

Housing Services Vulnerability Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all Leicester City Council Introductory and Secure Tenants, Leaseholders, HomeCome tenants and potential Housing Services service users.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 We are committed to providing services that meet the specific needs and circumstances of our tenants, HomeCome tenants, leaseholders and other individuals wanting to access our services.
- 2.2 We aim to continually improve services based on customer need and will take account of specific needs of tenants who require support when we consider the range and quality of the services we provide.
- 2.3 We will take into account social issues that may affect the vulnerability of a person when offering accommodation.
- 2.4 Our service standards reflect Leicester City Council's corporate service standards and clearly set out what our customers can expect from us.
- 2.4 We will ensure that no individual is socially excluded or disadvantaged in accessing council housing and housing services.
- 2.5 We will include vulnerability data when collecting information about the profile of our tenants to help us develop a better understanding of our customers' needs.
- 2.6 We will establish whether there is existing support in place for vulnerable people and/or refer them to housing related support services where necessary.
- 2.7 We will involve vulnerable individuals and any relevant agencies in discussions and decision-making regarding their vulnerability in receiving housing services.
- 2.8 We will make reasonable adjustment as appropriate when dealing with vulnerability issues.
- 2.9 We will ensure our staff are trained to be "alerters" of a vulnerable person

3. References

- 3.1 Legislation and regulation

- ❑ Equality Act 2010
- ❑ Mental Capacity Act 2005
- ❑ Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- ❑ Tenants Services Authority (TSA) Regulatory Framework for Social Housing In England from 2010
- ❑ Children Act 1989 (amended)
- ❑ Data Protection Act 1998

3.2 Guidance

- ❑ CRE Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing 2006

3.3 Internal priorities, policies and procedures

- ❑ One Leicester: Sustainable Community Strategy 2010
- ❑ Strategic Plan/Strategic Priorities
- ❑ Corporate and Housing Services service standards
- ❑ Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure
- ❑ Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure
- ❑ Corporate Equality Strategy
- ❑ Conditions of Tenancy
- ❑ Leicester HomeChoice – choice based lettings policy
- ❑ Housing Services Policies on:
 - Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Harassment/Racial Harassment
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Rent Arrears
 - Affordability
 - Relationship Change
 - Mutual Exchange/Assignment
 - Repairs

4. Definitions of Vulnerability

4.1 It is not possible to give an example of every situation where a person may be considered vulnerable. Nor does potential vulnerability mean that a person is in need of support. Therefore, the following examples are intended as guidance for staff to help identify where support may be offered or needed. People may fit into more than one definition at any given time.

4.2 Examples of how a person could be vulnerable:

- ❑ Age
- ❑ Disability – physical/sensory
- ❑ Ethnicity
- ❑ Gender
- ❑ Religion or belief
- ❑ Sexual orientation
- ❑ Transgender
- ❑ those having:
 - learning disabilities

- mental health issues
- substance misuse issues
- domestic violence/abuse issues
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Homelessness
- Substance misuse
- Offenders and ex-offenders
- Teenage parents
- Young people at risk, including at risk of offending
- People who may be made vulnerable through debt or eviction

5.0 Possible indicators of vulnerability

5.1 Possible indicators of vulnerability may be:

- Chaotic lifestyle
- Difficulties with:
 - basic budgeting or significant financial problems
 - childcare responsibilities
 - significant daily tasks
 - performing personal care tasks (self neglect)
 - managing in an independent living setting
- Language difficulties
- Physical frailty
- Self harming
- Self isolating behaviour
- Severe mobility impairment or at risk of falls

6.0 Policy content

6.1 Leicester City Council's Housing Services will protect vulnerable people wherever possible by:

- Ensuring compliance with data protection and confidentiality
- Promoting early intervention by establishing vulnerability issues during:
 - tenancy sign up
 - home visits
 - office interviews
 - estate visits
 - other face-to-face contacts
 - telephone contacts (ensuring compliance with data protection)
- Referring to the Vulnerability Indicators and Required Action Table to determine the most appropriate form of support for each vulnerable person (see Appendix A)
- Referring people made vulnerable through debt or eviction to Debt Reduction Advice (DRAW) Workers
- Offering advice regarding the Disabled Facilities Grant
- Updating computerised records with vulnerability indicators where there is known vulnerability

- Service provision to be adaptable (where appropriate) to suit the needs of the individual
- Obtaining a vulnerable person's permission to make referrals and/or to discuss their issues with other support agencies
- Following our Safeguarding Adults Policy and our duty under the Children Act 1989
- Establishing links with, and effecting referrals to, relevant support agencies and services

7.0 Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 Leicester City is an area of wide social diversity and the Council is committed to valuing all types of diversity and providing equal opportunities to ensure individuals are not discriminated against in terms of service provision.
- 7.2 Vulnerable people investigations are fully within our corporate equality and diversity aims and objectives. Details of our approach are set out in our Corporate Equality Strategy.
- 7.3 When dealing with vulnerability we will treat all customers fairly, with respect and in a professional and courteous manner, regardless of their age; disability; gender; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation, transgender or other personal circumstances.
- 7.4 This policy is available in different formats on request.

8.0 Customer involvement and consultation

- 8.1 We will ensure our customers are able to contribute to improving services provided by us. It is important that the service we provide is what customers want and involving them helps us to do that.
- 8.2 We will involve a range of stakeholders in all future reviews of this policy to ensure the outcomes meet the diverse needs of our customer base. These will include:
- Tenants and residents
 - Staff groups
 - Relevant agencies, e.g. Police, other statutory services, and housing related support services as appropriate.

9.0 Policy monitoring and review

- 9.1 We will monitor the implementation of this policy on an annual basis or as required and we will provide reports to Senior Management Team as requested.

9.2 We will review this policy every three years or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

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Vulnerability Indicators and Required Action

Code	Description	Action	Who
1DEAF	Deaf or hard of hearing	<p>Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details.</p> <p>Use written information or face to face meetings</p> <p>Face the tenant & sit at the same level as tenant</p> <p>Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code</p> <p>Arrange sign language interpreter</p>	<p>All staff</p> <p>Action Deafness 0116 257 4800</p>
1DISA	Has a perceived disability	<p>Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details.</p> <p>Ask if you may know the nature of their disability but they are not required to provide this information</p>	All staff

1FBEN	First language Bengali	Arrange Bengali interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1FDIS	Facial Disfigurement	Ensure all staff are aware Speak directly to the person in meetings May affect speech	All staff
1FFCH	First language French	Arrange French interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1FFRS	First language Farsi	Arrange Farsi interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1FGUJ	First language Gujarati	Arrange Gujarati interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1FKRD	First language Kurdish	Arrange Kurdish interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1FPAN	First language Punjabi	Arrange Punjabi interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1FPOL	First language Polish	Arrange Polish interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1FSOM	First language Somali	Arrange Somali interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit

1FSVK	First language Slovak	Arrange Slovak interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1FURD	First language Urdu	Arrange Urdu interpreter If using CLU gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code	1. Staff in local office 2. Approved interpreter list 3. Community Languages Unit
1HDBT	History of Debt	Seek permission from tenant to make a referral to STAR for support If currently in debt make referral to Debt Reduction Advice Worker (DRAW) and Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC)	Tenancy Services Officer
1HTYF	History of Tenancy Failure	Check if tenant currently receiving support If not seek permission from tenant to make a referral to STAR for support	Tenancy Services Officer
1LRND	Learning Difficulties	Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details. Face to face meetings with tenant and representative Use plain language & avoid jargon Allow time for tenant to respond	Tenancy Services Officer

		<p>Use short sentences and pictures to aid communication</p> <p>Ask for permission to make a referral to STAR</p>	
1MENT	Mental Health Issues	<p>Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details.</p> <p>Check if the tenant has a support worker to attend meetings</p>	Tenancy Services Officer
1MOBI	Mobility Impairment Issues	<p>Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details.</p> <p>Allow adequate time for tenants to answer the phone or door or to walk into meeting</p>	Tenancy Services Officer
1PHLA	Previous Homeless Applicant	<p>Ask for permission to make a referral to STAR</p>	Tenancy Services Officer
1READ	Reading Difficulties	<p>Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details.</p> <p>Arrange face to face meeting and ask for a representative to attend</p>	Tenancy Services Officer

		Written information on audio tape	
1SPCH	Speech Difficulties	<p>Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details.</p> <p>Written communication preferable and avoid telephone conversations</p> <p>In face to face meetings ask if the tenant would prefer to write instead of speak</p>	All staff
1VIMP	Visual Impairment	<p>Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details.</p> <p>Telephone communication or face to face meetings</p> <p>Written materials in large text, Braille or on audio tape</p>	All staff
1WBEN	Written Material in Bengali	<p>Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code</p> <p>Arrange Bengali translation</p>	Community Languages Unit
1WFCH	Written Material in French	<p>Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code</p> <p>Arrange French translation</p>	Community Languages Unit
1WFRS	Written Material in Farsi	<p>Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget</p>	Community Languages Unit

		code Arrange Farsi translation	
1WGJJ	Written Material in Gujarati	Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code Arrange Gujarati translation	Community Languages Unit
1WKRD	Written Material in Kurdish	Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code Arrange Kurdish translation	Community Languages Unit
1WPAN	Written Material in Punjabi	Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code Arrange Punjabi translation	Community Languages Unit
1WPOL	Written Material in Polish	Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code Arrange Polish translation	Community Languages Unit
1WRTE	Writing Difficulties	Ask if the tenant needs us to make adjustments to the way we communicate or deliver services to them. Ask for details. Request verbal information by phone Arrange visit with tenant & representative Offer information on tape or CD	Tenancy Services Officer
1WSOM	Written Material in Somali	Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code Arrange Somali translation	Community Languages Unit
1WSVK	Written Material in Slovak	Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget	Community Languages Unit

		code Arrange Slovak translation	
1WURD	Written Material in Urdu	Gain Manager's approval & obtain budget code Arrange Urdu translation	Community Languages Unit