



Vulnerable Residents Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 LRHA recognise that residents at the start of, or during their tenancy will face personal, social, or health-related challenges that can affect their ability to manage their housing independently.

1.2 As a responsible housing provider, we are committed to creating inclusive, safe, and supportive communities where all residents regardless of their circumstances can thrive.

2. The aims of this Policy are to ensure that:

2.1 Residents with specific vulnerabilities, whether long-term or temporary, can access services, feel safe, and sustain their tenancies, while providing staff with a framework to offer tailored support and reasonable adjustments.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 This policy outlines our commitment to identifying, supporting, and empowering vulnerable residents across all tenures including applicants, current residents, shared owners, and a resident's household members who may require additional support to sustain the tenancy. It applies to both general needs and supported housing.

4. Policy Objectives

4.1 Our approach to identifying and supporting vulnerable residents is to ensure that all services provided by LRHA:

4.1.1 Are equitable, with equal access to services and the same service level for all general needs and shared ownership residents.

4.1.2 Are delivered in cooperation, referring to funding and specialist support opportunities with third parties, and public services, where applicable.

4.2 LRHA will work collaboratively with residents, carers, advocates, and partner agencies, aiming to remove barriers, promote independence, and sustain tenancies.

5. Definition of Vulnerability

5.1 A vulnerable resident is *'An individual who, due to specific characteristics or exceptional life events, is currently unable to act independently or manage their housing without additional support'*. The vulnerability may arise from (limited examples):

- 5.1.1 Bereavement or trauma.
- 5.1.2 Age, disability, or long-term illness.
- 5.1.3 Mental health condition.
- 5.1.4 Domestic abuse or violence.

6. Identifying and Defining Vulnerability

6.1 It is not possible to list all the possible factors or circumstances in an individual's life, environment and experiences that contribute to them being unable to manage their housing or how multiple factors present may affect each other.

6.2 However, this section details common factors to take into consideration when considering a resident's state of vulnerability and in planning actions.

6.3 **Underlying characteristics** - residents in these groups may not always require additional support just because of this characteristic:

- 6.3.1 Older people (particularly those 75 years or older).
- 6.3.2 16 – 21-year-olds.
- 6.3.3 Very young children and babies (particularly those 2 years old or under).
- 6.3.4 Disabled people.
- 6.3.5 Care leavers.
- 6.3.6 Lone parents under 21 years old.
- 6.3.7 Refugees or asylum seekers.
- 6.3.8 Carers.
- 6.3.9 Families with disabled children.
- 6.3.10 Ex service personnel.
- 6.3.11 Those living with a terminal illness.

6.4 Ability to act, engage and cope - residents may lack ability because of having one or more of these factors:

- 6.4.1 Learning disability.
- 6.4.2 Mental illness.
- 6.4.3 Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- 6.4.4 Permanently impaired mobility or frailness.
- 6.4.5 Chronic, debilitating health conditions.
- 6.4.6 Addiction/serious substance or alcohol abuse.
- 6.4.7 Low level of literacy.
- 6.4.8 Low or no English language skills.
- 6.4.9 Age related conditions that impact independent living.

6.5 Exceptional life events - residents may have recently experienced an exceptional or traumatic event and so may be vulnerable at this point in time:

- 6.5.1 Recent history of street homelessness.
- 6.5.2 Recently moved from supported accommodation to independent living.
- 6.5.3 Bereavement following the death of a partner, child, or other close relationship.
- 6.5.4 Having recently left care as a young person.
- 6.5.5 Sexual or racist abuse or serious harassment or other hate crime.
- 6.5.6 Recent experience of domestic violence.
- 6.5.7 Living in or recently left a refuge or homeless persons' hostel.
- 6.5.8 Recently discharged from hospital or other institutional care.
- 6.5.9 Periods of sustained physical or mental illness at home.
- 6.5.10 Multiple debts and unable to meet basic needs e.g. fuel or food poverty.
- 6.5.11 Pregnant women.
- 6.5.12 Recently given birth, still born or miscarried.
- 6.5.13 Recently released from prison after a custodial sentence.
- 6.5.14 Families with children excluded from school.
- 6.5.15 Ex-service personnel returning from area of conflict.

7. Supporting Vulnerable Residents

7.1 LRHA offer a range of support including, including:

- 7.1.1 Managing our vulnerable resident tenancies in line with LRHA's Corporate Value of Caring.
- 7.1.2 Record any vulnerabilities and ensure records are kept up to date.

- 7.1.3 Recording all vulnerability indicators in our systems.
- 7.1.4 Use available data and observations from telephone and home visits to proactively recognise vulnerability.
- 7.1.5 Take account of vulnerability when delivering services and make reasonable adjustments.
- 7.1.6 Record any delegated authority and permission to disclose.
- 7.1.7 Collaborating with external agencies and third parties (e.g., social services, mental health teams, advocates, legal representatives).
- 7.1.8 Offering flexible appointments and joint visits with carers or advocates.
- 7.1.9 In person sign up meetings for new homes.
- 7.1.10 Assisting residents with general household budget setting.
- 7.1.11 Assisting with maximising the income of residents.
- 7.1.12 Offering one-off financial assistance such as the Resident Support Fund.
- 7.1.13 Providing tailored repayment plans for rent arrears.
- 7.1.14 Undertaking wellbeing calls and visits during the tenancy.
- 7.1.15 Install a key safe for resident use for carers or family providing support.
- 7.1.16 Considering vulnerability before initiating enforcement action.
- 7.1.17 Varying the communication methods to make communication and engagement easier for vulnerable residents.
- 7.1.18 Training staff to act in the spirit of the Vulnerability Policy and ensure that they are trained and able to undertake informed referrals to third parties on behalf of residents.
- 7.1.19 Undertaking internal RADAR meetings periodically to ensure all members of staff are informed about vulnerable residents, including those that are considered complex cases.

8. Communication and Access

8.1 LRHA commit to:

- 8.1.1 Asking about communication needs during the sign-up meetings and periodically throughout the tenancy.
- 8.1.2 Providing information in accessible formats (e.g., large print, Braille, translations).
- 8.1.3 Accepting correspondence via authorised representatives (e.g., carers, advocates).
- 8.1.4 Building close relationships with our residents to minimise issues around difficulty of access.
- 8.1.5 Recruiting, training and retaining staff who are capable of acting in a caring manner, and able to communicate with all residents, including those who have vulnerabilities in a positive manner.

9. Allocation and Occupancy Sustainment

9.1 When undertaking the allocation process for our homes, LRHA will:

- 9.1.1 Consider vulnerabilities of individuals (and members of their households who may be vulnerable) to ensure suitability of the housing and that it is appropriate for the proposed residents.
- 9.1.2 Request supporting evidence for special housing needs.
- 9.1.3 Ensure residents fully understand their rights and responsibilities at the start of the tenancy and periodically during the tenancy.
- 9.1.4 Ensure that vulnerable residents understand that failure to comply with the terms and responsibilities of the tenancy agreement may mean that they could be evicted.

9.2 During the allocation process, LRHA will review any information it receives in respect of vulnerability to help colleagues ensure that any offer of housing is right for the individual and their family, as a commitment to longer-term tenancy sustainment.

9.3 For transfers or special housing requests where vulnerability is a determining factor, LRHA may require confirmation from a medical professional or other appropriate support agency of the resident's circumstances before a decision is made in line with LRHA's Allocations and Lettings Policy.

9.4 When LRHA lets a new home, there will be a sign-up meeting conducted in person to ensure the new resident fully understands the tenancy agreement and their responsibilities including the Good Neighbour Agreement, and a sign-up meeting at the home to induct the new resident on key areas such as operating the heating systems.

9.5 LRHA staff will actively solicit information regarding any vulnerabilities including any existing support or care services in place. Where appropriate referrals can be made to specialist third parties for other support services.

10. Repairs, Servicing and Safe Access

10.1 LRHA recognises that vulnerable residents may find it more difficult to cope if something goes wrong in their home and they need a repair. When a resident contacts LRHA to request a repair, the Repairs Team will confirm if there are any disabilities, support needs or exceptional circumstances regarding the resident to be taken into account. These circumstances will be recorded on the housing management system, and the resident will be recorded on the Vulnerable Resident Register.

10.2 This information will be used to personalise the service provided by each member of staff at each stage of the service provided so that it is appropriate and aligned to the needs of the individual. There are reasonable adjustments that can be made including, but not limited to:

10.2.1 Recording support needs during repair requests

10.2.2 Offering flexible appointment scheduling.

10.2.3 Arranging joint visits with carers or advocates, when appropriate.

10.3 If there is a risk of abusive behaviour or other risk factors regarding a particular resident, LRHA will maintain records of residents where it is deemed a two-person visit is required to mitigate the identified known risk.

10.4 LRHA will cooperate with its Approved Contractors and where required provide a member of staff to be a second person attending home visits to ensure contractors are able to complete the instructed works.

11. Anti-Social Behaviour

11.1 LRHA will always prioritise the investigation into abuse, hate crimes and harassment. These are criminal behaviours so LRHA will also work closely with the Police to support residents who experience these as well as those who are victimised or taken advantage of because of a disability or other vulnerability.

11.2 LRHA recognises that some residents may act in an anti-social way due to behaviours related to their vulnerability, and LRHA will try to engage them and relevant support services to improve the situation before taking any tenancy enforcement action.

11.3 However, LRHA have to balance the safety and wellbeing of neighbouring residents along with the wellbeing of the vulnerable ASB perpetrator in considering the most appropriate response.

12. Mental Capacity

12.1 In line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, LRHA will liaise with those agencies or parties that have legal authority to act on behalf of its services users, or advocate or client, who lack capacity. This may be a representative who has or is, a/an:

12.1.1 Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA).

12.1.2 Deputyship Order from the Court of Protection.

12.1.3 Litigation friend appointed in Court proceedings if the resident lacks capacity to litigate.

12.1.4 Appointee appointed by the DWP to manage a person's benefits if they lack capacity.

12.1.5 Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) commissioned by the local authority who are appointed where a person aged 16 or over lacks ability to act to decide for themselves where to live and has no-one, such as a friend, relative, attorney or deputy to advise or support them.

12.2 LRHA will cooperate with all third parties, where circumstances are clear a breach of a tenancy agreement has occurred e.g. an unoccupied tenancy, alternative actions will be considered.

12.3 Each individual circumstance will be considered by the Management Team, and a course of action decided.

13. Aids and Adaptations

13.1 LRHA is committed to tenancy sustainment for residents whose needs may change over time and require aids or adaptations from a handrail for support to the installation of a wetroom facility.

13.2 A budget is available annually for minor adaptations or aids such as a handrail, with the majority of works completed by the Property Maintenance Service.

13.3 If a major adaptation is required, then staff will support the resident through the process to access a Disabled Facility Grant from their local authority.

14. Training

- 14.1 All LRHA staff members will receive annual mandatory training on this policy, and related areas such as safeguarding, domestic abuse and suicide prevention.
- 14.2 The training will equip LRHA staff with the skills and knowledge to confidently meet the requirements of this Policy and to make informed referrals.
- 14.3 Approved contractors and others delivering services on behalf of LRHA will undertake training on this Policy and safeguarding to ensure they can recognise and respond appropriately to residents who they believe are vulnerable, to liaise with the Resident Engagement Team to agree to amend their standard approach to still deliver the service instructed.

15. Legislation, Statutory Regulatory Standards and References

- 15.1 This policy is in accordance with the following legislation and regulatory standards:
 - 15.1.1 Equality Act 2010
 - 15.1.2 Mental Capacity Act 2005
 - 15.1.3 Human Rights Act 1998
 - 15.1.4 Data Protection Act 2018
 - 15.1.5 Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
 - 15.1.6 Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024
 - 15.1.7 Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- 15.2 This policy is in accordance with the Consumer Standards Code of Practice April 2024 and relevant to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard required outcomes 1.1.1 and 1.2.1, and specific expectations 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4.
 - 2.1.1 Registered Providers must use relevant information and data to:
 - a) Understand the diverse needs of tenants, including those arising from protected characteristics, language barriers, and additional support needs.
 - b) Assess whether their housing and landlord services deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants.
 - 2.1.2 Registered providers must ensure that communication with and information for tenants is clear, accessible, relevant, timely and appropriate to the diverse needs of tenants.

- 2.1.3 Registered providers must ensure that landlord services are accessible, and that the accessibility is publicised to tenants. This includes supporting tenants and prospective tenants to use online landlord services if required.
- 2.1.4 Registered providers must allow tenants and prospective tenants to be supported by a representative or advocate in interactions about landlord services

15.3 Tenancy Standard required outcomes 1.3.1 and specific outcomes 2.3.1.

- 2.3.1 Registered Providers shall publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions, and tackling tenancy fraud, and set out:
 - g) Their policy on taking into account the needs of those households who are vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children, including through the provision of tenancies which provide a reasonable degree of stability.
 - i) Their policy on granting discretionary succession rights, taking account of the needs of vulnerable household members.

16. Equality and Diversity

- 16.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.
- 16.2 LRHA respects and values the differences between our residents, partners and staff and we will treat everyone we work with fairly, and with respect. This policy has been considered in light of LRHA's equality and diversity policy and is compliant with its principles.
- 16.3 We will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will adapt our process or make reasonable adjustments to accommodate an individual's needs wherever possible and reasonable.

17. Monitoring and Review

17.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. A review may be conducted earlier if there are significant changes to either legislation or LRHA's operating practices.

18. Associated Documents / Policies

18.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- 18.1.1 Adaptations Policy
- 18.1.2 Allocations and Lettings Policy
- 18.1.3 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- 18.1.4 Complaints Policy
- 18.1.5 Domestic Abuse Policy for Residents
- 18.1.6 Safeguarding Policy
- 18.1.7 Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
- 18.1.8 Vulnerable Resident Register

18.2 Copies of these policies are available on SharePoint and will also be covered as part of the induction process of both new staff and Board Members, where appropriate.

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