

Draft

Practice Example – Cause for Concern, Charter Housing

A system for safeguarding tenants

Cause for concern is a system of capturing all safeguarding concerns across the Association, making sure they were dealt with in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Historically, there were issues with key data relating to tenancies not being easy to locate when needed as they were hidden within case files or buried beneath other data within the existing housing management system. When there were staff changes, vital knowledge was lost and we were not able reacting as quickly and appropriately as they could do if they had this information at their fingertips.

We needed to put together the pieces of information we had on our tenancies to create a picture of a tenant to allow us to decide the best course of action in cases involving adult and children at risk and responding to cases involving domestic violence. The concept was designed to make use of the experience and knowledge developed by staff across the association to help tailor an immediate response.

We needed to design a procedure that fitted into current working systems, making to as easy as possible for staff to report concerns and for the right person to respond.

The Cause for Concern procedure went live in October 2014. At its core is a confidential database with details of tenancies where there have been concerns around safeguarding issues. It captures data and reports by staff from all departments in one central point which is only accessible by members of staff that need access to the information. When there is an issue in the tenancy, the database gives us a clear picture of what has happened in that household on one screen and allows officers to respond to the issue with this knowledge in hand.

All staff are given training on the procedure, with 130 staff trained over the past two years. This is in addition to other safeguarding training and highlights key issues that staff should lookout for in their interactions with tenants. After attending the training, staff as

emailed a link for their desktop which opens up a form for them to populate with the details of what they've seen or been told.

The form asks for details of the people involved, why the staff member is concerned and what, if any, action they have taken. When this form is completed it is emailed to a group of staff known collectively as the Cause for Concern group. This is made up of 8 staff with varying rolls in the organisation, who each have a particular set of skills and experience, allowing them to give advice and make decisions on what action needs to take place.

At least two members of the group will respond to the concern and give advice on how best to proceed. The most important element of this is to report back to the staff member making the report. This has built up trust in the process and improved reporting, especially from our maintenance operatives.

The creativity in this has come from the staff. This is work done using existing resources and has allowed us to improve the quality of service we deliver to our tenants. We have a better picture of the lives of our tenants and makes best use of the skills and knowledge of our staff