

Safeguarding children policy

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Policy Owner	Executive Director of Customer Services
Other related documents	<p>Customer Strategy</p> <p>settles safeguarding toolkit</p> <p>Recruitment policy and procedures</p> <p>Common Housing Allocations Policy</p> <p>Arrears Policy</p> <p>ASB Policy</p> <p>Domestic Abuse Policy</p> <p>Complaints Policy</p> <p>Colleagues code of Conduct</p> <p>Whistleblowing policy</p> <p>Disciplinary Procedure</p> <p>Vulnerable Customers Policy</p> <p>Temporary Accommodation Policy</p> <p>Government guidance “Working together to safeguard children 2018”</p>

Policy statement

At settle, our purpose is to help people who are struggling to find a place to live. We help our customers to stay in their homes comfortably, so that they can live the life they choose. This policy sets out settle's responsibilities to safeguarding children to ensure all colleagues are clear on our moral and legal obligations.

settle has a duty of care to protect children and young people from abuse or neglect. Every child has the right to feel safe and to be protected from any situation or practice that could result in them being significantly harmed. All settle colleagues have a responsibility for the safeguarding of children. All colleagues, contractors and Board members are responsible for the safety and welfare of children living in our homes who may be at risk which includes reporting suspected cases of abuse, neglect or risk as soon as they identify a concern.

The government guidance 'Working together to safeguard children 2018', The Children's Act 2004 and section 213A of the Housing Act set out duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children living in our homes. settle has in place reporting channels to support individuals who need to raise a concern. If child protection meetings take place colleagues involved in the case are expected to attend.

We will continue to raise awareness of our child safeguarding responsibilities with training delivered to all colleagues.

This policy seeks to improve our collaborative working with partner agencies and increase the referrals made to these partners. Colleagues can often fall into the habit of continuing to work on a case due to a lack of support from other agencies or due to pressure to try and support with multiple issues. Improving consistency on how and when we refer cases to external agencies is a measure of success for this policy.

Key principles

- Safeguarding and protecting children is the shared responsibility of both settle and partner agencies. Children are safeguarded most effectively when partners cooperate with one another and share information appropriately.
- Allegations of abuse or neglect made by children, family members, residents, colleagues or partner agencies must always be prioritised and taken seriously.
- Leadership responsibility at a senior level for our safeguarding arrangements including representation on the Local Safeguarding Board.
- Meet obligations as set out in the government guidance 'Working together to safeguard children 2018'
- Be responsive and adaptable to changes in the way services are delivered by partner agencies
- Seek solutions with partner agencies to safeguard children; taking action before harm occurs
- Maintain knowledge on any legislative changes that impact on our obligations to deliver services
- Ensure any high-profile cases where risks were not managed in other organisations are made known to colleagues

- Apply learning from casework and reviews to implement changes as identified.

Policy Actions

- Meet our legal obligations set out in the Children’s Act 2004 and Working together to safeguard children guidance 2018; responding to any emergency changes to this legislation or guidance as needed
- Gather and use data to support a preventative approach to protecting children from harm aiming to mitigate risk before it escalates.
- All settle leaders take responsibility for ensuring their teams understand their legal and moral duties and are confident to report concerns
- Manage and report safeguarding issues relating to children living in our homes who may be at risk of abuse neglect or harm
- Take appropriate action against perpetrators of abuse where possible to do so
- Prevent the obstruction (wilful or unintentional) to the healthy development and wellbeing of children living in our homes
- Evidence learning and improvement from incidents and case reviews including any cases where risks were not managed in other organisations
- Identify and access appropriate support for children and young people with a focus on the child when making decisions about their lives. Work in partnership with them and their families
- Annual refresher training to ensure colleagues understand child safeguarding obligations
- Recruitment processes follow the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations and checks for specific roles that work closely with children are carried out.
- Take prompt action to ensure vulnerable children living in our homes have a safe physical environment and that the appropriate care is in place, so they have the best quality of life possible.
- Assessment and action should be collaboratively sought with specialist agencies, supported by established contacts with lead link officers in relevant agencies and the seconded community mental health worker.
- Provide regular safeguarding reporting detailing any extraordinary risk to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group
- Have regard for other key legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Care Act 2014

Desired outcomes

- Increase on existing number of referrals into external agencies (supported by clear referral pathways) which will improve the number of cases where children are being supported by agencies appropriately placed; and who can work with settle to support families to sustain tenancies.
- Referring cases at an earlier stage to external partners so that children’s’ risk of harm is reduced, and they receive support more promptly once we become aware of a safeguarding concern. Measured through case average time being reduced - 187 days for 2022/23

- An increased number of internal referrals achieved through greater awareness raising and training delivered to frontline colleagues. Improves outcomes for children through more colleagues being able to identify concerns and refer promptly and appropriately.
- Capacity to work on a higher number of cases (16 cases for 2022/23), supporting more families in the process and increasing the number of referrals to other agencies
- Increase the number of home visits completed by neighbourhood services – leading to earlier intervention and helping to mitigate the risk of abuse, harm, and neglect to vulnerable children

Performance indicators

- 100% of colleagues will have regular training at the appropriate level for their role
- Increased number of potential concerns being raised
- Increased number of external referrals to partner agencies
- Child safeguarding data contributes to customer insight - regular reporting on levels and types of customer vulnerability
- All reports and outcomes of child safeguarding monitored and reviewed. Where the risk to the child is deemed serious or where its identified service delivery has failed to highlight or act on a safeguarding issue and internal case review will be undertaken by a designated Safeguarding Officer
- All case reviews will be undertaken by designated safeguarding leads where it is identified that service delivery has failed to prevent a safeguarding issue.
- Colleague handling of cases will be reviewed by their line manager and missed opportunities or failures will be acted on in performance management meetings and reported to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group.
- Feedback from customers and other agencies will be factored into any changes to our approach.

Key legislation

Children's Act 1989- 2004

Working together to safeguard children 2018

Equality Act 2010

Homeless Reduction Act 2017

GDPR Regulation 2018

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or when there is a business need or change in legislation.