

Child and Adult protection and Safeguarding policy

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Issuing team/department:	Children, Young People and Families
Version no:	4
Date approved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDs • Trustee Board 	<p>26 February 2020</p> <p>21 March 2020</p>
Review frequency:	Annual
Next review date:	March 2021
Circulation (primary location):	Intranet

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1. Policy statement

- 1.1 The National Deaf Children's Society, including its international arm Deaf Child Worldwide, believe that children and adults should never experience abuse of any kind. All children have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse regardless of for example, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, language or social background.
- 1.2 We are committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk as an integral part of our Mission and Values. We will *promote* the welfare of children and adults at risk; work to *prevent* abuse occurring, seek to *protect* those who are risk of abuse or neglect; and *respond* as effectively as we are able to those who have been abused. We will take steps to identify those people who may be at risk children and/or adults at risk.
- 1.3 Legal frameworks and procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns vary from country to country, but we wish to see these fundamental principles applied wherever we are working.
- 1.4 Deaf and disabled children and adults may be particularly vulnerable to abuse, especially where they are more dependent on others due to the extent of their disability or have difficulty communicating. It is especially important to make sure all steps are taken to protect them from harm and to keep a watchful eye for signs of abuse or neglect.
- 1.5 Safeguarding and responding to child/adult protection concerns is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and representatives whether salaried or voluntary, whatever their role or status.
- 1.6 Promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk by working in partnership with them, their parents, carers and other agencies within the countries we operate is essential.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society or its international arm Deaf Child Worldwide. The term 'staff' is used for simplicity throughout this document to refer to all of the above.

3. Definitions

3.1 **Safeguarding** can be defined as:

- Protecting children and adults from harm and maltreatment
- Preventing harm which could result in the impairment of children's or adults' health or development
- Promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk and enabling them to achieve the best outcomes¹.

3.2 **Child/adult protection:** refers to the actions taken to protect children and/or adults who are at immediate risk of harm.

3.3 **Abuse:** Child/adult abuse, sometimes also referred to as 'maltreatment', is defined as all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, radicalisation, misuse of power, coercion or control over another person, commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's/adult's health, development or dignity². Abuse is harm which is so severe or persistent that it's deemed "significant" and is likely to have a lasting effect on the health or development of the child or adult. This policy applies to all forms of harm, including harm which may be caused intentionally or unintentionally, and which may not reach the threshold of significant harm. Further definitions of harm/abuse can be found in the Procedures and Guidance documents.

3.4 **Child:** Although we recognise that the legal definitions of a child varies in different countries, for the purpose of this policy children are defined as all those less than 18 years of age in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child³. The guidance document sets out where there are legal definitions to consider within countries.

3.5 **Adults at Risk/vulnerable adults:** An adult at risk for the purpose of this policy, is anybody 18 or over and "who may be in need of care services by reason of mental health issues, disability, age or illness and who is unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation"⁴. The definition of an adult at risk varies from country to country. Some of our programmes and partners work with individuals aged 18-25 years. Accordingly, NDCS and DCW will respond to concerns regarding adults at risk that we support or come into contact with in accordance to this policy and legislation applicable to the countries we operate in. We have a legal duty to apply safeguarding interventions when we identify an adult at risk.

3.6 **Vulnerable adults:** We also support or come into contact with other adults, who are not deaf themselves or related to a deaf child, through a range of services such as family weekends, helpline or family support officers (CFSOs), local groups and family sign

¹ Adapted from the definition in Department for Education (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children

² World Report on Violence and Health, WHO 1999 and 2002

³ UNCRC (1989) Guiding Principles. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Guiding_Principles.pdf

⁴ Care and Support Statutory Guidance, (as issued under the Care Act 2014) 2018

language sessions. All adults at some point experience vulnerability, for example through bereavement, relationship breakdown, job loss or due to characteristic factors such as living with disability, dementia and mental ill health. NDCS and DCW will respond to adults identified as vulnerable, or experiencing a period of vulnerability, and in need of support by signposting them to other services such as the Samaritans.

- 3.7 **Deaf:** We use the term 'deaf' to refer to **all levels of hearing loss in children and young people**, including a partial, total or temporary loss of hearing. This includes those who may describe themselves as having a 'hearing loss', 'hearing impairment' or as 'deaf' and includes children who have glue ear.

4. Principles

We will seek to keep children safe by:

- 4.1 Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- 4.2 Through our work, supporting them to develop an awareness of unacceptable behaviour and what they can do about it.
- 4.3 Appointing a Safeguarding Assurance Manager and specific designated safeguarding officers for all areas of the organisation.
- 4.4 Appointing a board member as Trustee Safeguarding Lead to have oversight of our safeguarding work.
- 4.5 Adopting safeguarding and child protection practices through robust policies and procedures.
- 4.6 Making sure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities and providing effective management for staff through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- 4.7 Recruiting staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- 4.8 Making sure that we provide a safe physical environment for our children and staff by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the country specific laws and regulatory guidance, and to any higher standards that may be set by us.
- 4.9 Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and adults at risk, their families and staff via the most appropriate method to the country we are operating in.
- 4.10 Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know and who will manage it and respond appropriately.
- 4.11 Using our procedures to manage any allegation against staff or other service users appropriately, transparently and effectively, and to prevent the employment/ deployment of unsuitable individuals through effective due diligence.
- 4.12 Making sure that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.

5. Responsibilities and escalation

- 5.1 Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. This should be made explicit in every job or role description for staff, sessional workers and volunteers and referenced in agreements with partners and contractors.
- 5.2 The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in the National Deaf Children's Society and Deaf Child Worldwide.
- 5.3 Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may lead to disciplinary process, ultimately resulting in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.
- 5.4 We will make sure each department within the charity has a designated safeguarding officer who can provide advice on any safeguarding concerns and escalate them where appropriate.
- 5.5 We will make sure there is clear internal escalation procedure to the safeguarding assurance manager, executive directors and trustees, as well as external escalation to the relevant authorities responsible for safeguarding/child abuse allegations within each country we operate⁵.
- 5.6 Our trustees will maintain an oversight of safeguarding within the organisation to make sure that those benefiting from, or working with the charity are not harmed in any way through contact with it. This includes having a nominated Trustee Safeguarding Lead. The safeguarding responsibilities for trustees and for the Trustee Safeguarding Lead are set out in the trustees' role description.

6. Implementation

- 6.1 This policy is implemented through accompanying detailed procedures, specific to the UK or international context. The procedures contain all necessary forms, flowcharts and contact information. Guidance and training are also provided to help staff carry out their safeguarding and child/adult protection responsibilities.

In the UK

- Safeguarding Procedures and Guidance

Internationally

- DCW: Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

⁵ Regulations in England state that it is a requirement for employees (staff and volunteers) of residential holiday schemes for disabled children to report a concern about the safety or welfare of a child to one of the following: i) The National Deaf Children's Society's registered person/manager; ii) The National Deaf Children's Society's Safeguarding Assurance Manager; iii) police officer; iv) Ofsted; v) the local authority in whose area accommodation is being provided by the scheme (children's social care team); vi) National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Regulation 13 (2) (e))

7. Further information and supporting documentation

- 7.1 A list of safeguarding personnel can be found in Appendix 1.
- 7.2 For further information or queries, including advice on implementing this policy and procedures, please contact your designated safeguarding officer. Names and contact details can be found as an appendix to the relevant procedures and guidance.
- 7.3 This policy is supported by the additional following policies, rules, standards, forms and procedures:
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice
 - Safer Recruitment and Vetting policy
 - Procedures for managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- There are similar reporting requirements for our events in Scotland with the Care Inspectorate:
- E-safety policy
 - Confidentiality and Information Sharing policy
 - Lone Working policy and procedure
- 7.4 Other related policies are:
- Complaints
 - Health and Safety
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Whistleblowing
 - Data Protection
 - Relationship and Sexual Health
- 7.5 A list of relevant UK and international laws and guidance can be found in Appendix 2.

8. Revisions

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually and additionally if a significant change is made to the laws, regulations, systems or processes related to this policy.

Appendix 1: Safeguarding personnel

The National Deaf Children's Society will have the following specific safeguarding roles:

- Trustee Safeguarding Lead
- Safeguarding Strategic Lead
- Safeguarding Assurance Manager
- Designated Safeguarding officers for each team within the Children, Young People and Families department
- Registered person/manager for residential holiday schemes
- Deaf Child Worldwide designated safeguarding officer
- Designated safeguarding officers for each of the other departments (and Wales)
- Designated safeguarding officer for volunteers
- Designated safeguarding officers for Scotland, Northern Ireland, East Africa and South Asia
- Out of hours safety coordinators (UK)

Questions and concerns may also be addressed to the Safeguarding Assurance Manager's email address: Andrew.richardson@ndcs.org.uk

Name and contact details can be found as an appendix to the relevant procedures and guidance.

Appendix 2: Relevant laws and related guidance

This policy has been drawn up in the basis of UK and relevant international laws and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults (this list is not exhaustive):

International Legislation

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991 (Article 19)

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008

European Convention on Human Rights

In the UK (not limited to)

Legislation

Children's Act 1989 and 2004

Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Associated Legislation

Data protection Act 2018

Information Sharing Statutory Guidance 2015

Human Rights Act 1998

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

Equality Act 2010

Protection of Freedom Act 2011

Children and Families Act 2014

Community Care Act 2014

Serious Crime Act 2015

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Government and Statutory Guidance (UK)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)

Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People (Northern Ireland, 2017)

Working Together to Safeguard People (Wales, 2017)

Prevent Strategy (2011)

National Professional Standards and Regulatory Bodies (UK)

Ofsted

Care Inspectorate

Local Agencies (UK)

Local Safeguarding Children Board (currently transitioning to Local Safeguarding Partnerships)

Area Child Protection Committees

Safeguarding Board for NI

In other countries where we work

Each country where we work has specific laws with which we will comply.