



DSUK Safeguarding Policy

Introduction and purpose

This policy sets out how Down Syndrome UK (DSUK) operates to keep adults at risk of abuse or neglect and children safe from abuse. The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

We have a Duty of Care to our volunteers and service users. We are committed to the protection and safety of adults at risk and children whether they are volunteers and/or participants in our activities. We will protect and support the volunteers who work with us as well as users of our services.

All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1998. Children's legislation includes the Children's Act 1989 and 2004.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. For our safeguarding policy to be effective every volunteer, and staff member who supports us whatever their role, will play their part in keeping people safe.

This policy covers working with and supporting vulnerable adults, which includes adults and young people with Down syndrome or various learning difficulties.

Definitions

Adult at risk of abuse or neglect for the purposes of this policy, adult at risk refers to someone over 18 years old who, according to paragraph 42.1 of the Care Act 2014:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of their care and support needs, they are unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service, they may still be an adult at risk.

Children and young people are defined as those persons aged under 18 years old. This policy will apply to all staff, contractors and volunteers and will be used to support their work.

"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children" is defined as:



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- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and 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

Persons affected by this policy

- All volunteers and staff
- All service users
- All visitors and contractors

Our Policy

DSUK has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

There are no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk and children from abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and mistreatment.

DSUK recognises that under the Care Act 2014 it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. It is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

The welfare of the child and/ or adult at risk is paramount and all adults have the right to protection from abuse.

We are committed to working with appropriate agencies including the police, to ensure the reporting of abuse is appropriate and in line with local, national and Charity Commission requirements and Information Sharing guidance. We understand General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is not a barrier to sharing safeguarding information with responsible agencies. Sharing information without consent may be justified, if, for example:

- other people are, or may be, at risk, including children
- sharing the information could prevent a crime
- a serious crime has been committed
- the person has the mental capacity to make that decision, but they may be under duress or being coerced
- the risk is unreasonably high and meets the criteria for a multi-agency risk assessment conference referral
- a court order or other legal authority has requested the information.



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- If the decision is made to share information with external partners without consent, the learner or service user will be informed. Any risk to the person in doing so will be considered and advice may be sought from the local authority or police without disclosing any personal details.

We will create an environment where volunteers and staff feel able to raise safeguarding concerns and feel supported with their safeguarding responsibilities.

All volunteers and staff are required to report any suspected abuse and be aware of the appropriate reporting and support procedure for safeguarding as outlined below, including the reporting of people at risk of radicalisation and extremism.

All Volunteers and staff must be clear on appropriate behaviour and responses and follow our agreed Code of Conduct. Where appropriate, failure to maintain standards will be dealt with using DSUK Procedures.

All volunteers, staff, and freelance workers working for and on behalf of the charity will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check if deemed required and repeated every 2 years. A basic DBS check will be carried out for those in roles that involve engaging with families, including through a caregiver/chaperone. An enhanced DBS check will be carried out for those in roles that have direct contact with vulnerable people either in person or online. All DBS checks will be repeated after 2 years.

All volunteers and staff who come into contact with adults at risk of abuse, and children and their families as part of their DSUK duties will be alert to possible signs of abuse and consider whether there may be safeguarding concerns. They will discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to get appropriate support.

All volunteers and staff who come into contact with adults who appear to be suffering from poor mental health, and could therefore be at risk of self-harm, will bring this to the attention of the safeguarding officer to ensure the individual is signposted to necessary support organisations.



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Reporting a safeguarding concern

A safeguarding concern may relate to you or to the way someone else is being treated. If you have a safeguarding concern, you should **Safeguarding Referral Form** below and report as follows:

For staff members/freelance workers and volunteers:

1. First, raise any concerns with your line manager.
2. If you believe that your immediate line manager is involved, or you feel for whatever reason unable to raise it with your line manager, raise the issue with your Chief Executive.
3. If your concern is with the Chief Executive, contact the chair of the board of trustees.
4. If your concern involves a trustee, go to the Chief Executive.
5. Put your name on the complaint. If requested, your identity will be kept confidential for as long as possible, provided that this does not prejudice the enquiry. Anonymous complaints may be investigated if the person receiving the complaint believes it to be appropriate, having taken into account the seriousness of the issue, the complaint's credibility, the ability to investigate an anonymous complaint and fairness to any individual mentioned in the complaint.

For safeguarding concerns regarding PADS community groups or the work DSUK carries out:

1. Raise concerns with the charity by submitting the **Safeguarding Referral Form** to the safeguarding lead at safeguarding@downsyndromeuk.co.uk.
2. Put your name on the complaint. If requested, your identity will be kept confidential for as long as possible, provided that this does not prejudice the enquiry. Anonymous complaints may be investigated if the person receiving the complaint believes it to be appropriate, having taken into account the seriousness of the issue, the complaint's credibility, the ability to investigate an anonymous complaint and fairness to any individual mentioned in the complaint.

Any concerns raised will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will receive a response. Either a senior staff member or a nominated investigating officer will investigate the concern.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the senior member of staff or nominated investigating officer will write to you:

- acknowledging the concern has been received;
- indicating how it is proposed to deal with the matter;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to complete the investigations;
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made.



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DSUK will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you might experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, it will make arrangements for you to receive advice about the procedure. DSUK will ensure that there is no detriment at all to your career if you report a safeguarding concern in good faith.

If your concern is not substantiated, you should not take any subsequent action or make any disclosure to anyone other than those referred to in this policy.

The matter will be recorded following DSUK's Grievance Procedure, and any wrongdoing will be dealt with according to DSUK's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure.

Risk assessment and management

Under usual circumstances, DSUK will risk-assess any situation in which a potentially vulnerable employee, volunteer or associate may find themselves or that might cause someone to become vulnerable. It will then take appropriate measures.

DSUK will ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers learn about protection issues and their responsibilities in line with statutory guidance.

Incident investigation

DSUK will report and investigate allegations and concerns to improve its safeguarding processes. It will use any lessons learned from such events to take corrective action to prevent recurrences.

Where there are alleged incidents of abuse, the police are responsible for investigating whether a criminal offence may have been committed. DSUK will report a suspected crime (e.g. assault or indecency) to the police.

Trustees' responsibilities

Prevention is the primary responsibility of trustees. Trustees must take reasonable steps to protect staff, volunteers and those connected with the activities of DSUK from harm.

The Chief Executive or Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform trustees immediately when they become aware of a safeguarding issue and advise of the action being taken.



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Trustees are responsible for making reports, where necessary, to the police, social services and other agencies, and, where the criteria are met, sending a serious incident report to the charity regulator.

See also Grievance Procedure, Complaints Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure.

Caroline Turner, the Designated Safeguarding Lead for DSUK will fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities in a way that ensures that adults and children are safeguarded from harm. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for following up and reporting any suspected reports of abuse. The Safeguarding Lead will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training will be refreshed every 2 years.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board.

Policy Ratified on	14.07.2021
Policy Reviewed Date	4 th November 2024
Policy Review Date	4th November 2025
Trustee sign off	Casimir Knight



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Child/ Adults Name

Date:

Concern: *What is the nature of your concern?*

Evidence: *What is the evidence that led to your concern? Please write down anything you feel is relevant*

Contact: *Who do you need to talk to, or refer the matter to and what would you like to discuss with that person?*



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Outcome By the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Designated Safeguarding Lead Signature.....

Person Referring Name

Signature

Date:

Was Feedback Appropriate:

Yes

☐

No

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