

Safeguarding Policy - Children and Vulnerable Adults, Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Dry Stone Walling Association (DSWA) acknowledges that children and vulnerable adults may be subject to harm or abuse. This policy document states what the DSWA will do to minimise the risks and what steps will be taken to ensure the safety of all people using and engaging in our services, activities and/or premises.

Throughout this document, we will refer to vulnerable children and adults as 'people'.

This policy and procedure will help DSWA staff, freelance contracted staff, volunteers, Trustees and DSWA Branches to be clear about expectations, boundaries, and procedures.

The DSWA is serious about the protection of all people and is actively working towards promoting their safety. Our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy will be reviewed and updated at least once a year and/or following a serious incident.

1.2 DSWA Principles

1.2.1 The DSWA aims to enable people of all ages, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability to play their full part in community life, to be in control of their own lives and affairs and to have access to all the services and opportunities society offers.

1.2.2 The DSWA recognise that people have rights as individuals. Everyone has the right:

- To live their life free from violence, fear and abuse.
- To be protected from harm and exploitation.
- To have independence.

1.2.3 The DSWA is committed to:

- Ensuring that there is a consistent and effective response to any concerns, allegations or disclosures of abuse.
- Supporting staff, volunteers and Trustees in reporting and investigating all incidents of abuse.
- Preventing abuse from occurring within the organisation.
- Ensuring that staff, members and Trustees have the knowledge and understanding about both child & adult protection and receive training on implementing protection procedures. See Appendix B
- Working in partnership with other organisations.
- Monitoring and evaluating practice.
- If necessary, contributing towards Inter-agency Adult Protection Investigations and Risk Management Plans.
- Working towards creating Safer Services.
- Encouraging members to report any suspicions they have about abuse by awareness raising.

1.3 What is a Vulnerable Adult?

In this policy "adult" means a person aged 18 years or over.

The broad definition of a vulnerable adult referred to in, 'Safeguarding and Protecting people for charities and trustees' (a Gov.UK document updated October 2019 [Link here](#)) is: '*an adult at risk of abuse may: have an illness affecting their mental or physical health, have a learning disability, suffer from drug or alcohol problems, be **frail***'.

1.4 What is a Vulnerable Child?

In this policy 'child' means a person aged less than 18 years.

1.4.1 The warning signs that a person may be being abused are rarely clear-cut. Signs of abuse may be physical, medical, sexual, behavioral or emotional.

1.4.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purpose of statutory guidance under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 respectively as:

- protecting children from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- undertaking that role to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

1.5 What is Abuse?

1.5.1 Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

1.5.2 Abuse can occur in any relationship.

1.5.3 Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. Incidents of abuse may be multiple, either to one person in a continuing relationship or service context or to more than one person at a time, or by more than one perpetrator.

1.5.4 A continuum of abuse includes isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice at one end of the spectrum, through pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct at the other.

1.5.5 Many incidents of abuse are criminal acts.

1.5.6 Any person can become subject to abuse. A wide range of people can and do abuse vulnerable adults.

1.5.7 We recognise our responsibility to people who have been abused. We recognise that we may also have a responsibility in relation to the perpetrators of abuse who may be our staff, volunteers, or others acting on our behalf and service users.

1.5.8 This policy includes domestic abuse and covers incidents of abuse by strangers.

1.5.9 Abuse can take place in any context and at any time.

1.5.10 Abuse concerns the misuse of power, control and/or authority and can manifest itself as:

- Domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment, including honour based violence, forced marriage & FGM (Female Genital Mutilation).
- Racial or religiously motivated assault.
- Discrimination and oppression.
- Institutional abuse.
- Financial abuse.

1.6 Types of Abuse

1.6.1 There are 8 types of abuse in this policy and they are - sexual, physical, financial, neglect, psychological/emotional, discriminatory, hate crime and institutional. Domestic abuse may be part of a number of these.

1.6.2 Physical Abuse - is the physical ill treatment of a child or adult, which may or may not cause physical injury.

1.6.3 Sexual Abuse - is any form of sexual activity, including grooming and sexual assault/abuse that the person (child or adult) does not want and to which they have not consented (a child under 13 cannot in law consent), or to which they cannot give informed consent.

1.6.4 Financial Abuse - is the exploitation, inappropriate use, or misappropriation of a person's financial resources or property. This includes the withholding of money or unauthorised or improper use of a person's money or property, usually to the disadvantage of the person to whom it belongs.

1.6.5 Neglect - is the deliberate withholding or unintentional failure to provide help or support which is necessary for the adult/child to carry out activities of daily living. Neglect also includes a failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk.

1.6.6 Psychological Abuse - This may be intentional or unintentional; it may involve the use of intimidation, indifference, hostility, rejection, threats, humiliation, shouting, swearing or the use of discriminatory and/or oppressive language, which results in: Person's choices, opinions and wishes being negated. The person becoming isolated or over dependent.
Psychological abuse includes the denial of a person's human and civil rights including choice, opinion, privacy and dignity and being able to follow one's spiritual and cultural beliefs or sexual orientation. It includes preventing the person from using services that would otherwise support them and enhance their lives. Furthermore, it includes the intentional and/or unintentional withholding of information, e.g. information not being available in alternative formats/languages.
Be aware that every other category of abuse will almost inevitably involve elements of psychological abuse. Signs of psychological abuse may well be indicative of other forms of abuse taking place.

1.6.7 Discriminatory Abuse (including hate crime) - Exists when values, beliefs and culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to individuals or groups. It can be motivated by race, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, culture or ethnic origin. A person may be exploited/targeted by others who perceive them as 'vulnerable' due to one or more of the above factors.

1.6.8 Institutional Abuse - This can be defined as abuse or mistreatment by a regime as well as by individuals within any building, where care is provided.

[No secrets](#) (A government White Paper) says: "*Neglect and poor professional practice need to be taken into account. This may be in the form of isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice, at one end of the spectrum, through to pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct at the other. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems*" (2.9)

2.1 Procedures for reporting allegations, concerns or suspicions of abuse

2.1.1 Anyone reading this document should consider themselves as a potential alerter. It is the responsibility of any member of staff / Trustee/ volunteer from any agency to act if they suspect the abuse of a vulnerable person.

2.1.2 You may be told about abuse by either the vulnerable person themselves (direct disclosure) or by someone else who has been told about or who has witnessed abuse.

2.1.3 It is the responsibility of the person who is first aware of the situation to follow procedures as outlined in Appendix C.

2.2 Responsibilities including DSWA Trustees with Line Management responsibilities

2.2.1 Once the allegation or suspicion has been raised with Branch Safeguarding Lead (BSL) or National Safeguarding Lead (NSL), she/he must decide without delay the most appropriate course of action.

2.2.2 It is the responsibility of the Branch Safeguarding Lead or National Safeguarding Lead to:

STEP 1: Deal with immediate needs if there is a risk of immediate harm to ensure that the victim of the alleged abuse is safe.

STEP 2: Clarify

- Take any necessary personnel action if the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff (refer to own HR policy).
- Ensure that the situation falls within the safeguarding children & **adults** procedures i.e. meeting the definition of a vulnerable person.
- Follow procedure (Appendix C) and record any action taken (Appendix D)
- Complete the necessary regulation requirements and inform Chair / Vice Chair of the DSWA.
- If a serious incident takes place the Chair of DSWA will inform the Charity Commission and complete the relevant paperwork.

STEP 3: Making a referral, if necessary, to the appropriate agency - Police, Social Care, Ambulance service (Each BSL will compile a list of local services for referral e.g. Social Care safeguarding teams or police)

STEP 4: Coordinate a post incident DSWA reflective session. Capture any learning and update the Safeguarding Policy. Make staff / volunteers and Trustees aware of any changes.

2.3 Referral to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) (Disclosure Records —Scotland)

2.3.1 if an employee, freelance employee, Trustee or volunteer is:

- dismissed because they have or might have harmed a child or adult or
- was about to be dismissed for either of these reasons, but the person resigned first

2.3.2 An employer is breaking the law if they do not refer someone to the DBS for any of these reasons.

2.3.3 Contact the police if you think a crime has been committed.

2.3.4 If a member of the public or an anonymous caller contacts the DSWA with a protection concern, we will advise immediate contact with Social Services & or the Police.

2.3.5. Any staff member, DSWA Trustee or member receiving anonymous reports of abuse should pass this information onto the National Safeguarding Lead or Deputy National Safeguarding Lead or the Chair/Vice Chair of Trustees. If they cannot be contacted for whatever reason contacts the Police.

3. Importance of training for DSWA Staff, Volunteers and Trustees.

The DSWA will ensure that there will be initial training for those in positions within the organisation who are assessed as needing this training. (See Appendix B)

4. DBS Checks

Any person representing the DSWA, whether a paid member of staff, volunteer, Trustee or Branch member, who is coming into contact with vulnerable adults and children, will have a DBS check where a risk assessment deems this to be necessary.

5. Other DSWA policies linked to our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy are:

- Health and Safety Policy.
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Code of conduct for Trustees.
- First Aid.
- Fire Safety.
- Digital Safety Policy/GDPR.
- Welfare Policy.
- Discipline Policy.
- Whistleblowing Policy.