



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Owner	Chief Customer Officer
Directorate	Customer
Authorising body	Board
Resident involvement	Yes
EIA	Yes
Published	July 2026
Next Review	July 2029
Review frequency	3 years (triennial)
Version	V1

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** At Eastlight Community Homes (hereafter ‘Eastlight’), we take our responsibility to ensure the safety of children and young people seriously. We are firmly committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who may be at risk of harm.
- 1.2** We believe that safeguarding is a collective responsibility, and everyone at Eastlight plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety of children.
- 1.3** We understand the importance of working together with local authorities and services to protect children and young people. We work closely with Local Safeguarding Children partners who coordinate multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across each local area. Eastlight is committed to complying with their frameworks and meeting all legal, statutory and regulatory requirements under UK law.
- 1.4** This Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy outlines how Eastlight safeguards children and young people at risk of harm, abuse or neglect. We have clear safeguarding procedures in place and provide specialised training to support our commitment.

2. Scope

- 2.1** This Policy applies to all children and young people living in or visiting an Eastlight home.
- 2.2** It applies to all Eastlight colleagues, Board and Committee members, contractors, sub-contractors, agency staff, or other people that work for us or carry out responsibilities on our behalf and by our instructions.
- 2.3** Everyone at Eastlight (including those identified in 2.2) shares responsibility for safeguarding children and must promptly act on concerns of abuse and/or neglect.

3. Statutory & Regulatory Requirements

- 3.1** This Policy is designed to ensure Eastlight meets its obligations under the following statutory and regulatory requirements:
 - Care Act 2014 (and Care & Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Act)
 - Sexual Offences Act 2003
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Children & Young Persons Act 2008
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
 - Children Act 1989 and 2004
 - Children & Social Work Act 2017

- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010.

4. Think Customer

- 4.1** At Eastlight, we exist to provide the best possible homes and services for residents.
- 4.2** Our 'Think Customer' approach aims to guide and support colleagues whenever they make decisions that affect our residents, directly or indirectly.
- 4.3** 'Think Customer' ensures our people fully consider how residents will experience and be impacted by the service we provide. Before acting, our people must think about:
- The short and long-term effects of their actions
 - The residents' individual needs and preferences
 - Whether their communication is clear, respectful and appropriate
 - If they can draw on any past insights or experiences to help them when making tough decisions
 - Whether they, themselves, would be happy with the service being provided.
- 4.4** The 'Think Customer' model is designed to complement and work alongside all Eastlight policies and procedures, including this Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy.

5. Our Guiding Principles

- 5.1** Eastlight applies the principles of safeguarding children to our everyday practice, as defined in the Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance. These are:
- **Empowerment** – Supporting and encouraging people so they can make their own decisions and consent
 - **Prevention** – Taking action before harm occurs
 - **Proportionality** – Responding in a way that is appropriate to the risk presented and least intrusive
 - **Protection** – Providing support and representation for those in greatest need
 - **Partnerships** – Finding local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
 - **Accountability** – Ensuring accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

- 5.2** Although the Care Act 2014 primarily relates to adults, the principals also support good safeguarding practice for children and young people.
- 5.3** We will take a child-centred approach to safeguarding, prioritising children’s needs when making decisions about their lives, and working in partnership with them and their families.

6. Definitions

6.1 Children

- 6.1.1 In England, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday and is therefore considered inherently vulnerable.

6.2 Care Leavers

- 6.2.1 The Children Act 1989 places duties on local authorities towards ‘looked after’ and ‘previously looked after’ children as they exit the care system.
- 6.2.2 The Children Act 2004 further developed the principles in the Children Act 1989, including outlining the responsibilities of those working with children to help safeguard children and promote their welfare.
- 6.2.3 All children over the age of 16 and leaving care fall into one of the below categories:
- Eligible child
 - Relevant child
 - Former relevant child
 - Other qualifying care leavers.
- 6.2.4 If, at the age of 21, the young person is still being helped by the responsible authority with education or training, then they remain a ‘former relevant child’ until a maximum age of 25. A programme of education or training will be set out within their Pathway Plan.
- 6.3** Eastlight considers a safeguarding concern where a child is suspected to be experiencing:
- Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Emotional or psychological abuse
 - Neglect and acts of omission
 - Online abuse
 - Child sexual exploitation
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Bullying and cyberbullying
 - Domestic abuse
 - Child trafficking
 - Grooming

- Child criminal exploitation (including County Lines).

7. Reporting Concerns of Abuse

- 7.1** All Eastlight colleagues have a mandatory obligation to report any incident of alleged, suspected or witnessed abuse promptly, including taking appropriate action.
- 7.2** If someone suspects that a child is being abused by another member of staff, they should raise the concern to their Head of Service, Operational/Strategic Lead or the People Team immediately. Serious allegations against colleagues will also be reported to the Executive Team and the Board.
- 7.3** Accurate and timely record-keeping is essential when managing allegations of abuse. (Please see the Safeguarding Children Procedure for details).

8. Roles & Responsibilities

8.1 Eastlight Staff

8.1.1 All colleagues are expected to:

- Complete safeguarding training as required by the organisation
- Be vigilant for signs of abuse and neglect
- Report all suspected cases of abuse or neglect, following the required procedures
- Be mindful of their actions and ensure these are appropriate
- Consider situations that may pose risks and manage them responsibly.

8.1.2 Eastlight's strategic and operational roles and responsibilities are as follows:

Board Lead

Eastlight will designate a Board Member to ensure the Board is given the necessary information to enable it to discharge its responsibilities and that safeguarding matters are properly considered at Board level.

Strategic Lead

The Head of Housing - Neighbourhoods and Head of Housing – Operations are responsible for providing oversight on Eastlight's approach to safeguarding and reporting to the Board. They are responsible for ensuring the service is compliant with our legal, statutory and regulatory requirements.

Operational Lead

The Intensive Housing Support Manager and Regional Neighbourhood Managers are responsible for the operational management and delivery of Eastlight's Safeguarding service.

Safeguarding Champions	Safeguarding champions are responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures regarding safeguarding are adhered to in their departments and that relevant concerns are appropriately raised.
Intensive Housing Support Coordinator Senior/Neighbourhood Lead	These teams within Housing Operations and Neighbourhoods are responsible for managing safeguarding concerns in line with our organisational procedures, including making referrals to the relevant local authorities.
Managers	All Eastlight Managers are responsible for ensuring their teams are aware of Eastlight’s safeguarding policies and procedures, and that they have completed mandatory safeguarding training. Managers are expected to discuss safeguarding regularly as part of 1:1s and team meetings to ensure awareness.
All Staff	All Eastlight staff are expected to report all cases of suspected abuse or neglect in line with Eastlight procedures. All staff are expected to attend Safeguarding training as and when required (frequency dependent on role).

8.2 Eastlight Contractors

- 8.2.1 Contractors working with Eastlight must follow the same expectations for reporting child safeguarding concerns as Eastlight colleagues.
- 8.2.2 Contractors are expected to undertake safeguarding training which will be provided by Eastlight as stipulated as part of the procurement process.

9. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

- 9.1 Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis to safeguard children at risk while respecting confidentiality laws and regulations.
- 9.2 Eastlight will ensure that our service supports the work of any statutory organisation involved in dealing with issues of neglect or abuse. This will include data sharing in line with relevant legislation, policy and protocols.
- 9.3 We will work closely with local Safeguarding Children Boards to share information and promote the safety and wellbeing of children at risk.

10. Review

- 10.1 Eastlight will formally review this Policy every three years or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, regulation or best practice, considering any changes and making amendments accordingly.

- 10.2** In addition, amendments considered of sufficient magnitude or importance will be implemented in between review dates, where appropriate.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

- 11.1** An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for this Policy was conducted. As a result, actions have been put in place to mitigate any negative impacts.

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