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Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

Purpose and Scope

Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all vulnerable adults engaged in the breadth of its activities. DWT acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

Definition (from The Care Act 2014): an Adult at risk (also referred to as a vulnerable adult) is defined as any individual aged 18 and over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Our separate Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and related documents should be referred to for all safeguarding issues relating to those aged under 18.

This policy and related documents apply to all staff, trustees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of DWT.

The purposes of this policy is:

- to protect vulnerable adults who access DWT's services;
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to protecting vulnerable adults from abuse;
- to protect staff by having a clear framework, robust procedures and transparent reporting.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of vulnerable adults involved in our services is paramount;
- all people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual

orientation or identity, marital status, pregnancy and maternity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;

- working in partnership with vulnerable adults, their carers and other agencies is essential in ensuring their welfare.

We will seek to keep vulnerable adults safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting a best practice approach to safeguarding through appropriate procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers; and appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer for adults at risk (DSO) and lead trustee with responsibility for oversight of the Trust's safeguarding procedures;
- providing an effective management framework for staff and volunteers with appropriate supervision, support and training;
- ensuring all necessary checks are made when recruiting staff and volunteers in roles involving regular contact with vulnerable adults;
- working with other agencies to follow the Care Act statutory guidance;
- acting within our confidentiality policy and usually gaining permission from service users before sharing information about them with another agency;
- informing service users that where a person is in danger or at risk, or a crime has been committed, then a decision may be taken to pass information to another agency without the service user's consent;
- making safeguarding referrals to Safeguarding Adults Boards as appropriate;
- keeping up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and the welfare of adults.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect vulnerable adults:

- General Data Protection Regulations, 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2004
- Special Educational needs and disability code of practice 2014
- The Care Act 2014 and 2022

Documents relating to this Policy:

- Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Safer Recruitment, including our use of the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Reporting Guidance for Staff and Volunteers
- Online Safety Guidance

This policy operates in conjunction with our policies and procedures on:

- Recruitment

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Complaints
- GDPR and Data Protection
- Privacy and Data Retention
- Discipline and Grievance
- Health and Safety
- Social Media
- Whistle Blowing

Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

DWT is committed to ensuring that all managers, staff and volunteers who have frequent face to face contact with others undertake training to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse.

All appropriate staff and volunteers will be asked to complete the appropriate training/e-learning modules. This training will be repeated every 3 years (2 years for Level 3/Designated Safeguarding Officer).

DWT will not be limited in its view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as they can take many forms and the circumstances of an individual case will always be considered.

Types of Abuse include:

Discrimination - Including forms of harassment, bullying, slurs, isolation, neglect, denial of access to services or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, religion or because someone is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. This includes racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia or any other form of hate incident or crime.

Domestic abuse or violence - Including an incident or a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexual orientation. This includes psychological/emotional, physical, sexual, financial abuse; so called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Financial or material - Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery - Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Neglect and acts of omission - Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to access appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Organisational/Institutional - Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in a person's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on- going ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Physical - Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Psychological (sometimes referred to as emotional) - Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber- bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Sexual - Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual assault, sexual acts, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

It also includes sexual exploitation which may include situations, contexts and relationships where the person receives "something" (e.g., food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, mobile phones, cigarettes, gifts, money) or a perceived friendship/relationship based on them or others performing sexual acts.

Self-neglect - Includes a person neglecting to care for their personal hygiene, health or surroundings; or an inability to provide essential food, clothing, shelter or medical care necessary to maintain their physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing and general safety. It includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately (commission) or unknowingly (omission) and it may be a single act or repeated acts.

People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, staff, volunteers or others in a position of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities for Safeguarding within DWT

The table below outlines roles and responsibilities:

| <i>Role</i> | <i>Responsibilities</i> |
|--|---|
| 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">• maintaining a clear strategic and operational focus on Safeguarding children and adults at risk;• ensuring DWT meet the required legislative standards;• making sure everyone in the organisation is aware of their Safeguarding responsibilities and knows how to respond to concerns; and• reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission as necessary. |
| Designated Safeguarding Officer – Adults | 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. |

Reporting Guidance for Staff and Volunteers

DWT believes that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard adults at risk from harm and report any concerns they may have. Information on how to report safeguarding concerns is provided in the *Safeguarding Adults Reporting Guidance for Staff and Volunteers*.

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.

Taking, Storing and Using Images

It is Trust policy to not take photographs of individuals or groups participating in Trust activities to avoid any safeguarding concerns. When images are required for promotional purposes, the Trust will organise specific events or activities where photographs can be taken and safeguarding issues carefully managed.

Where organisations or groups participating in Trust activities have their own consent processes for photos, we will ensure that these are followed in relation to any images DWT subsequently uses for promotional purposes. The organisation or group will be made aware that images may be used by the Trust for promotional purposes and could be published in print and digital media and used on line and in social media and any consent given is on that basis.