

Habitare Homes Limited: Safeguarding Policy

Version:	3.0
Policy Owner:	Board
Date adopted:	October 2025
Date of next review:	October 2026
Approved by:	Board

1 | Introduction

Habitare Homes Limited (“Habitare”) will establish safeguarding as “everyone’s responsibility” and promote a culture that does not tolerate abuse and encourages people to raise concerns. This policy sets out our approach to safeguard those who live in our homes and who may be at risk.

2 | Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff whether employed directly by Habitare, a partner/contractor, and any other individual who is responsible for visiting properties owned on behalf of Habitare or its managing agents.
- 2.2 Where a managing agent is engaged to manage properties on behalf of Habitare:
- The managing agent will apply all aspects of the Safeguarding Policy on our behalf, and ensure their staff and contractors are trained on the policy.
 - The managing agents will inform Habitare of all significant activities undertaken in fulfilment of the policy where required.
 - The words “staff”, “we” and “us” in this policy refers to the staff of Habitare, and the managing agent with regard to all operational matters.

3 | Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
- Ensure that Habitare staff and staff and contractors employed by our managing agents/ are aware of the types of abuse that can occur.
 - Develop a culture that encourages people to raise concerns and does not tolerate such abuse.
 - Prevent abuse from happening wherever possible.
 - Encourage staff to respond promptly and proportionately where abuse does happen, to make the necessary referrals and engage the appropriate authorities, to stop the abuse continuing and to ensure the person harmed receives effective support.

- Provide a framework for those providing management services on Habitare's behalf to enable the recognition and reporting of suspected abuse towards children and vulnerable adults.

4 | Definitions

4.1 Definition of a 'child'

The 'Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2006' document defines a child as being anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living alone, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, is in prison or in a young offenders' institution is irrelevant – they are still defined as children under the Children Act 1989.

4.2 Definition of a 'vulnerable adult'

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be at risk of harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect because of a:

- physical disability
- physical or mental illness
- learning difficulty
- reduced physical or mental capacity due to older age
- dependency on alcohol, illegal drugs or medication

4.3 Definition of 'Abuse'

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Friends, strangers, family members, and professional staff can all be guilty of abuse. Abuse can include physical, mental, sexual, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect.

5 | Relevant Legislation

5.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the legal and regulatory documents listed below:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005) – the Mental Capacity Act (2005), and supporting Code of Practice (2016),
- Data Protection Act (2018) – governs the protection of personal data.
- Human Rights Act (1998) - includes a duty on public bodies to intervene proportionately to protect the rights of citizens.
- Housing Act 2004 (as amended by Awaab's Law)
- The Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act (1989 and 2004)
- Health and Social Care Act 2008

- Crime and Disorder Act 1993
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding May 2011
- Every Child Matters -HM Government -Working together to Safeguard Children -HM Government 1999 –updated 2006
- Protecting adults at risk: London multi-agency policy and procedures to safeguard adults from abuse-2011

6 | Our responsibility

Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

- 6.1 Habitare expects all individuals working for us or managing our properties to be alert to both actual and suspected abuse. This is particularly relevant for those who have personal contact with residents, particularly those who visit residents in their own homes. Awareness of the home environment is important; if individuals identify that children or vulnerable adults are living in unhygienic or dangerous conditions (including damp and mould), and/or where care needs appear to be neglected the concern should be escalated in line with this policy.
- 6.2 In accordance with our Building Safety Policy, if it is found that the damp and mould hazard poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of a resident, the property will be made safe (using temporary measures if necessary) within five working days of the investigation.

Responding to suspected or alleged abuse or neglect

- 6.3 If we suspect abuse or have received a report of abuse we will:
- Ensure the managing agents safeguarding lead refer any concerns over the abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult to Children's or adult services in the first instance and where appropriate, the Police if there is a suspected or actual crime.
 - Cooperate with local authorities' safeguarding boards and multi agency partnerships
 - Enter into and comply with local authority information sharing protocols where they exist. Where possible a person's consent should be sought to share information, but full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when the responsibility to safeguard the adult or child at risk is greater than the responsibility to the individual.
 - Record any discussions and actions carried out following suspected or alleged abuse or neglect accurately, thoroughly and promptly.
 - Fully co-operate with any agencies involved with cases of alleged abuse or neglect.
 - Work with other agencies to investigate any alleged breach of tenancy agreement and take action through policies and procedures where appropriate.

- Monitor all reports of suspected or known abuse, their management and resolution.
- Report it to Habitare. Staff will not investigate suspected abuse or neglect. Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is a complex area which must be dealt with by the appropriate agencies and channels.

Staff training, recruitment and conduct

- 6.4 All members of staff who have regular contact with vulnerable adults and/or children will be subject to employment checks and Criminal Records Bureau / Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) checks, where appropriate.
- 6.5 All contractors and subcontractors should have a safeguarding policy in place or be willing to work in accordance with this policy. As part of their induction, all appropriate staff including those employed by contractors and sub contractors will be required to read and understand all relevant policies and procedures provided, including this policy. All appropriate staff will be trained in the implications and processes involved with the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children and will be trained in how to identify signs of abuse and neglect. Where a person suspected of abuse or neglect is a member of staff, a disciplinary investigation will be carried out immediately.
- 6.6 If a member of staff suspects that any other member of staff is involved in abuse or neglect, they should report this immediately through the whistleblowing policy.

7 | Monitoring and Performance

- 7.1 The board of directors of Habitare has overall responsibility for this policy.
- 7.2 This policy will be reviewed annually or when there is a change in circumstances or the introduction of new legislation. Any safeguarding cases raised will be reported to the next board meeting.

Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
December 2023	New Policy Implemented	V1.0
October 2024	Policy updated and annual review cycle included	V2.0
October 2025	Included reference to Awaabs Law and Building Safety Policy	V3.0