



**Muirhouse
Housing
Association**

MUIRHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION



**Muirhouse
Homes Ltd**

MUIRHOUSE HOMES

Title of Policy:	Child Protection
Date of Adoption or Last Review:	New Policy
Lead Officer:	Stephanie Sedstrem
Approval Date	8 th November 2021
Review Date	November 2021

If you have difficulty with reading this policy, including any difficulties with sight or hearing, or if you require this document translated into another language, please contact us and we will be happy to provide this information in a format that suits your needs.

Letting Agent Registration Number – 1911016
Landlord Reference – 403737/230/16191

Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Values

Our Vision is an engaged, thriving, desirable and eco-friendly Muirhouse with high quality, truly affordable and greener homes.

Our Mission - We will provide high quality, truly affordable homes and services for residents and strengthen our engagement and partnerships to enrich the community and safeguard our environment.

Our Values - In upholding our central value of providing high quality, affordable homes and services, our behaviours and decisions will demonstrate our commitment to

Excellence: Ensuring the highest standards in all that we do and innovating to continually improve. Across the MHA Group, we are committed to providing a high quality, customer focused service that demonstrates value for money.

Caring: Being compassionate about and responding appropriately to the needs of our residents, staff, and Board.

Mutual Respect: Valuing the views, knowledge, expertise, and skills of others and collaborating to achieve good outcomes for residents, staff and the Association. We will continue to be a leading member of the local community, working with our customers and statutory, voluntary, and private sector partners.

This policy applies to

Staff and Tenants of Muirhouse Housing Association and Muirhouse Homes Limited

Policy Summary

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear statement of Muirhouse Housing Association and Muirhouse Homes' policy on Child Protection. This policy is important in ensuring the protection and safety of children and considers the welfare of a child or young person to be of paramount importance and sets out how we will fulfil these requirements.

Equalities

Muirhouse Housing Association and Muirhouse Homes Limited are committed to ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex or sexual orientation.

This document complies with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Privacy

This policy has been developed and will be applied in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (2018).

Compliance

SHR Regulatory Standards

Standard 1: Standard 1 The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

Standard 2: The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

Standard 4: The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.

Standard 5: The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

Standard 6: The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

Other Guidance

Child Protection Inter-Agency Guidelines 2016

Inter-Agencies Child Protection Procedures Edinburgh and Lothians

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009

Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001

Related Policies

Adult Protection Policy Privacy Policy Staff Code of Conduct Whistle Blowing Policy
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Muirhouse Housing Association and Muirhouse Homes Limited are committed to the protection and safety of children and considers the welfare of the child or young person to be of paramount importance and any action taken on their behalf will be child-centred and in their best interests.
- 1.2 This policy reflects The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and is designed to raise awareness with our staff of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children and young people.
- 1.3 We will aim to ensure that staff recognises areas of potential harm, (physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and neglect), recognise when a child is at risk of harm and know how to raise their concerns with appropriate professional bodies.
- 1.4 We will follow the National guidance for child protection 2021 and Inter Agencies Child Protection Procedures Edinburgh and Lothians.
- 1.5 We are committed to the principles of sustainability and will endeavour to develop fair and consistent policies, procedures, and practices.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1 We are committed to protecting children at risk of harm who come into contact with our staff through the direct or indirect provision of services. All staff are expected to comply with the provisions of this policy to ensure the protection of children and young people.
- 2.2 The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that “each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation”. Inter-Agencies Child Protection Procedures Edinburgh and Lothians state that “Child protection is not the responsibility of any single agency. Professionals working with children are required to work together to share information, assess needs and risks, and plan and deliver services jointly in a co-ordinated manner. In doing so, professionals can reduce the risk of harm to children and also promote their welfare.”.
- 2.3 A child in Scotland, as defined by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 is anyone below the age of 16 or a child between the age of 16 and 18 who is still subject to a supervision requirement by a Children’s hearing.
- 2.4 The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 states children can be someone over 16 when certain criteria are met.
- 2.5 For the purposes of Human Trafficking, a child is any person under the age of 18.

2.6 For the purposes of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 the age of a victim is categorised as either Adult, Young Child or Older Child:

The term Young Child refers to a child who is under the age of 13 at the time of the offence; and

The term older child refers to a child who is aged 13,14 or 15 at the time of the offence

2.7 We will not tolerate any kind of abusive behaviour regardless of the age, status or position of the perpetrator and the age of the child or young person experiencing the abuse.

2.8 The definition of harm is the ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child. Harm can be:

Physical
Intellectual
Sexual
Emotional
Neglect
Psychological

2.9 Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time.

2.10 Indicators of harm may include:

Something seen on a child or young person, for example bruising, fractures, injuries to the mouth, bites, burns and scalds

Something observed about a child or young person's behaviour

Something a child, young person, or someone else says

Constant hunger, poor personal hygiene, and appearance

Observed behaviour towards a child that causes concerns

Self-Harm

3. Aims and Objectives of Policy

3.1 Muirhouse Housing Association and Muirhouse Homes Limited are committed to providing an environment that is free from abuse and will therefore:

- Ensure that all staff, students, and contractors always maintain appropriate professional boundaries in accordance with our Code of Conduct.
- Ensure staff undertake training in child protection at a level appropriate to their role.
- Immediately apply the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure where an employee is guilty or suspected of abuse.

4. Body of the Policy

- 4.1 We have a duty to report any concerns about the wellbeing of any child at risk from harm to the appropriate statutory agencies. Local Authority Social Work Services, in conjunction with NHS and Police Scotland have a statutory responsibility, under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, to investigate fully any concern or allegation of harm, to intervene as appropriate and to take all reasonable measures to protect a child at risk from harm.
- 4.2 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that a policy is in place to provide guidance to staff in relation to dealing with actual or alleged incidences of harm.
- 4.3 The Housing Services Team Leader responsible for ensuring that staff within the Housing Services Team undertake training at the level appropriate for their role and that there are procedures in place for reporting harm.
- 4.4 Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff take appropriate action in responding to actual or alleged harm, following the procedures and local guidance identified. This includes accurate recording of any instances of alleged or actual harm. All records of alleged or actual harm must be retained for a period of 75 years.
- 4.5 The Housing Services Team Leader (or nominated representative) will be the first point of contact for Social Work or Police and will be responsible for supporting the employee and other individuals throughout this process.
- 4.6 Where staff identify or suspect actual or potential harm or have concerns about a child at risk of harm, they should immediately report their suspicions to line management who will contact the Social Work Service through the Social Work Contact Centre and where appropriate, Police Scotland (with or without the consent of the child or young person).
- 4.7 If the child or young person is in immediate danger, requires immediate medical attention or a crime is suspected then the appropriate emergency services must be called. Statutory Agencies promote the reporting of concerns or incidents and will make every effort to assist staff who contact them for guidance or who raise a concern. Our Data Protection Policy will be observed.
- 4.8 Where possible and appropriate, prior to reporting to statutory agencies, staff should consult with the parent / carer and / or the child / young person.
- 4.9 Staff should explain to those involved that every effort will be taken to protect confidentiality; however, if concerns are related to the protection of children, it will be necessary for information to be passed to appropriate authorities. Our Data Protection Policy will be observed.

4.10 All staff must have access to and have read and understood the following:

- Our Child Protection Policy
- Our Adult Protection Policy
- Our Staff Code of Conduct
- Our Whistle Blowing Policy
- Inter-Agencies Child Protection Procedures Edinburgh and Lothians

4.11 Staff must ensure they have access to the following contacts:

- Social Work Out of Hours telephone number – 0800 731 6969
- Social Work Duty Officer – 0131 200 2324
- Contact details for the local Police

5. Implementation of the Policy

5.1 The Board of Management, in its formal approval of the policy acknowledges that it accepts full responsibility for its implementation. Day to day responsibility for the operation and monitoring of the policy is delegated to the Chief Executive and senior staff. All relevant staff have a responsibility to ensure that the policy is applied as instructed.

5.2 Implementation of the policy will be supported by:

- Devising detailed procedures to accompany the policy: responsibility for developing supporting procedures is delegated to the Housing Team.
- Communication with staff and tenants about the policy and procedures and any subsequent amendments.
- Staff training.
- Monitoring and internal audit of adherence to policy requirements and procedures.

6 Monitoring of the Policy

6.1 These will be monitored by the Housing Services Team Leader reporting to the Chief Executive. If any significant issues of concern arise or any matter which demonstrates a serious failure of internal controls, the Chief Executive will report such matters to the Board of Management.

7 Complaints and Appeals about the Policy

7.1 We recognise that in the delivery of our services to customers there may be occasions when a customer is not satisfied with the way a particular issue was dealt with. Tenants, their representatives or others who use our service can make a complaint to any member of staff who will try to resolve the matter straightaway. If this is not possible, we will make sure the matter is fully investigated in line with our complaints policy and procedure. Copies of these are available from our office or on our website. Feedback from complaints will be used to help improve our service.

8 Anti- Bribery

8.1 We are committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in all our activities and, in order to ensure compliance with the Bribery Act 2010, we have introduced an Anti-Bribery policy and procedures. These must be adhered to by all employees, Board Members and associated persons or organisations acting for or on our behalf when undertaking any actions referred to in this policy.

9. Review

9.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless key changes are required earlier to comply with legislation, guidance, or new learning.

9.2 As part of this review, consultation will take place with staff and customers to ensure that operational issues and the opinions of customers are considered.

9.3 The effectiveness of accompanying procedures and guidance will be monitored on a regular basis and, where applicable, amended as required operationally; or to reflect legislative changes.

9.4 Where references are made to specific job titles, roles, groups or committees, such references shall be deemed to include any changes or amendments to these job titles, roles, groups, or committees resulting from any restructuring or organisational changes made between policy reviews.

10. Appendices

Inter-Agencies Child Protection Procedures -

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/23055/child-protection-procedures>