



Arawak Walton Housing Association

Vulnerabilities Management Policy 2023

Approved by	SMT
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Date issued to staff	7 th February 2024
E&D impact Assessed	September 2023
Date of Next Review	2025
Policy Ownership	Housing Services Manager
Strategic Bridges	Wider role in the community
Legal Review	September 2023
Version	1.0
Revision details	
Statement of Values	<p>We value people</p> <p>We rely on teamwork</p> <p>We are open and accountable</p>

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. This Policy aims to outline the procedures and guidelines for Arawak Walton Housing Association (AWHA) in managing tenants who may be vulnerable due to various factors such as physical or mental health issues, disabilities, age, or other circumstances. The policy ensures that AWHA provides appropriate support and safeguards to these tenants, promoting their well-being and ensuring their rights are protected.
- 1.2. This Policy will guide AWHA staff in ensuring that vulnerable tenants are supported to access our services and sustain their tenancy.

2. Identification of Vulnerable Tenants

- 2.1. This Policy focuses on tenants who are vulnerable but have capacity to make their own decisions. Where a tenant has been assessed as lacking, or is believed to lack, capacity to make decisions we will work with their appointed representative.
- 2.2. AWHA have established a system to identify vulnerable tenants during the application process and keep this up to date.
- 2.3. Use all available information to identify if a tenant is vulnerable.
- 2.4. AWHA recognise that vulnerability may not be constant, and may fluctuate dependent on circumstances, life events or other factors. For this reason, we will respond flexibly and appropriately to our tenant's needs.
- 2.5. AWHA maintain a confidential register of vulnerable tenants, ensuring that relevant staff members have access to this information on a need-to-know basis.

3. Support and Assistance

- 3.1. As a responsible social landlord, our overall objective is to ensure that our vulnerable tenants receive the services and assistance they require to sustain their tenancy. To achieve this, we aim to:
 - 3.1.1. Provide appropriate support and assistance to vulnerable tenants, considering their individual needs and circumstances. Support may include signposting tenants to relevant external agencies, providing information on available community services, or offering in-house support services, such as adapting the way we communicate with tenants.
 - 3.1.2. Ensure that staff members receive appropriate training to recognize and respond to the needs of vulnerable tenants.

- 3.1.3. Take account of known vulnerability factors in the provision of services and in decisions around tenancy management and enforcement.
- 3.1.4. Assist vulnerable residents in accessing additional services that they may need.
- 3.1.5. Consider any additional needs due to the vulnerability and where appropriate vary our service delivery to ensure vulnerable residents still receive the same level of service.
- 3.1.6. Refer to statutory agencies and other external partner support agencies where appropriate.
- 3.1.7. Make safeguarding referrals whenever needed.

4. Communication and Engagement

- 4.1. AWHHA will aim to establish effective communication channels to engage with vulnerable tenants, ensuring they are aware of their rights, responsibilities, and available support.
- 4.2. Communication methods will be tailored to meet the needs of individual tenants, considering factors such as language, accessibility and preferred communication channels and formats.
- 4.3. AWHHA will actively seek feedback from vulnerable tenants to improve services and address any concerns or issues promptly.

5. Safeguarding

- 5.1. AWHHA has a robust safeguarding policy in place to protect vulnerable tenants from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- 5.2. Staff members will receive training on safeguarding procedures and will be required to report any concerns or incidents promptly to one of the Association's Safeguarding Leads.
- 5.3. AWHHA will work in partnership with relevant agencies, such as local authorities or social services, to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable tenants.

6. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- 6.1. AWHHA will handle all personal information of vulnerable tenants in accordance with applicable data protection laws and regulations.

- 6.2. Access to sensitive information will be restricted to authorized staff members who require it for their duties.
- 6.3. AWHHA will maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of vulnerable tenants, ensuring that their personal information is securely stored and only shared on a need-to-know basis.

7. Review and Monitoring

- 7.1. This Vulnerability Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant legislation and best practices.
- 7.2. AWHHA will monitor the implementation of this policy and assess its impact on the well-being and support provided to vulnerable tenants.
- 7.3. Any necessary updates or improvements to the policy will be made based on the findings of reviews and monitoring processes.

8. Policy Dissemination

- 8.1. AWHHA will ensure that all staff members are aware of this Vulnerability Policy and receive appropriate training on its implementation.
- 8.2. The policy will be made available to tenants, either through AWHHA's website, tenant handbooks, or other accessible means.

9. Legal Context

- 9.1. AWHHA has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to *“advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it”*.
- 9.2. The Social Housing Regulator's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard requires registered providers to *“treat all tenants with fairness and respect”* and *“demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs”*, with a specific expectation that providers will *“demonstrate how they respond to tenants' needs in the way they provide services and communicate with tenants”*.

- 9.3. The Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code 2022 states that landlords should *“comply with the Equality Act 2010 and may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to accommodate an individual’s needs.”*

10. Related Policies

- 10.1. Safeguarding Policy
- 10.2. Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- 10.3. Whistle Blowing
- 10.4. Data Protection Policy
- 10.5. Modern Slavery
- 10.6. Equality, diversity and inclusion Policy
- 10.7. Domestic Abuse Policy
- 10.8. Complaints, Concerns & Compensation Policy

11. Equality, diversity and inclusion

- 11.1. AWhA recognises all forms of discrimination and victimisation including all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 which are: Race, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Marriage or Civil Partner, Age and Pregnancy and Maternity explicitly. In addition, and not only particular to this policy, we also recognise that many other tenants can be diverse and /or vulnerable for reasons other than the characteristics protected under equalities legislation.