

Title of policy:	Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children's Policy
Version:	1.7.1
Purpose:	To set out North Star's commitment and approach to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children
Updated:	September 2026
Next review:	September 2028
Previous Reviews:	September 2022, September 2024, September 2025 (incorporating Ofsted requirements) September 2026 (incorporating Information Sharing Duties)
Approved By:	Head Of Supported Housing
Endorsed by:	North Star Safeguarding Group
Executive Lead for Safeguarding	Executive Director of Customers – Carole Richardson

1.0 POLICY APPROVAL

This policy has been approved and endorsed by North Star's Senior Leadership Team

The Executive Director responsible for Safeguarding holds overall accountability for ensuring safeguarding arrangements comply with legislation, statutory guidance, local authority requirements and safeguarding partnership procedures.

2.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy sets out how North Star employees and anyone acting on our behalf, including contractors, volunteers, students, agency workers and managing agents, understand the obligations placed upon us to maintain a safe environment for our customers and employees.

North Star provides services to a wide range of individuals and organisations and recognises that some customers will be vulnerable adults and children. We have a

responsibility to identify, record and report safeguarding concerns where abuse, neglect or exploitation is suspected.

This policy is mandatory for all employees, directors, volunteers, contractors, students, agency workers, managing agents and any person acting on behalf of North Star.

This policy is supported by separate Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children Procedures which provide detailed referral pathways and operational guidance.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

North Star is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults and children.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that all children and adults have the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.

We are committed to:

- Creating an environment where abuse is not tolerated.
- Promoting the wellbeing, safety and welfare of children and adults.
- Acting promptly when concerns arise.
- Working in partnership with statutory agencies.
- Ensuring staff are appropriately trained.
- Learning from safeguarding incidents and reviews.
- Embedding safeguarding throughout the organisation.

We expect all managing agents, contractors and partners working on our behalf to maintain safeguarding arrangements that are consistent with this policy.

North Star will actively participate in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements including case conferences, strategy discussions, child protection meetings, safeguarding enquiries and safeguarding reviews where appropriate.

North Star Safeguarding policy is published on our website, is accessible internally via our intranet and available in hard copy within each supported housing scheme.

4.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Children Act 1989

- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Supported Accommodation Regulations 2023

This policy should be read alongside:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Procedure
- Safeguarding Children Procedure

5.0 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

5.1 Care Act Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Care Act 2014, Care and Support Statutory Guidance and Local Safeguarding Adults Board Multi-Agency Policies and Procedures.

Staff must follow Local Safeguarding Adults Board procedures when responding to safeguarding concerns.

Copies of safeguarding procedures can be accessed via:

- Internal systems
- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Line Managers
- Hard copies available upon request

5.2 Definition of an Adult at Risk

An adult safeguarding duty applies where a person:

- Has needs for care and support;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- Is unable to protect themselves because of those care and support needs.

5.3 Six Principles of Adult Safeguarding

Empowerment

People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions.

Prevention

Taking action before harm occurs.

Proportionality

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk.

Protection

Support for those most at risk.

Partnership

Working with communities and partner agencies.

Accountability

Transparency and accountability in safeguarding practice.

5.4 Categories of Adult Abuse

North Star recognises ten categories of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint and physical sanctions.

Domestic Abuse

Including coercive control, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Rape, sexual assault, inappropriate touching, grooming and sexual exploitation.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

Threats, intimidation, humiliation, harassment, coercion and cyber bullying.

Financial or Material Abuse

Fraud, theft, financial exploitation and misuse of benefits or property.

Modern Slavery

Human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.

Discriminatory Abuse

Abuse on the grounds of age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or other protected characteristics.

Organisational Abuse

Poor care practice within services or institutions.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

Failure to provide appropriate care, treatment or support.

Self-Neglect

Failure to care for personal hygiene, health or living conditions.

5.5 Mental Capacity

North Star will comply with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

We will apply the five statutory principles:

- Presumption of capacity
- Support to make decisions
- Respect for unwise decisions
- Best interests
- Least restrictive option

6.0 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**6.1 Children's Safeguarding Framework**

North Star's safeguarding arrangements are developed in accordance with:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Supported Accommodation Regulations 2023
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures

All staff must act in accordance with local safeguarding partnership procedures.

6.2 Definition of a Child

For safeguarding purposes, a child is any person under the age of 18 years.

6.3 Categories of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical harm caused through deliberate actions.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment affecting development.

Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet basic physical and emotional needs.

Additional Safeguarding Risks

North Star recognises:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines
- Online Abuse
- Radicalisation
- Domestic Abuse
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based Abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Peer-on-Peer Abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Human Trafficking

6.4 Online Safety

Young people can be exposed to harmful online content, contact, conduct and commerce-based risks.

Staff must report online safeguarding concerns through safeguarding reporting procedures.

6.5 Self Harm and Suicide

North Star recognises that self-harm and suicidal ideation can be safeguarding concerns.

Staff will take all disclosures, indicators or concerns seriously and will report concerns immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.

6.6 Bullying

North Star believes all children and young people have the right to be protected from bullying.

We will:

- Promote positive behaviour
- Challenge bullying behaviours
- Provide support to those affected
- Investigate and respond appropriately to concerns

6.7 Missing Children

North Star recognises that children who go missing may be at increased risk of exploitation, abuse, criminal activity or significant harm.

Any child reported as missing will be responded to immediately in accordance with local authority missing procedures and safeguarding partnership guidance.

All incidents will be recorded, reported and reviewed.

6.8 Child-Centred Practice

North Star is committed to ensuring the wishes, feelings, views and lived experiences of children are sought, listened to and considered when safeguarding decisions are made.

Children will be supported to express their views and participate in decisions affecting them wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

North Star recognises that abuse can occur outside the home and within peer groups, schools, neighbourhoods, online environments and community settings.

Safeguarding assessments will consider the wider context in which harm may occur.

6.9 Anti Racist and Anti Discriminatory Practice

Staff will recognise and challenge discrimination, racism, bias and barriers which may affect safeguarding assessments, decision making or access to support.

6.10 Unborn Children

Safeguarding concerns may relate to unborn children where professionals believe there is a risk of harm after birth. Appropriate referrals should be made in line with local procedures.

7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board

Provides oversight and assurance regarding safeguarding arrangements.

Executive Director Responsible for Safeguarding

Provides strategic leadership and assurance of safeguarding compliance.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Responsible for:

- Advice and guidance
- Referrals
- Partnership working
- Safeguarding records
- Monitoring and reporting
- Staff support

Managers

- Ensure concerns are reported.
- Support staff.
- Monitor safeguarding practice.
- Ensure training compliance.

Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and Agency Workers

Must:

- Remain vigilant.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Comply with this policy.
- Attend safeguarding training.

Staff are expected to exercise professional curiosity and respectfully explore situations where information received does not appear consistent with a person's circumstances, behaviour, presentation or wellbeing.

Staff must escalate concerns where they believe a safeguarding response is inadequate or where risks remain unresolved.

Housing staff are often professionals who will often access a property due to new or ongoing concerns which include and are not limited to:

- General Home visits
- Tenancy breaches
- Domestic abuse incidents
- Anti-social behaviour investigations
- Hoarding
- Unsafe living conditions
- Adults posing risks to children in accommodation

These visits may trigger curiosity or concerns in relation to a child and the environment in which they live or frequent. Safeguarding concerns in these instances must be considered and reported accordingly.

Learning and Continuous Improvement

North Star will review safeguarding incidents, complaints, near misses and learning reviews to identify opportunities for improvement.

Lessons learned will be shared with staff and incorporated into policy, procedures, training and service delivery.

8.0 TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

Training

All staff, volunteers and agency workers receive safeguarding training during induction.

Current programme:

Training	Frequency
Adult Safeguarding Level 1	Every 2 years
Child Safeguarding Level 1	Every 2 years
Domestic Abuse Awareness	Every 2 years
Prevent Awareness	Every 2 years

Safeguarding leads and Safeguarding Group members receive enhanced safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Managers are responsible for ensuring staff receive regular safeguarding supervision, reflective practice opportunities and support following safeguarding incidents.

Complex safeguarding concerns may be subject to case discussions or management review.

Safer Recruitment

North Star operates safer recruitment practices including:

- DBS checks appropriate to role
- Identity verification
- Employment history checks
- Right to work checks
- Qualification checks where applicable
- Professional references
- Risk assessments where relevant

9.0 RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

When abuse is disclosed, suspected or witnessed, staff must:

DO

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the individual.
- Record accurately.
- Report immediately.

DO NOT

- Promise confidentiality.
- Ask leading questions.
- Investigate independently.
- Contact the alleged perpetrator.
- Delay reporting.

10.0 REPORTING AND REFERRALS

Adult Safeguarding

Where an adult safeguarding concern is identified:

1. Ensure immediate safety.
2. Contact emergency services if required.
3. Notify a manager or safeguarding lead.
4. Complete a safeguarding concern record.
5. Refer to the Local Authority if threshold criteria are met.
6. Record all decisions and actions.

Child Safeguarding

Where concerns arise about a child:

1. Ensure immediate safety.
2. Contact emergency services if necessary.
3. Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
4. Record the concern.
5. Refer to Children's Social Care where appropriate.
6. Record outcomes and actions.

All safeguarding concerns, referrals and decisions not to refer must be recorded.

North Star recognises that providing support at the earliest opportunity can prevent concerns from escalating.

North Star supports the provision of Early Help and will work with partner agencies to identify and support children and families before concerns escalate.

Where appropriate, staff will work with children, families and partner agencies to access Early Help services and support packages.

11.0 RECORDING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

All safeguarding concerns will be:

- Recorded promptly
- Factually documented
- Stored securely
- Treated confidentially
- Monitored by the Safeguarding Group

Records must include:

- Date and time
- Nature of concern
- Individual involved

- Action taken
- Referral details
- Outcome

12.0 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF, VOLUNTEERS OR CONTRACTORS

Any allegation involving an employee, volunteer, agency worker, contractor or student must be reported immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead and senior manager.

The allegation must not be investigated internally before seeking appropriate advice.

Where concerns indicate that an individual may have:

- Harmed a child;
- Committed an offence against a child; or
- Behaved in a manner suggesting they may present a risk to children;

the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted.

13.0 SAFEGUARDING GROUP

North Star maintains a Safeguarding Group.

The group will:

- Monitor safeguarding activity
- Review cases
- Identify themes and trends
- Share learning
- Support safeguarding leads
- Review policies
- Monitor referrals
- Promote best practice

14.0 PREVENT

North Star recognises that some adults and young people may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

All frontline staff receive Prevent awareness training and understand how to identify and report concerns.

15.0 INFORMATION SHARING

North Star will share information lawfully and proportionately where safeguarding concerns arise.

Information may be shared without consent where:

- There is a safeguarding concern;
- Sharing is necessary to prevent harm; or
- Legal obligations require disclosure.

North Star recognises its responsibilities under the Information Sharing Duty introduced under the Children Act 2004.

Where staff hold information relevant to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of a child, they will share that information with appropriate agencies where doing so may assist safeguarding activity.

Staff should not delay sharing information where a child may be at risk of harm.

Parental consent is not required where there is a lawful safeguarding basis to share information.

16.0 WHISTLEBLOWING

Any person who believes safeguarding concerns are not being appropriately addressed may raise concerns through North Star's Whistleblowing Policy.

Individuals will be supported to report concerns in good faith without fear of victimisation.

17.0 MONITORING

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Safeguarding Group.

Safeguarding activity will be reviewed through:

- Referrals analysis
- Case reviews
- Complaints
- Learning reviews
- Risk management processes

An annual safeguarding report will be provided to the Board.

18.0 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed:

- At least every two years;
- Following legislative changes;
- Following changes to statutory guidance;
- Following safeguarding reviews;
- Following significant incidents;
- Following audit recommendations.

Next Review Date: **September 2028**

19.0 COMPLAINTS

Anyone who believes they have been treated unfairly in relation to safeguarding matters may utilise North Star's Complaints Procedure.