

INCLUSION GUIDANCE

Rev A Mar 26

This guidance aims to ensure that all young or vulnerable people participating in dry stone walling activities are safe, respected, supported, and able to participate fully. Dry stone walling can provide valuable learning, wellbeing, and skill-building opportunities when carried out in an inclusive and supportive environment.

A specific risk assessment should be done for the young or vulnerable person and activity and/or event concerned. It should be reviewed regularly and shared with parents/guardians or carers.

It is highly recommended that before a young or vulnerable person undertakes any activities with the DSWA, that parents, guardians, carers as well as the participant is consulted to ascertain their needs. This will then give the instructor the opportunity to adapt working methods and communication as appropriate. This should be reviewed regularly together to ensure that participant gets the best experience available.

Supervision

- Young people and vulnerable participants must always be supervised by a competent adult with relevant experience in dry stone walling.
- Instructors should maintain appropriate ratios.
- Instructors must be aware of individual needs, support plans, or risk considerations where relevant.

Safeguarding

- All staff, volunteers, and instructors must follow the DSWA Safeguarding Policy and report concerns immediately to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Behaviour towards young or vulnerable participants must always be professional, respectful, and supportive.
- No participant should be left alone or isolated with a single adult unless appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.

Communication and Understanding

- Language should be age/ability appropriate.
- Instructions should be clear, simple, easy to understand and demonstrated practically where possible.
- Use positive language – make it about what they can do, rather than can't do.
- Ask participants to repeat back important information to check understanding.
- Use language that encourages safety. Use 'stop' rather than 'no' or 'don't'. Then review the situation together and explore how to make it safer together.
- Participants should be encouraged to ask questions and request help without feeling pressured.
- Allow extra time for learning and avoid rushing tasks.

Physical Accessible Participation

Dry stone walling involves lifting, carrying, and working with uneven stone, so additional care must be taken:

- Provide training in safe lifting techniques.
- Ensure stones handled are appropriate for the participant's strength and ability.
- Encourage team lifting where needed.
- Provide and enforce use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as:
 - Gloves
 - Safety boots
 - Eye protection where appropriate

Participants should never be pressured to lift stones they feel uncomfortable handling.

Tasks and techniques should be adaptable so everyone can contribute. Avoid assuming physical capability; ask the participants what they feel comfortable doing.

Wellbeing and Breaks

- Ensure regular breaks are provided. They may need to be more frequent than you would normally take.
- Provide access to water, shelter (from all weathers), and rest areas. Rest areas may need to be away from the group in a safe place.

Watch for signs of fatigue, stress, or discomfort, especially in young participants.

Emergency Procedures

Ensure participants understand:

- Who the first aiders are.
- Where to go in an emergency.
- How to report an injury or concern.

First aid provision should be provided in line with the DSWA First Aid Policy.

Parental/Guardian Consent (for under 18's)

Written consent from parents or guardians must be obtained before participation.

Emergency contact details must be available on site and stored in accordance with DSWA GDPR Policy.

Review and Feedback

Encourage participants, parents, guardians and carers to give feedback about their experience. Whilst you may get immediate feedback, it is good practice to seek further feedback at a later date when the participant has had time to digest the experience.

Instructors should regularly review whether the environment remains safe, inclusive and supportive.

Issue / Revision	Date	Description/Comments	Prepared By	Checked By
Rev A	March 2026	New Guidance	H Lewis	P Clayton