

# **ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**Creating Homes Strengthening Communities  
Services that Matter**

## INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding of Adults in need of protection is a priority for Clanmil Housing Association. Our policy and procedures set out what is expected of our staff when dealing with potential or actual safeguarding incidents.

We operate zero tolerance of any abuse wherever it occurs and regardless of who is responsible. We consider safeguarding to be everyone's business and we are committed to ensuring that our operations enhance and promote safeguarding at every opportunity.

Reporting arrangements have been put in place to ensure that we comply with our legal and moral responsibilities. The policy outlines how we will do this. The purpose of the policy and supporting procedures is to ensure that staff are aware of the issues that can potentially cause harm to adults in need of protection, know to report concerns and ultimately protect our tenants.

We will ensure that staff members who are in regular contact with tenants and residents will undertake relevant training ensuring the highest in professional standards from our people delivering services. We will share our policy as appropriate, including with Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Supporting People team, HSC Trusts, RQIA and partner agencies.

The rights of adults at risk to live a life free from neglect, exploitation and abuse are protected by the Human Rights Act 1998. Specifically, the rights of adults at risk are safeguarded as follows: to life (Article 1); protection from inhuman and degrading treatment (Article 3); right to liberty and security (Article 5).

## DEFINITIONS

### **Adult at risk of harm**

The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety defines an adult at risk as '*an adult at risk of harm*' being age 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal characteristics and/or their life circumstances.

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special education needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or in, the

functioning of the mind or brain. Life circumstances may include but are not limited to isolation, socioeconomic factors and environmental living conditions.

### **Adult in need of protection**

They define an '*adult in need of protection*' as a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- personal characteristics AND/OR
- life circumstances

and who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests.

### **What is abuse and harm?**

- a. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights that can take various forms.

Clanmil is committed to practices that promote the welfare of all our residents and tenants and safeguard them from harm, in particular with regard to people identified as adults at risk.

We provide supported housing and registered care to a range of adults with various personal characteristics and life circumstances which may place them at greater risk. We will undertake, as far as reasonably possible, to ensure that adults are safeguarded from abuse and exploitation.

- b. "A physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of an adult at risk by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period. It may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse.
- c. Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetrated by a person/persons, in breach of that trust, who have influence

over the life of a dependant, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff or family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship”.

**Harm is defined as:**

*“The impact on the victim of abuse, exploitation or neglect. It is the result of any action whether by commission or omission, deliberate, or as a result of a lack of knowledge or awareness, which may result in the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional or mental health and well-being. Harmful conduct may constitute a criminal offence or professional misconduct.”*

1. **Physical abuse** – the use of physical force or mistreatment of one person by other which may not result in injury – hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, administering medicine that maybe harmful to the person, restraining or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way.
2. **Psychological abuse** - behaviour that is psychological, harmful or inflicts mental distress by threat, humiliation or other verbal/nonverbal conduct.
3. **Financial or material abuse**- actual or attempted theft, fraud or burglary. It can be the misappropriation of funds, misuse of property, money or benefits or other assets or goods that that the person did not or could not consent to.
4. **Sexual violence and abuse** – any behaviour, perceived to be sexual in nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative harmful or unwanted. It can take various forms and may include non-contact behaviour such as indecent exposure, stalking or being made to view abusive materials or watch sexual activity. It may include non-consensual penetrative activity or non-penetrative sexual activity. Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society.
5. **Neglect** – occurs when a person deliberately withholds or fails to provide appropriate and adequate care and support required by another adult. It may be through lack of knowledge or awareness or failure to take reasonable action given facts available to them.
6. **Discriminatory abuse**- mistreatment of a person because of their ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexuality, gender or disability.

## VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The policy is underpinned by the following values and principles:

Access to information and knowledge; Diligent and effective contractors; Confidentiality; Dignity and respect; Fulfilment; Privacy; Support; Creating safe environments;	Committed and professional staff; Choice; Consent; Equality and diversity; Independence; Safety; Awareness.
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The following legislation also relates to the safeguarding and protection of adults at risk:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
- The Criminal law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967
- The Health & Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Orders and the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009
- The Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
- The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
- The Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Race relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75
- The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008

## **ADULT SAFEGUARDING CHAMPION**

Our Adult Safeguarding Champion is responsible for ensuring the following:

- To provide information and support for staff on adult safeguarding within Clanmil.
- To ensure that the organisation's safeguarding policy is disseminated and to support implementation through the organisation.
- To advise within the organisation regarding adult safeguarding training needs.
- To provide advice to staff who have concerns about signs of harm, and to ensure appropriate reporting to the relevant HSC Trust, RQIA and PSNI where there is a safeguarding concern.
- To support staff to ensure that any actions take account of what the adult wishes to achieve. This should not prevent information about any risk of serious harm being passed to the relevant HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service for assessment and decision making.

The Adult Safeguarding Champion does not have sole responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of safeguarding practice are competently fulfilled at Clanmil. Rather, the role holder has a key promotional, advisory and reporting function as well as supporting other staff in safeguarding practice. The role holder will participate in any external forums that support this policy in the Association and its governance.

## **THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

- The Regional and Local Adult Safeguarding Partnerships (NIASP & LASP) have been developed to ensure that issues relating to adult safeguarding are responded to both proactively and strategically. The NIASP is responsible for the strategy, development and dissemination of guidance and policy/procedure, the monitoring of trends and the potential undertaking of serious case reviews. The LASPs is responsible for the implement of the guidance, policies and procedures developed by NIASP, and to develop good interagency working in the local area.

Clanmil will ensure that it is a proactive member of relevant LASPs and contribute to the work of the LASP groups. The Adult Safeguarding Champion will represent Clanmil within these activities, and in consultation with the Senior Management

Team, will ensure the appropriate engagement of Clanmil staff and services in appropriate activities in relation to these groups.

- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for maintaining the list of individuals barred from engaging in regulated activity with children and vulnerable adults across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. A regulated activity provider must refer anyone to the DBS who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will decide whether the person should be barred from working in regulated activity with children, adults or both.
- The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) is responsible for ensuring that staff who are required to be on the NISCC register are fit to practice and meet all registration requirements. They provide the Professional Code of Practice for both Social Care Staff and Social Care employers. They may decide to sanction a social care staff member or remove them from the social care workforce register if they have concerns regarding their practice. Clanmil is obliged to refer to NISCC any suspected or actual safeguarding incidents.
- The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is responsible for ensuring that all regulated services only engage appropriate individuals in regulated activities, by providing regular inspection of all aspects of the service including procedures that impact on the safety of vulnerable adults. They have a right to:
  - issue service improvement or closure notices
  - establish contact with HSC Trust Designation Adult Protection Officer (DAPO), PSNI and other agencies as appropriate
  - ensure accurate and up to date records are maintained detailing all decisions made, the reasons for those decisions and any actions take
  - compile and analyse records of reported concerns to determine whether several low-level concerns are accumulating to become significant and make records available for inspection.

## **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN ADULT AT RISK**

Everyone working with adult at risk has a duty to report suspected, alleged or confirmed incidents of abuse. Clanmil employees are required to do so immediately and without delay.

If a staff member is in doubt about whether or not to report something, they should always report suspicions, allegations or incidents to their line manager in the first instance. If their line manager is not available a member of the extended management team should be contacted.

## **WHISTLEBLOWING**

Staff are required to act when suspicious that abuse is occurring at work, regardless of the setting or who the alleged perpetrator or victim may be. We will respect and support staff who adhere to their duty of care in reporting suspected or alleged abuse. The member of staff will suffer no detriment for their actions regardless of whether the allegation is proved or not unless the allegation is deemed to have been malicious. Clanmil also operates a policy on Whistleblowing.

Clanmil is committed to participating in a multi-disciplinary working arrangement with the primary services responsible for the investigation of abuse i.e. Trust/Social Services, GP, and PSNI.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Domestic violence is a crime and affects the quality of life of the victims, their family and their friends, and can also affect a person's home. Our staff will respond to allegations or suspected domestic violence in an effective and sympathetic manner, signposting and supporting victims with practical help and advice around housing options and our commitment to them as tenants.

Domestic Violence is a sensitive and emotive subject, which will also be addressed by our Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedure.