

## **VULNERABILITY POLICY**

Reference: DD/09

Approved: 01/04/09

Revised:

### **1 Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 The Group recognises that some of its residents are vulnerable owing to one or more of a variety of causes. It is committed to meeting their needs through the provision of suitable accommodation and appropriate responsive landlord services.

### **2 Aims**

- 2.1 The objectives of this Policy are:

- To limit the instances of tenancy breakdown and provide a responsive housing service to vulnerable residents in line with the Tenant Services Authority regulatory code by identifying vulnerability through appropriate training.
- To maintain balanced and sustainable communities by delivering appropriate support services to vulnerable residents directly or through external sources.

### **3 Definition of vulnerability**

- 3.1 It is not possible to outline every situation where a resident could be considered vulnerable, nor will one of the following conditions mean that they need support. The following categories are meant to assist rather than replace staff judgment.

- People with a recent history of homelessness, rough sleepers, refugees and those with no experience of independent living.
- Those with substance misuse problems. E.g. alcohol or drugs.
- People in receipt of, or entitled to state retirement pension.
- Ex offenders.
- Those at risk of domestic abuse.
- People with learning difficulties.
- Those with serious long term, or terminal, illness.
- Young people at risk, including those leaving care as well as teenage parents.
- Those people with a mental, physical or sensory disability who are in receipt of a state benefit, or are entitled to such a benefit, as a result of that disability.
- Others with a disability which impacts on the performance of normal daily living tasks. People with a child under 12 months old in the household.

### **4 Related policies**

- 4.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies, including:
- Responsive repairs and cyclical maintenance

## HOUSING SOLUTIONS GROUP

- Equality and diversity
- Data Protection
- Anti-social behaviour
- Racial harassment and hate crimes
- Domestic abuse
- Protection of vulnerable adults from abuse
- Assistance to elderly disabled and blind
- Aids and adaptations
- Corporate debt
- Community Cohesion
- Financial inclusion
- Waiting list, transfer and mutual exchange

### 5 **Policy statement**

- 5.1 In meeting the objectives of this Policy, we will use a partnership approach. The Group will seek to build strong relationships with support agencies developing service level agreements where appropriate, to ensure an effective response to the needs of vulnerable residents.
- 5.2 We will aim to identify residents who are vulnerable. We recognize that vulnerability can be a temporary and complex state and wherever possible assistance will be gained from housing staff and other agencies in assessing vulnerability.
- 5.3 All existing residents and applicants on our waiting and transfer lists will be asked to complete our Service Information Form to aid in the self assessment of vulnerability. This form is voluntary but if completed will aid the Group in providing a responsive and appropriate housing service to vulnerable residents.
- 5.4 In any situation where a child or a vulnerable adult is suspected or known to be at risk of abuse, we should not intervene but must notify the relevant local authority social services department immediately. Staff should refer to our policies on domestic abuse and protection of adults from abuse.
- 5.5 As part of our general approach to vulnerable residents, we will:
- Comply with relevant legislation and recognised best practice.
  - Train staff effectively in dealing with vulnerability, disability awareness and confidentiality.
  - Liaise with appropriate agencies when writing and reviewing support plans to meet the needs of vulnerable residents.
  - Seek to ensure that wherever possible disabled residents can have necessary and appropriate adaptations carried out to their homes.
  - Provide assistance to the care of the homes and gardens of our elderly, disabled and / or blind residents who have no other help available to them.
  - Ensure that repairs services are flexible to the needs of vulnerable residents.
  - Waive recharges where a resident's vulnerability prevented them from adhering to the stated policy.
- 5.6 Where special needs or vulnerabilities are identified as part of the support planning process we will keep a record of relevant details subject to the agreement of the person concerned. These records will help us to respond to identified needs by for example, shortening repair

## **HOUSING SOLUTIONS GROUP**

response times where appropriate. Access to recorded information and its security will conform to the standards set out in our Data protection policy.

- 5.7 We will provide appropriate communication formats, on request, to meet identified needs e.g. translations, interpreters, signers, audiotapes, Braille, large print documents.
- 5.8 We recognise the role of carers, advocates and personal representatives. Where appropriate we shall take their views into account when consulting vulnerable residents on issues that affect them.

## **6 Monitoring**

- 6.1 Service reviews will be carried out to ensure that the policy is effective and the Group is providing services which meet vulnerable residents' needs. These may take the form of peer reviews or a sample check of cases where a tailored service has been provided.
- 6.2 Residents may also be asked to provide evidence of vulnerability to ensure that a fair service is being delivered.

## **7 Equal Opportunities**

- 7.1 Housing Solutions Group is committed to a policy of fair and equal treatment for all its members, residents, employees and applicants, regardless of religion, sexual orientation, age, class, racial origin, sex, disability or marital status as determined in the Equality & Diversity Strategy.

## **8 Review**

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions Group policy.