

PO28 Vulnerable Adults

Approval

Approved by Tenants' Forum	Community Issues Group 17.10.07
Approved by Board	30 January 2008
Due for Review	October 2010

Review undertaken

Resident involvement <i>As agreed with Tenants' Forum</i>	Consultation undertaken with Community Issues group, and with residents' focus group
Equality Impact Assessment	Due week beginning 22 October
Other consultation	Input was invited from SODC, Henley and Didcot CABx and Berinsfield Information Centre. SMT reviewed 16 October 2007

Policy Statement

Soha recognises the importance of identifying the needs of vulnerable customers as early as possible. We will engage with support services, and will have a range of partnerships, to support vulnerable customers in the most appropriate way, giving due respect to customers' right to privacy.

Soha recognises its duty to protect service users from abuse. We will work in partnership with other agencies to protect vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation.

Clear guidelines for staff will be provided to support them in the above.

1 Scope of policy

This policy sets out Soha's commitment to identify, support and protect vulnerable customers.

Soha's definition of 'vulnerable adult' is taken from the concept outlined in the Cabinet Office Better Regulation Task Force's report on 'Protecting Vulnerable People 2000' and the broad view taken by the Housing Corporation in its 2007 strategy on housing for vulnerable people 'Investing in Independence'.

These view vulnerability in its widest sense. Under these definitions, vulnerable adults may include, but are not limited to: people with physical or sensory disabilities, mental health problems or learning difficulties with support needs; older people with support needs, people with low literacy and social skills; people with alcohol or drug problems. Vulnerability may also be viewed on different levels including gender, race and cultural differences, and poverty.

2 Aims

Soha aims to identify the needs of vulnerable customers as early as possible and to offer appropriate support through a range of mechanisms, including working closely with other health and social care / support groups.

We aim to provide equal access to our services and to be responsive to individual needs. We will respect individuals' right to privacy.

We aim to support staff who work with vulnerable customers through good training and supervision.

We aim to prevent abuse and to support victims of abuse.

We will apply this policy consistently and fairly, and will not discriminate against any person on grounds of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, age or any other matter which may cause a person to be treated with injustice.

3 Implementation

3.1 Identification and data storage

Adults may be initially identified as 'vulnerable' by staff, self-identification, or by a relevant agency or person.

Soha will have clear procedures in place about the storage of this information, access to it and sharing of it. These will be backed up by good, usable IT systems and will conform to our Data Protection and Access to Personal Information policies.

3.2 Partnership working

Soha will continue to develop and take part in partnerships both formally, through Service Level Agreements, and informally in multi-agency working with statutory and voluntary organisations.

3.3 Access to services

Soha aims to meet the needs of vulnerable customers in the delivery of its services. Procedures for the provision of services will be sensitive and, where possible, responsive to individual circumstances. This includes:

- offices with accessible reception and meeting rooms
- using information about individuals to communicate appropriately
- individual support plans for customers accessing Supported Housing services, developed with individual customers.
- the provision of housing management services, including rent arrears recovery, letting and allocations, reactive maintenance, estate management, and harassment and nuisance
- taking account of the needs of vulnerable customers in development services
- identifying vulnerable tenants before planned works and improvements and responsive repairs, for contractors to accommodate individual needs.

3.4 Staff training

Soha aims to ensure that all staff who work with vulnerable tenants are appropriately trained and well supported.

3.5 Prevention of abuse

Soha will have procedures and guidelines for staff outlining:

- types, indicators and patterns of abuse
- dealing with potential or actual abuse
- deciding when to intervene; and
- reporting and monitoring of cases.

4 Responsibility

The Director of Customer Services is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy. However, as the Policy has implications for all areas of Soha's operation, all Directors have a responsibility for contributing to its effective operation.

5 Monitoring and review

The storage of information will be monitored regularly for compliance with data protection policy.

Partnerships will be reviewed annually, for example through a survey of stakeholder organisations

An annual report to Tenants' Forum or sub-group outlining the practical support given to vulnerable adults.

The handling of abuse cases will take place with managers.

6 Context

Housing Inspectorate Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) 31: Diversity
