

KNOWES HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD	
Policy Name	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Impact on Service Delivered by Knowes HA
Policy Category	Housing Management
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Consultation	Internal

UNCRC-Compliant Housing Management Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Knowes HA will deliver housing services in accordance with the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, ensuring that the **rights, welfare, and safety of children** are central to decision-making in:

- Rent arrears management
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) responses
- Repairs and maintenance

(Particular regard is given to **health and safety risks impacting children**).

2. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy aligns with:

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that establishes the fundamental civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of every child. It acts as a legally binding framework to ensure children are protected, supported, and able to reach their full potential.

The specific UNCRC outline the core principles of child welfare, development, and protection. They are defined as follows:

- **Article 3 (Best interests of the child):** Public or private social welfare institutions, courts, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies must make the best interests of the child a primary consideration in all actions concerning them.
- **Article 6 (Right to life, survival, and development):** Every child has the inherent right to life. Governments must ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.
- **Article 12 (Right to be heard):** Children have the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and these views should be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
- **Article 19 (Protection from harm):** Institutions must protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or exploitation by those caring for them.
- **Article 24 (Right to health):** Children have the right to the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation

of health, with a focus on diminishing infant and child mortality and preventing disease.

- **Article 27 (Adequate standard of living):** Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development.

3. Core Principles

KHA will:

- **Prioritise children's safety and wellbeing** in all housing-related decisions
- Apply a “**child impact assessment**” before enforcement actions
- Recognise children as **indirect service users** affected by tenancy management
- Promote **early intervention and prevention**
- Work in partnership with safeguarding agencies, particularly Social Services who will be KHA main contact when considering action against a tenant where this may impact on children residing in the property, (see section 4)
- Ensure children's voices are considered, where appropriate

4. Partnership Working with Safeguarding Agencies

Knowes Housing Association (KHA) is committed to working proactively and collaboratively with safeguarding agencies to ensure the protection and wellbeing of children who may be affected by housing management actions. In particular, KHA will maintain strong working relationships with **Social Work Services, who will act as the primary safeguarding partner** where tenancy-related action may have an impact on children residing within a household.

Where KHA is considering enforcement action—such as eviction proceedings, anti-social behaviour interventions, or other tenancy enforcement measures—staff will:

- Identify at an early stage whether children are residing in or connected to the household
- Make timely referrals to Social Work Services where there are concerns about the potential impact on children
- Share relevant information in line with data protection and safeguarding protocols to support informed decision-making
- Seek professional advice from Social Work Services on:

- The potential risks to children
- Appropriate safeguarding measures
- Alternative interventions that may reduce harm

KHA will ensure that no enforcement action likely to significantly impact children is progressed without:

- Clear evidence that safeguarding considerations have been fully assessed
- Appropriate relevant agency consultation has taken place
- Consideration of the best interests of the child, in line with the UNCRC

In cases where risks to children are identified, KHA will:

- Participate in multi-agency meetings (e.g. case conferences, child protection planning)
- Support coordinated action plans led by Social Work Services
- Consider delaying or adapting tenancy action where appropriate to allow safeguarding interventions to take effect

This partnership approach ensures that KHA not only fulfils its housing management responsibilities but also contributes effectively to the wider child protection framework, minimising harm and promoting positive outcomes for children and families.

5. Rent Arrears Management

5.1 Approach

Rent arrears actions will be managed in conjunction with arrears management policy, but take into account children's rights to stable housing only when we are considering legal action that may result in repossession of a property.

5.2 Key Commitments

- If repossession action is initiated, we will conduct a **Child Impact Assessment** only when we are considering the following level of action:
 - Legal action
 - Eviction proceedings
- We will identify households with children at **early stage of arrears**
- We will offer:
 - Financial support advice
 - Payment plans

- Referral to welfare services
- Referral to Community Support Worker who can assist in signposting to relevant agencies who can assist in specialist financial advice and support

5.3 Health & Safety Considerations

Where arrears cases involve:

- Risk of homelessness
- Unsafe living conditions due to poverty

We will:

- Prioritise interventions preventing **child homelessness**
- Work with local authorities under safeguarding duties

5.4 Enforcement Safeguards

Eviction will only proceed where:

- All alternatives are exhausted
- Risks to children have been assessed and mitigated
- Relevant services (e.g. social services) are informed

6. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

6.1 Approach

ASB responses will consider both:

- **Children as victims**
- **Children as alleged perpetrators**

6.2 Child-Centred Response

- Safeguarding referrals to relevant agencies where children are at risk
- Avoid criminalising children unnecessarily
- Use early intervention:
 - Police – Joint visits with Housing Officers to outline actions and impact on household if ASB continues
 - Mediation – external agencies with specialist Mediation skills would be considered

- Youth engagement services
- Referral to Community Support Worker who can assist in signposting to relevant agencies.

7.3 Health & Safety Risks

Where ASB creates risks such as:

- Violence
- Drug activity
- Environmental hazards

We will:

- Act urgently to protect children by contacting relevant agencies, particularly Social Services who have the responsibility to safeguard children's health and security.

7.4 Enforcement

Legal actions (e.g. possession) will:

- Consider impact on children in the household
- Ensure proportionality
- Involve Social Services so they are fully aware of potential impact on family and children should action reach repossession

8. Repairs and Maintenance

8.1 Priority Framework

Repairs impacting children's safety will be treated as **urgent or emergency**, including:

- Damp and mould
- Heating failures
- Gas Safety issues
- Asbestos
- Smoke and Carbon Dioxide Alarm failure
- Electrical hazards
- Structural risks
- Pest infestations

8.2 Response Times

- Emergency (e.g. immediate risk): within **24 hours**
- Urgent (child health impacted): within **Up to 5 days**

8.3 Health & Safety Protocol

Where a repair poses a risk to children:

- Immediate safeguarding assessment
- Temporary measures (e.g. heaters, decanting)
- Escalation to senior management

8.4 Temporary Rehousing

Where properties are unsafe:

- Provide temporary accommodation
- Avoid disruption to schooling wherever possible

9. Complaints Handling

Our complaints handling process is underpinned by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness when raising concerns. This includes recognising their right to be heard (Article 12), ensuring their best interests are a primary consideration (Article 3), and providing accessible, child-friendly ways to make and resolve complaints. We will actively consider the impact of decisions on children's rights at every stage of the process, provide appropriate support to enable participation, and ensure outcomes promote accountability, learning, and the protection and advancement of children's rights.

10. Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Working

- Staff will receive **training on UNCRC principals linked to actions taken when tenancy conditions are breached.**
- Concerns will be referred to:
 - Local authority children's services
 - Police (if necessary)
- Participate in:

- Case conferences where appropriate.
- Child protection plans

11. Staff Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Apply UNCRC principles in decision-making
- Identify risks to children early
- Record child-related impacts in all casework
- Escalate health and safety concerns immediately

12. Monitoring and Accountability

- Regular audits of:
 - Evictions involving households with children
 - ASB cases involving minors
 - Repair response times affecting child safety
- Tenant feedback mechanisms
- Reporting to senior leadership and boards

13. Equality and Diversity

This policy ensures fair treatment regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic status

Special consideration is given to **vulnerable children**.