

Title	Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
Approval authority	Board
Date 1 <sup>st</sup> approved	December 2021
Last review	February 2023
Next review	May 2024
Commissioned by	Sarah Lister, Chair
Authored by	Jim Cokill, Trust Director



**Durham**  
**Wildlife Trust**  
**From Tees to Tyne**

**Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy**

## **This policy outlines Durham Wildlife Trust's commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People from abuse, maltreatment and neglect.**

### **Definition of a child**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) define a child as everyone under 18 unless, "under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy and the associated procedure is to provide clarity to all staff and trustees on Durham Wildlife Trust's (DWT) approach to Safeguarding Children.

DWT is committed to the highest standards of charity governance for Safeguarding and this policy is the foundation of a universal approach shared across the Wildlife Trust movement that puts Safeguarding at the heart of all DWT engagement with children.

DWT has a duty of care to children and young people, their parents, carers and/or families that take part in our activities. We endeavour to provide a safe and friendly environment that celebrates all achievements. We will achieve this by ensuring that employees and trustees comply with all legal, contractual and professional standards and responsibilities in their work with children – whether within a group situation or one to one.

This policy applies to all staff and trustees working on behalf of DWT. Where DWT undertakes activities with third parties, staff shall have due regard to the Safeguarding policies of the third-party provider.

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with key legislation updates or changes and will be promoted through induction, training and ongoing supervision and support.

A number of documents support Durham Wildlife Trust's effective implementation of safeguarding measures and they are listed below –

- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (this document)
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedures
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children and Young People reporting concerns about a child
- Safeguarding Children and Young People reporting allegations about an adult
- Safeguarding Children and Young People contact details
- Safeguarding Children and Young People DSO role
- Online safety guidance
- Guidance on working with children and young people
- Guidance of safer recruitment
- Children and Young people risk assessment check list

Each documents is available to all staff via the DWT SharePoint:

**Durham Wildlife Trust – Documents - General - Safeguarding**

Non staff are issued documents as part of induction and training processes.

## **Context**

Relevant child protection systems, laws and guidance to help keep children safe.

- The Children Act of 1989, 2004 and subsequent Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018

Child protection systems are all based on the same principles, which in their simplest form are:

- ensuring children's voices are heard;
- setting out when a child can take part in various activities;
- making sure children have access to education;
- providing for children to have a safe home;
- providing support for children who need to leave home;
- making sure children are safe if they decide to get a job and;
- making sure children's personal information is safe;

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This means:

- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or 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.

All of the legislation and guidance across the UK is very clear that as a charity working with under 18's, we have a duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

To ensure DWT's approach to Safeguarding is effective it is based upon two fundamental principles of Safeguarding Children:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Adopting a child centred approach: which means working in partnership with them and their families.

## **Durham Wildlife Trust's Safeguarding Commitment**

DWT believes that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to ensuring their safety and wellbeing is at the heart of our engagement with people.

We will:

- not tolerate any form of abuse or neglect within DWT;
- take all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and adults at risk who visit our sites, take part in our activities or engage with us online;
- give equal priority to keeping all children, young people and adults at risk safe from harm, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, beliefs, sex, or sexual orientation;
- provide our staff, volunteers and trustees with the knowledge and tools to guide them in protecting children, young people and adults at risk from abuse and neglect

We will achieve this by:

- supporting staff and volunteers by establishing a clear policy and procedural framework, transparent reporting and by promoting a culture of learning throughout the movement;
- encouraging staff and volunteers to discuss any concerns immediately or as soon as practically possible with their line manager/supervisor or designated safeguarding lead;
- listening to and hearing the voice of children, young people and adults at risk and respecting their views;
- recruiting our staff and volunteers safely including references, disclosure and barring checks as appropriate;
- recording and storing information safely and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations;
- recognising the position of trust in which staff, trustees and volunteers are regularly placed and use our procedures and work with our local authorities to manage any allegations against them appropriately;
- adhering to online safety guidelines to keep children, young people, adults at risk and staff safe when using any digital communications;
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, adults at risk, staff and volunteers, by adhering to health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance;
- working in partnership with the statutory agencies responsible for the Safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk;
- ensuring that any third-party individual or organisation involved in delivering activities on behalf of DWT has appropriate experience, qualifications and/or accreditation and insurance. If they are operating with any degree of autonomy, DWT staff will assure themselves that safeguarding procedures are equivalent and arrangements are adequate for the activity.

### **Recognising the signs of abuse in children and young people**

It is important to be alert to the signs of abuse and maltreatment. If you feel something isn't right, question the behaviour of children, staff, trustees or their parents or carers – don't be afraid to speak up and discuss concerns with your Safeguarding Leads.

Abuse and maltreatment can take many different forms, as well as the examples below, question anything that doesn't feel right or causes concern. Consideration should also be given to staff conduct when interacting with children and young people - such as not taking part in physical games, trying to avoid being alone with a child or young person (staying within sight and hearing of others whenever possible) and maintaining professional boundaries including any contact over digital devices. There are four main categories of types and indicators of abuse. You should be aware of the warning indicators for each of these.

<b>Category of abuse</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Indicators and what to look out for in Children</b>
<b>Neglect</b>	The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or/psychological needs,	Children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;</li> </ul>

	likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. This can occur during pregnancy through substance abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are left hungry or dirty;</li> <li>• are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat or warm clothes;</li> <li>• are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;</li> <li>• fail to receive basic health care; and</li> <li>• parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.	<p>Children with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequent injuries;</li> <li>• unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and</li> <li>• unexplained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- bruises or cuts</li> <li>- bruising in non-mobile babies</li> <li>- burns or scalds; or</li> <li>- bite marks.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Emotional abuse</b>	Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.</li> <li>• Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'.</li> <li>• Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child.</li> <li>• Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing,	<p>Children who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;</li> <li>• use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to Have;</li> <li>• ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and</li> <li>• have physical sexual health problems, including soreness</li> </ul>

	<p>rubbing and touching outside of clothing.</p> <p>They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.</p>	<p>in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.</p>
--	--	--

Safeguarding risks may also come from outside of the home environment, these are called Contextual Safeguarding Risks. They are indicators staff should have an awareness of. Please see Appendix 1 for further information.

### **Radicalisation**

The Prevent Duty was created under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and requires certain organisations *‘to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’*. The aim of this is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, and in particular to prevent people being exposed to extremist ideology and being radicalised in the first place.

Whilst DWT are not bound by the ‘Prevent duty’, our partner agencies such as Local Authorities and Health and Social Care agencies will carry this responsibility and we must be in a position to recognise warning signs and notify the appropriate agencies if we have concerns regarding terrorism or extremism. Further details can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Bullying**

DWT will not tolerate any form of bullying. Bullying can become serious enough to be a child protection issue and, if so, it should be dealt with under DWT’s Safeguarding Procedure.

Bullying can occur between children or between adults and children. Bullying can take many different forms and be physical, verbal or non-verbal. Mobile phones, social media and digital platforms such as online communities can be used to bully.

If any member of DWT becomes aware of an issue, we will endeavour to intervene at the earliest point, working with schools, leaders and parents/carers.

Should any staff member or Trustee work directly with children and young people, they will receive the training and awareness that they need to effectively manage any issues and enable them to support those affected by bullying.

### Online Abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that takes place on a digital platform via the internet. This could include social media and online communities, online gaming or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. It can take place anywhere and anytime.

Perpetrators of online abuse might be those known to the child or young person as well strangers. Online abuse may be linked to situations happening in a child or young person's life or it may be something that is only happening online. It can feel there is no escape from online abuse as it can happen in safe places such as a child's home or bedroom and images and videos can be stored and shared with other people for the purpose of distressing another individual.

Online abuse is no different to any other type of abuse and DWT's Online Safety Guidance should be followed at all times and DWT's Safeguarding Procedure used to raise any concerns.

### Roles and Responsibilities for Safeguarding within DWT

The table below outlines roles and responsibilities:

Role	Responsibilities
Trustee lead for Safeguarding	Taking an overall lead in this area on behalf of the board of trustees. Challenging any strategic decisions which adversely affect anyone's wellbeing. With the Trust Director, reporting serious incidents as necessary to the Charity Commission.
All Trustees	Support the lead trustee in creating a positive Safeguarding culture that works to protect children and adults at risk within DWT Approve Safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure that Safeguarding is considered at within decision making.
Trust Director	The Trust Director will ensure that Safeguarding is embedded within all decisions made by senior management by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintaining a clear strategic and operational focus on Safeguarding children and adults at risk;</li> <li>• ensuring DWT meet the required legislative standards;</li> <li>• making sure everyone in the organisation is aware of their Safeguarding responsibilities and knows how to respond to concerns; and</li> <li>• reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission as necessary.</li> </ul>

Designated Safeguarding Officer – Children and Young People	The point of contact for concerns and making referrals if necessary and able to offer support and advice regarding Safeguarding
All DWT staff and trustees	Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff and trustees have a duty to act upon any concerns.

### **Duty to Refer**

In the context of child safeguarding, a referral is when someone contacts their Local Authority Children's Services because they have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child.

All UK legislation states that professionals or agencies with contact with children and members of their families must make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Services if there are signs that a child or unborn baby has suffered significant harm through abuse or maltreatment or is likely to suffer significant harm in the future. If you are responsible for making Safeguarding referrals it is important to be aware of your local area referral pathways as well as other support services such as Early Help and the different thresholds of need.

If the Local Authority are looking into an allegation of abuse or neglect against a child, they may contact any organisation working with them for information, such as DWT, to help build a full picture of their life and ascertain if any further concerns have been raised or noted.

Please refer to DWT Safeguarding Procedure for details on how to make a referral or escalate a concern.

Despite every effort to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations of child abuse are made against staff or trustees. In conjunction with the DWT Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), the Trust Director must investigate any allegations and liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The LADO is in place to be contacted for any concerns and advice regarding an adult who is working (paid or in a voluntary capacity) with a child and may have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The LADO will also advise if a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is required.

If your concerns relate to a member of the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Trust Director, or you are unhappy with how a Safeguarding concern is being dealt with, please contact the Trustee lead for safeguarding or consult the DWT Whistleblowing Policy.



### **Serious Incidents and Charity Regulators**

A serious incident amounts to a situation whereby harm has occurred to DWT beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or others who encounter DWT through our work.

In **England and Wales** the Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. The responsibility for this lies with the Trustees, however operationally this is delegated to Trust Director and the Designated Safeguarding Officer must also be notified before any incident is reported. In all circumstances DWT must be notified of any member of staff or trustee reporting a serious incident to a charity regulator.

If a member of staff or volunteer is found guilty by a court of law, of perpetrating abuse, Durham Wildlife Trust has the responsibility to inform DBS within one month of their conviction. This will be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

## Appendix 1

### Contextual Safeguarding

In addition to the four types of abuse detailed in the main policy there are additional types of abuse you need to be aware of called Contextual Safeguarding. This is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm extending beyond their families.

These extra-familial threats might arise at school and in other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or from the wider community and online. The following examples are all types of Contextual Safeguarding Risks.

<p><b>Sexual Exploitation (often referred to as Child Sexual Exploitation or CSE)</b></p>	<p>This occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.</p>	<p>Children who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;</li> <li>• associate with other young people involved in exploitation;</li> <li>• have older boyfriends or girlfriends;</li> <li>• suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;</li> <li>• suffer from changes in emotional well-being;</li> <li>• misuse drugs and alcohol;</li> <li>• go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and</li> <li>• regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Harmful sexual behaviour</b></p>	<p>Is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive.</p>	<p>There are no formal indicators for this area, however research has shown that children may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• display attachment disorders;</li> <li>• have previous sexual victimization – a younger age at the onset of the abuse is more likely to lead to sexualized behaviour;</li> <li>• have poor empathy skills.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child criminal exploitation</b></p>	<p>Is typified by a power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation and usually involves some</p>	<p>Signs that a child or young person is being groomed or exploited into criminal activity or county lines include:</p>

	<p>form of exchange (e.g. carrying drugs in return for something). The exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or clothes) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived friendship or affection). Young people who are criminally exploited are at a high risk of experiencing violence and intimidation and threats to family members may also be made.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• persistently going missing from school or home and/or being found out-of-area;</li> <li>• unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, jewellery, or mobile phones;</li> <li>• excessive receipt of texts or phone calls;</li> <li>• spending more time online or on their devices;</li> <li>• using more than one phone;</li> <li>• suddenly acquiring expensive gifts such as mobile phones, jewellery – even drugs – and not being able to explain how they came by them;</li> <li>• having hotel cards or keys to unknown places;</li> <li>• being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going;</li> <li>• relationships with controlling older individuals or groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Serious youth violence</b></p>	<p>Young people involved in crime, whether exploitatively or not, may be at risk of being seriously harmed or of causing serious physical injury to another. This could be a weapon-enabled violence (stabbing, shooting or hit and run type incidents) or through aggravated assault. The risk of serious youth violence may increase when the young person is gang-affiliated.</p>	<p>Signs to be aware of may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• child seems to withdraw from family life;</li> <li>• sudden loss of interest in school or change in behaviour;</li> <li>• decline in attendance or academic achievement;</li> <li>• being emotionally 'switched off', but also containing frustration / rage;</li> <li>• starting to use new or unknown slang words;</li> <li>• holding unexplained money or possessions;</li> <li>• sudden change in appearance – dressing in a particular style or 'uniform' similar to that of other young people they hang around with, including a particular colour.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Radicalisation</b></p>	<p>Is defined as the process by which people come to support an extreme ideology which advocates violence. This ideology may be religious or political in nature but can also include a fascination with a person (such as someone who has been involved in murders or torture) or a social movement, for example animal rights activism.</p> <p>The Governments Prevent strategy/intervention programme aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. While it remains rare for children and young people to become involved in terrorist activity, young people from an early age can be exposed to terrorist &amp; extremist influences or prejudiced views. Referrals for Prevent can be made via your Safeguarding leads.</p> <p>The Charity Commission requires all charities to prevent abuse for extremist purposes.</p>	<p>There are no standard indicators for radicalisation, but issues that may make a child vulnerable to radicalisation can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identity crisis - distance from cultural / religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them;</li> <li>• personal crisis - family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.</li> </ul>
------------------------------	---	--