Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group Safeguarding Policy

Updated: July 2025

Policy Statement

Everyone, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in a safe environment. We commit to taking all reasonable steps to protect every person from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

We believe **safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone**. This policy gives all the guidance necessary for all of us to play our part. Safeguarding should not be left to one or two individuals. If you spot something you **must** follow our Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding policy statement.

Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group works with children, vulnerable adults and families as part of its activities and support service.

This policy applies to everyone working on behalf of the Charity, and its registered members; including the board of trustees, contracted paid staff, volunteers, and all members. It covers anyone no matter their 'protected characteristics'. We recognise not all vulnerabilities are obvious.

We recognise the expertise of the Safeguarding Officer by undertaking and delivering safeguarding training and managing concerns raised on a regular basis. The Safeguarding Officer will contribute to the safeguarding arrangements and policy.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with legislation, such as the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, both of which are amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Care Act 2014 and policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults.

All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group takes its duty seriously and promotes regular safeguarding training.

Purpose and Scope

1. The purpose of this policy is to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group's support, services and attend our social activities. It is also to provide parents/ caregivers, contracted staff and volunteers with the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who encounters children, vulnerable adults and their families has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action. To this effect, the Charity ensures that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner.
3. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, are recorded in writing and kept as a confidential record.
4. We recognise that the welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount and regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
5. We recognise specifically the vulnerabilities of children and vulnerable adults, and the additional safeguarding challenges and barriers that can exist when recognising abuse and neglect because of:
    - Special Educational Needs,
    - Disability,
    - the impact of previous experiences,
    - their level of dependency, • their communication needs, or
    - other issues.
6. Working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting welfare.
7. The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is safeguarded and promoted by the Charity by developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice, and by the drawing up and effective implementation of our written Risk Assessment, which takes appropriate action to reduce risks that are identified. The Charity takes a proportional risk-based approach to the level of information that is provided to temporary contracted staff and volunteers.
8. This policy also includes guidance on procedures when a contracted member of staff/ volunteer, faces allegations of abuse.

Definitions

The charity uses definitions of the term ‘safeguarding’ from statutory guidance.

1. Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 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
   - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

2. Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 as:
   - protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
   - people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
   - people and organisations making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
   - recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being

Note: We recognise some adults may not be classed as vulnerable but may present signs of abuse (e.g. domestic violence) or disclose abuse. The procedure outlined in this policy can be applied to anyone.

Responsibilities

Safeguarding Officer

To ensure effective management of this policy and related policies, we have appointed a nominated trustee Safeguarding Officer for safeguarding. Safeguarding is also discussed regularly at trustee meetings. The Safeguarding Officer is Jessica Archer.

Liaison with other bodies

We have procedures for contacting the local authority on safeguarding issues. We work in partnership with local statutory agencies, including social services, to report concerns.

Using our safeguarding procedures, we are able to share concerns and relevant information with other agencies confidentially where appropriate.

Reporting Processes

Suspicions of Abuse or Concerns About a Child's/Vulnerable Adults Welfare

On appointment, and as part of the regular training to update Trustees, contracted staff, or volunteers on child welfare and safeguarding issues, all staff learn how to report suspicions of abuse or concerns about a child/ vulnerable adult's welfare to the Safeguarding Officer.

When a member wishes to report a suspicion or concern, they are asked to complete a written record, which is always given to the Safeguarding Officer, who will take action as appropriate. All records are kept confidential and reviewed regularly so that concerning patterns of behaviour can be spotted.

Use of Email

Trustees, contracted staff, volunteers or members are advised not to use email to write down or report abuse or concerns. If for any reason email is considered appropriate to communicate to another party, the child or adult's full name or other features that would identify him/her should not be included. The Safeguarding Officer may use email to report to authorities as long as it is a secure system e.g. local authorities have provisions for this. The Safeguarding Officer will check with local authorities how they wish to receive the information.

Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

We acknowledge that abuse can take different forms - physical, domestic violence or abuse, sexual, psychological or emotional abuse, financial or material abuse, modern slavery, discriminatory abuse, organizational or institutional abuse, neglect or acts of omission or self-neglect.

- When children are suffering from abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play.
- When adults are suffering from abuse it will also likely be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour.

Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's or vulnerable adult's behaviour gives cause for concern and there is a possibility of a child suffering significant harm, the Safeguarding Officer may consult Children's or Adult Services.

We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity and follow due process. The Safeguarding Officer, Trustees, contracted staff or volunteers in the Charity take care not to influence the outcome, either through the way they speak to the child or adult.

Where a child or vulnerable adult shows signs and symptoms of neglect or of a failure to thrive, we make appropriate referrals.

If at any time, it is considered that the child may be a child in need as defined in the Children Act 1989, or that the child has suffered significant harm or is likely to

do so, a referral will be made immediately to Local Authority's children's social care. This referral can be made by any member but would usually be made by the Safeguarding Officer. If any member makes a referral directly to Local Authority's children's social care, they should notify the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible thereafter.

Disclosures

Where a child or adult makes a disclosure to a Trustee, volunteer, contracted member of staff, or member of Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group, that person should:

- Offer reassurance;
- Listen;
- Gives reassurance that she or he will take action;
- Does not question the child/vulnerable adult;
- Does not register shock or other emotion;
- Must not promise confidentiality;
- Must always refer the matter to their Safeguarding Officer and complete a written safeguarding report.

Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures

All trustees, contracted staff, volunteers or members should understand the following steps to support recognising and responding to concerns:

'The 4 R's'

Recognise possible abuse, including knowing what abuse is, what to look out for, and how to be vigilant at all times.

Respond quickly and appropriately to possible concerns. Sometimes a concern is obvious, sometimes it is not.

Report your concerns to the Safeguarding Officer to ensure that relevant actions are carried out in order to keep our members safe and supported.

Record your observations and concerns, including the actions you and others have (or haven't) taken.

Here is a guide of recording your observation/concern:

make a written record of:

- The person's name;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;

- The exact words spoken by the child or adult;
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These Safeguarding Concern records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. All trustees, contracted staff and volunteers are trained in the procedures for recording and reporting by written record.

Whilst cases are active, confidential records are kept and updated regularly by the Safeguarding Officer.

Taking Concerns Forward

Where a safeguarding concern exists, the Safeguarding Officer will notify the matter to the appropriate services using the specified forms and procedures. Records will be kept securely and with limited access.

Informing Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

Subsequent to a referral to Children's social care, a relevant Duty Social Worker (DSW) will advise next steps. The responsibility for communication to the parents/ guardians/ caregivers would usually be exercised by the Safeguarding Officer or by a Trustee member if necessary (in the event the Safeguarding Officer should be unavailable and it cannot wait). In cases where the parent/ Guardian/ Caregiver is the likely abuser, the Local Authority investigating officers/ Police will inform them.

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Safeguarding Officer. Confidentiality cannot be promised.

Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

For the avoidance of doubt, this applies to all aspects of the Charity.

1. We always aim to ensure safe and fair recruitment as set out in our constitution and agreed by the Charity Commission. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is an integral factor in our recruitment and selection and is an essential part of creating safe environments for children, vulnerable adults and young people. All contracted staff and volunteers who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility and will be provided with guidance and training in good practice and child protection procedures.
2. We want to do all we can to ensure that no disqualified or unfit person works or volunteers in the Charity or has access to children and vulnerable adults. Though not an exhaustive list, this will include checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), checks against the appropriate Barred List, prohibition checks (where necessary), employment history, appropriate references and whether a person is disqualified from working with children (including by association, where applicable to the role applied for).

3. Our recruitment procedures comply with these demands.
4. We take particular care to ensure those involved in delivering any service or activity to our members are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

5. Applicants for posts within the Charity are clearly informed if the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations where appropriate). Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed, and that any job offer will be withdrawn if any check is not satisfactory. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
6. Volunteers who have not been through the full vetting process do not work unsupervised.
7. Any contracted staff and volunteers are advised about safeguarding on appointment and updated within every 3 years.
8. We ask parents/ guardians/ carers to be responsible and supervise their child/ vulnerable adult whilst attending any service or activity provided by contracted staff and volunteers. For members of Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group Dance Crew, please refer to our dance safeguarding policy. **External Workers and Visitors**

We take all appropriate steps to ensure that checks are made on any staff employed, or individual volunteering externally in the Charity.

We take security steps to ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. All visitors are checked for suitability and are always appropriately supervised.

Training and Support

New contracted staff, volunteers, and other workers (such as self-employed, visiting instructors etc.) who join the Charity are required to participate in induction training appropriate to their role. This will include as a minimum:

- The Charity's safeguarding policy;
- The Code of Conduct for Trustees/ Volunteers;
- Whistleblowing procedures/ policy;

Where necessary specific reference to online safety and training. Training will usually take place within the first few weeks.

All existing contracted staff, volunteers, and other workers (such as self-employed, visiting instructors etc.) who work with children or deliver support/ run activities receive updated training at regular intervals. We aim to ensure this happens at least once every three years.

Those staff, volunteers, and other workers who do not work directly with children receive training as deemed appropriate to their role. This training and supporting

guidance will also be updated at regular intervals. We aim to ensure this happens at least once every three years.

A record of training in safeguarding/ child protection is kept on a central record by Jessica Archer, Safeguarding Officer.

Risk Assessment

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Anyone working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults, or who is likely to come into contact with them will be asked to have a DBS check done before commencing their role with us. Your employment or volunteer agreement is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders act 1974 and the Police Act 1997.

You are further required to notify the Charity immediately if at any time during your employment, you are charged with or convicted of any criminal offences or are in receipt of any indictments or cautions. Failure to notify the Charity of any such charges, convictions, indictments, or cautions, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

Trustee, Contractual staff and Volunteer Obligations

1. All staff in our Charity are required to notify the Safeguarding Officer immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children/ vulnerable adults. This includes any trustee, contractual staff member or volunteer who are disqualified from childcare or registration including 'by association' i.e. they live in the same household (or someone is employed in their household) as someone who has unspent cautions or convictions for a relevant offence (please see a list of the relevant offences set out here): https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs
2. The 'by association' requirement also applies if a Trustee, contractual staff member, or Volunteer lives in the same household as or someone is employed in his/her household who has been disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006.
3. The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 apply to those providing early years' childcare or later years' childcare, including clubs, to children who have not attained the age of 8 AND to those who are directly concerned in the management of that childcare.
4. The Charity takes its responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults very seriously and any trustee, contractual staff member or volunteer worker who is aware of anything that may affect his/her suitability to work with children must notify the Charity immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings he/she may receive, or if he/she is living in a household where anyone lives or works who

has been disqualified from working with children or from registration for the provision of childcare.

5. Trustees, contracted staff, or volunteer worker who are disqualified from childcare or registration, including 'by association', may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such persons may not be employed in the areas from which they are disqualified, or involved in the management of those settings, unless and until such waiver is confirmed.
6. The Charity will promptly report to the DBS any person (whether contracted, a trustee or volunteer) whose services are no longer used for regulated activity and the DBS referral criteria are met; that is, they have caused harm or posed a risk of harm to a child.

Allegations of Abuse Against Members of Contracted Staff or Volunteers

By this we mean allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children/ vulnerable adults in our Charity (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere) or of any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises or elsewhere. Allegations must be reported immediately.

1. The Charity will adhere to the statutory guidance on dealing with allegations of abuse in force at the time, with any further action - including investigation.

2. We will consider and thoroughly investigate any allegation expeditiously, fairly and consistently, avoiding all unnecessary delays. The aim will always be to ensure a quick resolution to the benefit of all concerned; the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation will have a bearing on timescales.
3. In the case of serious harm, the Police will be informed from the outset.
4. Where appropriate, the person who is subject of an allegation will be notified as soon as is practicable and will be provided with as much information as possible at that time (NB: in some instances, the Charity may not be permitted to disclose full details).
5. Suspension will never be a default option; the Charity will always consider whether the circumstances warrant suspension and/or reasonable alternative arrangements (working under supervision) are appropriate before a final decision is given in this regard. The individual will be notified of the reasons and justification for suspension and provided with a named contact within one working day.
6. Allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from personnel records. We will not refer to any unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious allegations in employer references.

7. Whilst care will be taken to ensure the effective protection of the child or vulnerable adult making the allegation, we will always provide appropriate support to the person who is the subject of the allegation.
8. There are restrictions on the reporting or publishing of allegations against trustees, contracted staff and volunteer workers and the Charity will take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated. These restrictions apply up to the point where the accused is charged with an offence.
9. If the subject of an allegation chooses to resign, the Charity will continue with its investigation and will make every effort to reach a conclusion regardless of whether the individual chooses to assist the investigation.

Whistleblowing

The Charity aims to create and maintain an environment where all members feel supported in their safeguarding role and able to raise concerns, including about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Charity's safeguarding regime.

All Trustees, contracted staff, volunteers and members of Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group are required to report to the Safeguarding Officer any concern or allegations about Charity practices or the behaviour of any Trustee, contracted staff, volunteer, or members who are likely to put children/ vulnerable adults at risk of abuse or other serious harm. There will be no retribution taken against a Trustee, contracted staff, volunteer, or member for making such a report if it is done in good faith.

The Charity has a separate Whistleblowing policy (please see above). Further

Government advice on whistleblowing can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing

Summary

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we expect you to have read all policies and undertake training so you are aware what to do should you spot it or it be disclosed to you. If you are uncertain about anything in this policy, please speak to the Safeguarding Officer.

Please refer to the Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Statement and Procedure document for further guidance and contact information to report a concern.

Safeguarding Lead

Role of the Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding Officer (along with trustees, contracted staff or volunteers) is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This Policy will be reviewed annually or earlier in the case of a significant change in any relevant legislation or regulatory guidance. We have a designated Safeguarding Officer. Details are as follows:

The Safeguarding Officer is:
Contact details: Jessica Archer
Tel: 0750 077 5596 safeguardingcadsg@gmail.com

The Deputy Safeguarding Officer is:
Contact details: Louise Ellis
Louise@cadsg.org

Contact may also be made to:

West Sussex Integrated Front Door

Request support or raise a concern about a child - West Sussex County Council

Approval

This Safeguarding Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees

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Monitoring and Review

Reviewed By	Date Reviewed	Date of next Review
Jessica Archer	02/12/2024	02/12/2025
Jessica Archer	July 2025	July 2026