy and the Shetland Islands Interagency Protection Procedures.

Comprehensive information on the Shetland Islands Interagency procedures is available at www.safersheland.com. This includes information on Child Protection, Adult Protection, Domestic Abuse and Gender-based violence.

3.0 Policy Statement

Hjaltland Housing Association and our employees recognise the obligations placed on them by the Shetland Inter-agency Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection procedures and of any other statutory provisions and regulations applying to its activities, and aims to:

- Do everything we can to protect children and vulnerable adults, and to ensure that all concerns for the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult are reported to the appropriate authorities.

Employees [and any sub-contractors] have a duty to co-operate in the operation of this policy by fulfilling the responsibilities placed upon them.

Signed

[NAME]
[POSITION]

Date: [FULLDATESIGNED] Planned Review Date: [FULLDATEPLANNED]

4.0 Regulatory Framework / Legal

The Regulatory Framework is based on the Housing (Scotland) Act, in addition to the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 & Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

Hjaltland Housing Association has a range of duties, obligations and responsibilities placed on them by legislation and through statutory guidance. These include achieving the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter, duties to help people who are homeless, duties around the safety of tenants' homes, and promoting equality and human rights.

Hjaltland Housing Association also have requirements placed on them by other regulatory bodies, including the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Care Inspectorate, Audit Scotland and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Hjaltland Housing Association will ensure that we meet all of our legal duties and responsibilities and that we adhere to relevant guidance and the requirements of other regulators.

Relevant Regulatory Standard: [No]

[RELEVANT LEGAL REGISTER & APPLICATION]

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 Committee

It is recognised that the Management Committee, while not actively involved in the day to day running of the organisation, is collectively responsible for providing leadership and direction.

Committee Members are responsible for ensuring that Hjaltland Housing Association fulfils its statutory obligations and allocates adequate resources to do so.

5.2 Executive Team

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Committee's policy objectives are achieved and that policy and performance are kept under active review to address any changes required. The following individual post has been allocated overall responsibility within the terms of our policy:

- Bryan Leask, Chief Executive Officer

5.3 Senior Leadership Team

Due to the 'managerial' function performed by Heads of Departments it is accepted that they will be best placed to identify and control any concerns within their departments. Day to day responsibility for ensuring the policy is put into practice and consultation with employees is delegated to:

- Heads of Departments

They will ensure:

- The objectives and guidance outlined within our management system is fully understood and observed by persons under their control;
- Responsibilities are clearly defined and allocated / delegated to the appropriate levels within their areas of responsibility;
- The policy statement will be brought to the attention of all employees under their control;
- Any changes to the policy or our arrangements are brought to the attention of all persons under their control;

5.4 Responsible Persons

It is important that policy standards are maintained and improved therefore where necessary specific roles within Hjaltland Housing Association, have been allocated additional responsibilities. Where this responsibility is specific to a subject area, the details of the responsible person are communicated to employees in writing or verbally as required.

These Responsible Persons will also be required to monitor their areas of control as well as the performance and activities of all persons under their control to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained.

Relevant responsible persons are:

- Head of Housing & Customer Services

5.5 All Staff

- Employees will comply with the policies, procedures and arrangements set out in the Management System together with any information, instruction and training provided. In addition, any risk control measures and equipment provided to ensure safe-working practices will be properly used.
- Employees will report to their Head of Department or other member of management any identified breaches of procedures, any accidents or incidents in any aspect, which appears to them to give rise to a significant risk to employees or other persons. Such reports will be made without undue delay.
- Employees will inform their Head of Department or other member of management, without undue delay, where they believe that further training or other risk control measures would be beneficial.
- Employees will co-operate in all programmes, training, assessments and other initiatives that are intended to reduce risk and will actively implement any control measures identified as being required.
- Employees will not participate in horseplay, practical jokes or other acts, which may result in harm being caused to themselves or to other individuals.
- Demonstrate their commitment by their behaviour and co-operate in the investigation of accidents and incidents;

6.0 Our Commitment

In line with our recruitment and selection procedures we will ensure that individuals, who are employed by The Association in a paid or voluntary capacity, are fit for the post they are appointed to. Where a post requires direct work with children or adults at risk, we will ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable or disqualified from working with these groups. A Standard

or Enhanced Disclosure will be requested only where this is considered relevant to the particular position. Where a Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, recruitment documentation will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

The posts of Housing Support Worker will be required to have a Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme check (PVG) undertaken as a condition of employment. These post holders will be working with adults at risk within 'regulated services'. The Head of Housing and Customer Service will also undergo a PVG check as the Registered Manager with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Where other posts are subject to registration with a body such as the SSSC an appropriate check will be undertaken to ensure that registration is in place and the person is not disbarred.

The Association will ensure through training that all staff is aware of their responsibility to protect children, young people and adults at risk. The training will include this policy and highlight the need to report child protection issues or concerns about conduct towards adults at risk. Staff members who may be in contact with children or vulnerable adults will be asked to complete an additional e-training module on safeguarding. Further training on the Shetland inter-agency protection procedures will also be made available.

A number of contractors will enter homes on behalf of the Association, as part of our obligation under repair and maintenance. Contractors entering our properties will be made aware of this policy and will be asked to direct any concern to The Association.

For the purposes of this policy, and in line with the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, a child will be considered to be anyone under the age of 18.

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 seeks to protect and benefit adults at risk of being harmed and describes adults at risk as being persons (aged 16 or over) who are;

- a) unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests
- b) are at risk of harm, and
- c) because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

An adult is at risk of harm for the purposes of the above noted if;

- a) another person's conduct is causing (or likely to cause) the adult to be harmed, or
- b) the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm.

In the work we do staff will promote the rights of children and adults at risk to be listened to and taken

seriously so that an individual is able to express their views, thoughts, and concerns.

Concerns about child protection and conduct towards adults at risk will be referred to Social Work in line with our procedures.

7.0 Child Protection and Adult at Risk Procedures

During the course of their work, should a member of staff receive information or suspect that a child or adult at risk may have been, or is being, abused in any way the following action will be taken;

1. Listen and reassure the child or adult at risk

In the event that a child or adult at risk approaches you to disclose that abuse has, or is, taking place;

- Show that you take the child/adult at risk seriously and listen to what they are saying, reassure them that they can trust you, and that you will pass on this information to people who will be able to support them.
 - Staff must not, in the case of a child promise to keep the situation secret as information relating to child protection cases must be referred to the Association's named person who will refer the matter to the Shetland Islands Council Duty Social Worker. However, the information provided by the child/ adult at risk should only be shared with those who need to know.
 - Do not ask the child/ adult at risk questions to obtain more information or investigate the concerns. Only ask the child/ adult at risk questions to clarify what he or she has said.

2. Record

Record on Appendix 1 what the child/adult at risk has said or, where as a staff member, you have concerns. Ensure to note the following information;

- The child/adult at risk's name, address and date of birth
- The date and time of information received / concern identified
- The child/adult at risk's account of what has happened or in the case where it is a member of staff that suspects abuse, detail your own concerns
- Sign and date the record.

All facts, incidents, assessments, and discussions related to the suspicions should be recorded clearly and accurately. Opinions and conjecture should be avoided, and an attempt made to capture only facts. Such records should be kept securely and safely as per the Data Protection Act 2018.

3. Refer

There are three statutory bodies who have a duty to investigate protection concerns;

- Police Scotland
- Shetland Islands Council Social Work Team
- The Reporter (Scottish Children's Reporter Association)

Shetland Islands Council Community Care Social Work Department has a duty to investigate Adult at Risk concerns and will coordinate this through the Shetland Inter-Agency procedures.

The Association's responsibility is to ensure referrals are made in an appropriate and timely way.

Any member of staff who has a concern or has received information from an individual must immediately inform the Association's designated child protection/adult at risk named person.

- The designated named person for Hjaltland Housing Association the Head of Housing and Customer Services. The named person should make phone contact with the Shetland Islands Council, Social Work Department Duty Social Worker, to advise them of the concerns. The phone call should be followed up with appropriate paperwork in line with the Inter-agency procedures.
- In the event that the named person detailed is not available, the member of staff should make direct contact with Social Work.

If urgent medical assistance is required, take the child or adult to the Accident and Emergency department, or telephone for an ambulance.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is often hidden. In practice, it might involve children and young people being coerced, manipulated, forced or deceived into performing and/or other performing on them, sexual activities in exchange for receiving some form of material goods or other things, such as food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gifts, affection. Sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology and without the children's immediate recognition. Victims rarely directly disclose abuse, not recognising that they have been exploited and

may believe they are in an 'adult relationship' with their abuser, due to the sophisticated grooming processes and power imbalance involved. Where staff have concerns over the welfare of a child and suspect Child Sexual Exploitation they should follow the Child Protection Procedures.

MISSING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The links between going missing, sexual exploitation, homelessness and abuse are widely recognised. Children and young people who go missing are at particular risk with 1 in 6, who slept rough or with strangers experiencing sexual exploitation or serious violence while missing.

Hjaltland Housing Association will assist the Police and/or Local Authority however possible in the search for children or vulnerable adults reported as missing. This will include utilising office space and staff to support in the search if required.

SOCIAL WORK REFERRAL CONTACT DETAILS ;

Children and Families Social Work

Duty Social Worker; 01595 744420

Emergency Social Worker – (out of hours); 01595 695611

Email; childrens&families-intake@shetland.gov.uk – this mailbox is checked regularly between the hours of 09.00am and 5.00pm on weekdays only (excluding Public Holidays)

Adult Social Work

Duty Social Worker; 01595 744400

Emergency Social Worker – (out of hours); 01595 695611

Email: dutysocialwork-adults@shetland.gov.uk - this mailbox is checked regularly between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm on weekdays only (excluding Public Holidays).

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Where a referral to Social Work relates to the actions of a member of staff, the Head of Housing and Customer Services will liaise closely with Shetland Islands Council Social Work department.

~~should there be the need to implementation our disciplinary procedures.~~ This is to ensure that any our disciplinary action, as per The Association's Disciplinary Policy, does not impinge on any criminal proceedings that may be ~~implemented required~~ as a result of the Interagency Child Protection Procedures. In the absence of the Head of Housing and Customer Service, the Chief Executive or other member of the Senior Management Team will be responsible for liaising with Social Work.

8.0 Equality, Diversity and Human Right Impact Assessment

The Association is committed to promoting positive measures that eliminate all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Our aim as landlord, service provider and employer is to recognise the needs of all individuals, and ensure these commitments are evident throughout every aspect of our business and our activities.

The Association assesses and reviews all new and revised policies and procedures, and an Impact Assessment is available.

9.0 GDPR

The Association will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Hjaltland Housing Associations Privacy notices.

10.0 Monitoring and Review

Employees [and any sub-contractors] have a duty to co-operate in the operation of this policy by fulfilling the responsibilities placed upon them.

As stated, the operations of the company and this policy will be reviewed at regular intervals or in light of changing company circumstances, procedures and statutes. These changes will be brought to the attention of employees and others whose health and safety may be affected by such changes.

Planned Review Date: September 2026

APPENDIX ONE

This form should be completed where a member of staff has concerns regarding the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, and in consideration of HP25 – Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults Policy.

This form should be completed as soon as a disclosure has been made or where concerns are initially raised.

Child/adult name:

Address;

Date of birth;

Please use the following space to detail the individual's account of what happened or where on professional judgement, the reason for concern – please note date, method of communication and if others were witness to this.

Referring officer name;

Date of referral;

Please pass this form to Head of Housing & Customer Services. In the event they are unavailable, phone duty social work- 01595 744 420.

Actions taken by Head of Housing & Customer Services