

Ekaya Housing Association

Safeguarding Children Policy

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1. Introduction.

1.1 This policy sets out Ekaya's commitment to the safeguarding and protection of all children at risk. Ekaya is committed to providing a safe and secure environment, where children and young people feel safe and are kept safe and where all staff contribute to the culture of vigilance, which is imbedded in our services. All staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.

1.2 Ekaya has a duty to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of a child by reporting any concerns immediately. We do not need proof to report something as a child protection concern. All that is required is that there are reasonable grounds to suspect abuse has taken place and a child has been placed at risk.

1.3 Ekaya Housing Association (EHA) believes that it is unacceptable for a child to experience abuse or neglect of any kind and recognises its responsibility for delivering safe services to children, and to protect them from harm. Children develop best when they are healthy, safe and secure; when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. This policy sets out how Ekaya's service complies with statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who receive accommodation and/or support from Ekaya. Ekaya maintains an attitude of 'it could happen here' as far as safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interest of the child.

1.4 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

1.5 All Staff and Volunteers have a clear duty to report any concerns relating to the abuse or suspected abuse of a child or vulnerable adult to their line manager/ accountable person. They will report it to the appropriate social work or multi- disciplinary team and the police if a crime is suspected or has been committed, as many instances of abuse are criminal offenses.

2. Policy Statement

2.1 EHA aims to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all service users in the delivery of its work by ensuring:

- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, belief, pregnancy or maternity or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

- All young people in our care are given information about what abuse is, how to prevent and report it, together with regular reminders at timely intervals.

- Ekaya requires all staff who are part of the Support Services Team to complete safeguarding and child protection training and as part of their induction when joining the organisation, and at least annually as part of Ekaya's overall training programme. In addition Staff and Volunteers have training and guidance on the Code of Conduct. They will also be trained on safeguarding procedures and know how to follow them if they witness or suspect anything that may be a safeguarding or child protection issue, or w h e r e a disclosure is made of risk of/ actual abuse. Staff will know each Local Authority's guidelines and key contacts and will keep up to date with local procedures for the authorities they work in as they vary across authorities.
- Information is shared about our safeguarding procedures and good practice with staff, volunteers, children, parents, commissioning bodies and other relevant agencies.
- Effective management is provided for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Incidents of safeguarding whether actual, suspected or alleged are logged and these logs are reviewed regularly to ensure lessons can be learned and revised ways of working adopted as indicated by these reviews.
- Ekaya is committed to promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children, at risk. All employees have a duty to be alert to potential safeguarding concerns with children. All staff are trained to be aware of and implement the Ekaya's Safeguarding policies and procedures and work in partnership with other agencies to help safeguard those at risk.

3. Scope of Policy

- This policy applies to the EHA only. Ekaya's subsidiary, Happy Nursery Days maintains a separate safeguarding policy.

- There are three elements to our policy to safeguard children

3.1 Prevention

Providing an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued, and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties. Providing a positive and safe environment, careful and vigilant staff, and accessible support to children with good adult role models. Where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are actively listened to. Raising awareness of all staff, of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.

Ensuring that all adults within our setting who have access to children have been rigorously checked as to their suitability using safe recruitment procedures.

3.1.1 Protection

Agreed procedures are followed by all staff. Staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns. Concerns are recognised and acted upon. Through the development of effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children.

3.1.2 Support

Support to children, who may be at risk where staff respond to their concerns and complete any work that may be required. Staff are proactive in any child protection plan or on any early help, assessment, and action plan.

3.2 This Policy should be used in conjunction with the Governments' Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69fb1c28d0e316a40f269a5b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_a_guide_to_multi_agency_working.pdf)

3.3 EHA has no formal powers to investigate abuse, which is the role of Local Authority Children's Safeguarding Partners Board and the Police. Ekaya staff will take all abuse suspicions and allegations seriously, respond swiftly, and report suspected abuse to statutory agencies whilst taking appropriate action to safeguard the child. We will co-operate with the investigation, i.e.

information sharing and in jointly developing and implementing safeguarding plans..

4 Legal framework: Children

4.1 The Government has published guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69fb1c28d0e316a40f269a5b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_a_guide_to_multi_agency_working.pdf)
Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers May 2024 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf)

Ekaya procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with the London Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures, which are based on the London Child Protection Procedures.

London-Multi-Agency-Adult-Safeguarding-Policy-Practice-Guidance-and-Procedures-November-2025.pdf

4.2 Local authorities base their child protection procedures on 'Working Together' and London local authorities us the 'London Child Protection Procedures', last updated in March 2026 (https://londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/chapter/using-these-procedures). Safeguarding Partners will consist of three agencies: local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, and chief officers of police. These Safeguarding Partners will work with relevant appropriate agencies within their locality to safeguard and protect children. All three Safeguarding Partners have equal responsibility for fulfilling the role.

5 Definitions of abuse (Children)

5.1 The Children Act 1989 defines 'harm' as "ill-treatment or the impairment of h e a l t h or development". 'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioral development; 'Health' means both physical and mental health; and 'ill- treatment' includes neglect, physical or sexual abuse plus ill-treatment which is not physical, i.e. psychological or emotional abuse. Neglect covers the act of neglect plus failure to prevent neglect.

5.2 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 expanded the definition of harm to include "impairment suffered by hearing or seeing the ill-treatment of

another" for instance witnessing domestic violence. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting by those known to them or more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). The London Child Protection Procedures state that: "Where there is domestic violence in families with a child under 12 months old (including an unborn child), even if the child was not present, any single incident of domestic violence should trigger a child protection investigation". Regardless of age, any child who is suffering actual harm or risk of significant harm from domestic violence should be referred to the appropriate Children's Services.

5.3 Examples of different types of abuse can include, but are not limited to: Physical abuse (Assault, Ill treatment (physical or otherwise), Neglect, abandonment, exposure, Conduct likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health (includes psychological injury)) Sexual Abuse (Sexual assault, Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, Sexual activity with a child, Grooming , Causing a child to watch sexual acts, Voyeurism) Emotional / psychological abuse (Injury to health, Ill treatment. Impairment of health or development, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing ill treatment of another) Neglect / maltreatment (Adequate food, Clothing, Medical aid, Lodging) Exposure to domestic abuse

6 Local Authority Procedures

6.1 Ekaya Housing Association provides a range of services in a number of different London boroughs. Although all Local Authorities use Pan London Safeguarding Procedures, they may also have local reporting requirements in relation to Safeguarding. All front-line services and head office staff must be aware of and comply with local Safeguarding requirements as well as with Ekaya's internal policies and procedures and know where to get advice. Local contacts are outlined in Ekaya's Safeguarding Procedures.

7 Training and Support to Staff, Volunteers and Service Users

7.1 EHA will ensure that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. The training will be updated at least every three years and is in line with advice from the local authority Safeguarding Children Partnership, together with annual refresher training. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. Their training is updated every year.

7.2 All staff members, volunteers and Board members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email,

ebulletins, staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Opportunities are provided for staff to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.

7.3 Our service users will also be given information and training about what abuse is, how to prevent and report it and about organisations that can support them. Service users will also have the opportunity to contribute to the review of our Safeguarding/Child Protection policy. Consultants and contractors are made aware of their responsibilities to report suspected or actual abuse by clauses in their contracts.

8 Designated Person for Safeguarding

EHA has a Designated Person for Safeguarding with responsibility to inform the policy of the organisation, oversee its application, ensure compliance and report directly to Ekaya's Policy and Performance Committee. The Committee receives and considers regular reports of all Safeguarding matters and considers any 'lessons learned', which require policy changes to prevent reoccurrences where possible.

Ekaya's Designated Safeguarding Lead is the **Director of Operations**.

9 Our Approach to Child Protection/Safeguarding

Ekaya aims to prevent child protection concerns through good risk management, staff training, clear communications, working in partnership with agencies and learning from experience.

This includes:

- HR policies and procedures in place, taking a Safe Recruitment approach to ensure our staff are fit to work with our service users
- Up to date Risk Management plans are in place for service users
- Up to date risk assessments in place to reduce risk of any safeguarding incidents e.g. visitor's policy, lone working procedure
- Service user risk management plans and service risk assessments will be reviewed and updated in light of any incidents and mitigation actions put in place
- Regular internal monitoring and reporting on safeguarding and child protection matters and learning from our experiences

- Providing clear information to service users with children about how to provide a safe environment, promote children's welfare, and understand what abuse and neglect is

  Where child protection incidents do occur we will ensure that we are able to identify them and deal with them quickly and appropriately. Ekaya does this by ensuring:

- Staff and customers can recognise abuse and know how to report it

- Staff are appropriately trained; know our policies and procedures and their role and responsibilities within them

- Managers and Team Leaders understand local authority protocols, including who to contact, how and when

- Systems are in place for recording and monitoring child protection concerns

- We learn and improve through feedback and experience

10 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

For further advice on Information Sharing see: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69fb1c28d0e316a40f269a5b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_a_guide_to_multi_agency_working.pdf) and the Government Advice, Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers May 2024 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf)

We will share all information necessary to safeguard children at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. This may include statutory, voluntary and independent sector organisations, housing authorities, the police and Crown Prosecution Service, as well as organisations which provide advocacy and support.

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and out of respect for staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or provider (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR principles, which require that information is:

- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Kept no longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Secure

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information will not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a parent/carer to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. Ideally, information sharing will be done in writing so that there is an evidence trail however, there may be occasions in Child Protection proceedings where this method is too slow. In cases where agencies ring the setting requesting information, staff will take a message, inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, they will ensure they can identify who is requesting the information before sharing, and then record what has been shared, when, why and with whom.

Information about a child will usually only be shared with a third-party agency with the consent of an adult who has parental responsibility, or in their absence, a carer except where a child is at immediate risk.

11 Monitoring

Ekaya's Designated Safeguarding Lead will keep a log of safeguarding and child protection concerns and will review this regularly with the Head of

Operations to ensure that cases are being progressed and to identify any common issues.

Regular monitoring of safeguarding takes place through standard agenda items at all E k a y a Policy & Performance Committee and Board meetings. Safeguarding is also treated as a risk and this is monitored by Ekaya's Audit & Risk Committee.

12. Policy Approval

Staff consultation:	TBC
Approval Date:	28/10/2026
Approved by:	Policy and Performance Committee
Policy Owner:	Director of Operations
Next Review Date:	01/09/2027

NB – A separate Safeguarding Children Procedure is being developed following the approval of this policy in September 2026.