

L&Q Safeguarding Children at Risk Policy

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach towards safeguarding children at risk from harm, neglect and abuse.
- 1.2 We are committed to ensuring that children and young people are always in a safe, healthy and supportive environment when using our services.

2 Scope and Exclusions

- 2.1 The principles in this policy apply to all L&Q residents who are children (see section 4 for definition of a child). For our approach on safeguarding adults at risk, please refer to our Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all our employees. Those we commission to deliver a service on our behalf are also required to follow this policy or have their own effective safeguarding policies in place.
- 2.3 The Children Act 1989 (Section 47) requires Local Authorities to make enquiries, if it believes a child is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. Local Authorities will have different approaches for determining if a referral meets the criteria of being a safeguarding enquiry. This policy refers to concerns that may meet the criteria and therefore require us to report the concern to the Local Authority for them to determine if an enquiry should be made. Please see section 8 on for more information on how we work with statutory agencies.
- 2.4 We have other policies in place such as Supporting Residents with Additional Needs, Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Abuse to support cases that don't meet the criteria.

3 Legislation and Regulation

- 3.1 Key legislation that supports and outlines approaches to the safeguarding of children includes, but is not limited to:
 - The Children Act 1989 and 2004
 - The Care Act 2014
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

4 Definitions

- 4.1 **Child safeguarding-** the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
- 4.2 **A child-** in England a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday and is therefore considered vulnerable.
- 4.3 **Care leavers-** The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 defines a care leaver as a child who is aged 16 or 17 and has been looked after by a local authority for a period of 13 weeks or more after their 14th birthday and remained in care on or after their 16th birthday. The Act means that these young people are statutorily entitled to some ongoing help and support from the local authority after they leave care. All children who are over the aged of 16 and leaving care fall into one of the following categories:
- Eligible child
 - Relevant child
 - Former relevant child, or
 - Other qualifying care leavers

5 Types of Abuse

- 5.1 There are several types of abuse that a child may experience. This is not an exhaustive list, but we train our employees to recognise the following as potential areas of safeguarding concerns:
- **Physical abuse** – such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, female genital mutilation (FGM) or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
 - **Domestic abuse** – under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children who reside in a home where domestic abuse takes place are recognised as victims, therefore acknowledging that the child is a victim, rather than just a witness.
 - **Emotional abuse** – such as telling or making a child feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate.
 - **Sexual abuse** – through forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening.
 - **Neglect**– such as the failure to:
 - provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from their home or abandonment)

- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, including preventing over- medication

A landlord's failure to provide repairs or maintenance in some cases might be considered an act of neglect.

- **County Lines-** a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) goes further and more specific when describing the different types of child abuse. This includes:

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| • Child sexual exploitation (i.e. involving money) | • Grooming (by sexual perpetrators or radical extremists) |
| • Female genital mutilation | • Child trafficking |
| • Forced marriage | • Honour-based abuse |
| • Non-recent abuse | • Bullying and online cyber bullying |
| • Online abuse | |

5.2 For details of the types of abuse an adult may experience, please refer to the Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy.

6 Key Principles

- 6.1 Safeguarding is everyone's business, which means that we should never ignore cases of concern and must report any concerns or incidents of harm or abuse that are raised by a neighbour, members of the public or that we witness during our work. We will require our employees and those representing us, who are dealing directly with residents, to have an up-to-date DBS check. All employees will also receive training appropriate to their role, regarding children at risk.
- 6.2 Our approach to safeguarding will be based on the six principles of safeguarding as set out in the Care Act 2014. These are:
- **Empowerment-** people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
 - **Prevention-** it is better to act before harm occurs.
 - **Proportionality-** the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
 - **Protection-** support and representation for those in greatest need.
 - **Partnerships-** local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse.
 - **Accountability-** accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.
- 6.3 Whilst these principles were designed initially for the care sector, they are recognised and implemented by all organisations who work with or around children.

7 A Child Centred Approach

- 7.1 We are committed to working within the Early Help processes. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life from the foundation years through to the teenage years. We will:
- Place a child's needs at the forefront which means listening, believing what we are told, respecting their needs and views in how we respond. This is to ensure that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates.
 - Use our website to promote awareness to ensure our residents and partners are aware of how to report safeguarding concerns and the support we can provide.
 - Consider legal action in line with our tenancy agreement if a resident has been convicted of a sexual offence or physical abuse.

- Aim to prevent homelessness when considering breaches of tenancy. The presence of children in the household will be considered when taking possession action and children services will be notified at an appropriate time.
- Ensure children are considered as a priority for housing and aim to prevent the risk of homelessness and endeavour to keep them safe from harm or exploitation including threats of harm from criminal gangs who have exploited the child. For further information on this please refer to our Allocations and Lettings Policy and Tenancy Changes Policy.

8 Working In Partnership

- 8.1 All L&Q employees and those working on our behalf have individual responsibility for the welfare of children using our services.
- 8.2 Several agencies hold the statutory duty to complete enquiries to protect those at risk once we have referred. These include Local Authorities, the Police and the NHS and Integrated Care Boards. We will work in partnership with these statutory agencies to make children safe. This will include working with Local Safeguarding Boards.
- 8.3 The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR supports the sharing of relevant information for the purposes of keeping adults at risk safe. We understand information sharing, joint working and communication are essential in keeping people safe and we work to build and maintain good professional relationships to support the safeguarding process. We will ensure that records are factually accurate and shared in line with our Data Protection Policy.

9 Responding and Reporting

- 9.1 We have a statutory duty to report any incident or concern of alleged, suspected or witnessed abuse or harm within three working days and to take action to protect the individual where it is necessary to do so.
- 9.2 Where we have become aware of an incident or risk, we will report this to our Safeguarding Team in no more than one working day of the incident or risk identified. The same timescales apply to reporting concerns both externally and internally.
- 9.3 All incidents or allegations of abuse will be reported to the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Boards immediately and no more than three working days of the incident or risk identified. The Charity Commission's serious incident reporting regime also requires trustees to report serious incidents.
- 9.4 Where we are concerned that a child may be at risk but doesn't meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral, we are able to share concerns with relevant agencies.

- 9.5 We will manage all safeguarding effectively and have an escalation process in place. If we or someone employed by us are the alleged perpetrator in a safeguarding case, this will be treated seriously, and the same processes will apply.

10 Monitoring and Controls

- 10.1 We have introduced KPI's to ensure compliance with this policy. These include:
- % Safeguarding concerns reported within three working days
 - % of Safeguarding concerns compliant with L&Q's reporting procedures
 - % of staff with up-to-date safeguarding training
- 10.2 Customer Group Committee are provided with these safeguarding reports monthly.
- 10.3 The Group Board and Executive Group scrutinise annual safeguarding reporting data and information.

11 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 11.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a responsibility to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.
- 11.2 We recognise that in some circumstances, people with certain protected characteristics may be at greater risk of abuse or neglect, or of experiencing barriers to being able to access the right support. So that all residents can access our services, we sometimes need to adjust what we do.
- 11.3 For example, where a resident may not be able to express their feelings and wishing in the way that they would like to, we may be able to adjust how we communicate. This could include those who have communication difficulties, unaccompanied children, refugees, children who are victims of modern slavery and/or trafficking and those who do not speak English or English is not their first language.
- 11.4 For further information on how we can support residents and make reasonable adjustments, please refer to our Supporting Residents with Additional Needs Policy.

12 Policy controls sheet

Date of approval: 10/04/2025

Approved by: Customer Group and Director of Governance and Accountability

Effective date: 10/04/2025

Next Review date: 10/04/2028

Policy owned by: Director of Governance and Accountability

Associated documents: Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy, Supporting Residents with Additional Needs Policy

| Main change | Key points |
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| Full programmed review of the policy, including updates to align with the new policy template and formatting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed to align with the Supporting Residents with Additional Needs Policy• Reviewed to align with updates to the Safeguarding Standard Operating Procedure• Updated KPIs to reflect the change in time to report safeguarding concerns |
| Reviewed by: The Policy Team | |
| Approved by: Customer Group and Director of Governance and Accountability | |