

Doorstep Library Safeguarding Policy

1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy is made in line with the Doorstep Library's (DL) mission to protect people from harm; make sure people can raise safeguarding concerns; handle allegations or incidents if and when they arise.
- 1.2 DL works with children, young people and adults through its projects and has a responsibility to promote the wellbeing and safety of all people with whom it comes into contact.
- 1.3 DL believes it is always unacceptable for a person to experience abuse or neglect of any kind.
- 1.4 DL is committed to protecting children, adults at risk and all stakeholders from harm and responding appropriately when harm is experienced or there is risk of harm.

2.0 Policy purpose

- 2.1 To safeguard and promote the wellbeing of anyone who interacts with DL.
- 2.2 To ensure all relevant stakeholders are aware of and understand the policy.
- 2.3 To guide relevant stakeholders on how they should behave if they suspect harm is or has been experienced or there is a risk of it happening.
- 2.4 To ensure compatibility with other DL policies.

3.0 Who is affected by this policy?

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees, trustees, volunteers, contractors or other stakeholders working for, with or representing DL in any capacity in any setting.
- 3.2 All relevant stakeholders must be made aware of the policy before working for, with or representing DL. Those with specific communication needs because of language or disability should have access to information in appropriate forms to ensure their understanding.

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 A 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. It also includes unborn children (Children Act, 1989).
- 4.2 Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (temporarily or permanently) for various reasons in different situations, including:
 - a. Learning or physical disability
 - b. Physical or mental illness
 - c. Reduction in physical or mental capacity
 - d. Receipt of any form of healthcare or community services

- e. Detention in custody
 - f. Inability to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.
- 4.3 DL 'stakeholders' include trustees, employees (staff), volunteers, freelance consultants and associates
- 4.4 'Management' is defined as senior staff (SMT) and trustees.

5.0 Legal framework

- 5.1 There is a legislative framework in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults through:
- a. The Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004)
 - b. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - c. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
 - d. Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (2009)
 - e. What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015) (Department for Education 2015).
 - f. Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.
 - g. Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 sets out the "need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"
 - h. <https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/front-page>
- 5.2 This policy will adhere to relevant legislation and guidance in England. The standards and expectations set out in the policy will also apply to places and people DL works with anywhere in the world.

6.0 General principles

- 6.1 Safeguarding relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and to protect them from harm.
- 6.2 All DL stakeholders should have, as a minimum, a basic awareness of safeguarding issues, including:
- a. Being alert to the possibility of abuse and neglect
 - b. Having enough knowledge to recognise an abusive or potentially abusive event or set of circumstances
 - c. Knowing who within DL to raise concerns with
 - d. Being competent to take the appropriate immediate or emergency action. If any member of staff has any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult, they must alert DL's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Emily Oliver
 - e. If the DSL agrees there is grounds for concern, they must take appropriate action to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult. This may include contacting the relevant local authority or the local police
 - f. **If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger the member of staff who first becomes aware of the danger should dial 999 for the police.**
 - g. If the concern relates to a member of staff, the DSL should raise concerns with CEO/ Safeguarding Trustee if appropriate, and contact the local authority Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care team responsible for providing advice and liaison in such cases. In any situation where there is a suspicion

of abuse, the welfare needs of the child or adult at risk must come first even where there may be a conflict of interest (e.g. where the suspected perpetrator may be a member of staff).

7.0 What constitutes abuse?

- 7.1 Abuse is a deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a person's safety, wellbeing and development. Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional.
- 7.2 Neglect also constitutes abuse but can be defined as failing to provide or secure a child or vulnerable adult with the basic needs required for physical safety and wellbeing.
- 7.3 DL recognises that a person's welfare is paramount and that all children and adults at risk have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse - regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief and sexual orientation or identity.
- 7.4 DL ensures that all stakeholders are made aware of and given access to our internal 'Safeguarding definitions and signs of abuse' document for further detail.

8.0 Procedures for safeguarding adults and children

8.1. The current policy must be available at all times to all stakeholders:

- a. through the Doorstep Library internal file sharing system
- b. an electronic copy sent via email
- c. on the Doorstep Library website
- d. a hard copy at each Doorstep Library base and in the office.

8.2 There are 3 designated persons within Doorstep Library Network with clearly defined responsibilities for safeguarding children: the Designated Lead on Safeguarding (DSL) who has overall responsibility, the CEO and the Safeguarding Trustee (phone numbers listed at the end of this document).

8.3 Organisation duties and responsibilities:

- a. Raise awareness of the need to protect children and adults at risk and reduce risks to them
- b. Ensure staff and volunteers in contact with children and adults at risk have the requisite knowledge, skill and qualifications to carry out their jobs safely and effectively
- c. Ensure safe practice when working in partnership with other organisations, that they have in place adequate safeguarding arrangements, including appropriate policies and mechanisms to provide assurance on compliance
- d. Maintain an organisation that is safe for all stakeholders, children and vulnerable adults and an environment where poor practice is challenged
- e. Ensure all staff, associates, volunteers, young people and trustees who will be working with children and adults at risk consent to vetting through the Disclosure and Barring Scheme where applicable
- f. Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken:
 - i. Recording all incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints

- ii. Reporting any serious incidents immediately to the Safeguarding Trustee. The Safeguarding Trustee will then decide, with the CEO and DSL, on the appropriate action to be taken, acting within the guidelines of the relevant Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care team and within the statutes of the law at that present time
- iii. Reporting to the trustees of all new incidents or complaints is scheduled at every trustees meeting, as is follow up
- iv. Reporting to the Charity Commission if appropriate
- g. Ensure appropriate DL leaders and staff are accountable for the effective implementation of this policy
- h. Ensure all staff receive copies of safeguarding policies, are trained in their meaning and application and understand their responsibilities.
- i. Reviewing the policy and procedures annually, or sooner if there are legislative changes or changes in practice to be considered
- j. Ensuring that it has up-to-date information about government guidance on safeguarding and that its policies and practice comply with all recommendations on good practice

8.4. Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- a. Providing support and advice to managers and all staff on safeguarding matters related to children and adults at risk
- b. Ensuring all stakeholders receive training on child protection and safeguarding as part of their induction, and on an ongoing basis where required
- c. Managing referrals/cases reported and working to ensure resolutions
- d. Carrying out referrals to the relevant local authority social care team where abuse of a child or adult at risk is reported or suspected
- e. Referring the matter to the local authority Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care team where a member of staff is suspected of abuse
- f. Maintaining an overview of safeguarding issues and monitoring the implementation of this policy
- g. Deciding, supported by the CEO and Safeguarding Trustee if appropriate, whether to refer any reported matters onto the police or to the local authority social care service. Where possible, referrals should be made on the same working day and certainly **within 24 hours**.
- h. Including this policy on the agenda for discussion at trustee meetings and other appropriate meetings
- i. Ensuring that clear written guidance on what to do when a child safeguarding incident or concern arises is available to all stakeholders
- j. Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with staff and volunteers.
- k. Handling safeguarding allegations in a charity:
<https://safeguarding.culture.gov.uk/how-use-tool>

8.5. Responsibilities of trustees

- a. To comply with their legal duties, trustees must react responsibly to reports of safeguarding risks and incidents of abuse and take steps to make sure all staff know how to deal with these.

- b. Trustees should report a suspected or actual serious incident to the Charity Commission by email at: RSI@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk if:
 - i. beneficiaries have been, or are alleged to have been, abused or mistreated while under the care of DL, or by someone connected with DL, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer
 - ii. there has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated (alleged or actual) and this is connected with DL's activities
 - iii. there has been a breach of procedures or policies at DL which has put beneficiaries at risk, including a failure to carry out checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified under safeguarding legislation, from working with children or adults.
- c. In addition, immediate action should be taken to:
 - i. prevent or minimise any further harm
 - ii. report it to the police, if it is suspected a crime has been committed, and to any other regulators the charity is accountable to
 - iii. plan what to say to staff, volunteers, members, the public and the media
 - iv. review what happened and prevent it from happening again - this may include strengthening internal controls and procedures, and/or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers.

8.6 Responsibilities of DL line managers

Individual line managers are responsible for ensuring staff and volunteers comply with the expectations set out within this policy. Specific responsibilities include:

- a. Being the first point of contact for reports of concerns
- b. Ensuring all employees and volunteers in regulated roles are subject to DBS checks where applicable
- c. Reporting all concerns to the DSL, or CEO/Safeguarding Trustee if unavailable
- d. Providing advice and support to employees reporting disclosures or concerns
- e. Working with the DSL to resolve issues.

8.7 Employee responsibilities

DL staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children and adults at risk with whom they work. It is the responsibility of staff to promote good practice and minimise and manage potential risks. All staff – including volunteers, freelance staff and associates - must be aware of the requirements within these procedures.

Action to safeguard:

- a. DL staff have no powers to investigate abuse. But all staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or adults at risk and a responsibility to work closely and co-operatively with other agencies to achieve this. Staff may have a role as referrers, witnesses or supporters in safeguarding processes
- b. If a member of staff suspects that a child or adult at risk is being harmed by experiencing, or already has experienced, abuse or neglect and/or is likely to suffer harm in the future, they must talk to the DSL
- c. It is not the responsibility of DL to decide if abuse has taken place. It is the responsibility of staff at DL to act if there is cause for concern so the

appropriate agencies can investigate and take any action necessary to protect the young and/or adult at risk

- d. If a member of staff is concerned a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger, or requires immediate medical treatment, they should call the police and/or emergency medical services on 999 straight away.

9.0 Trustee, staff and volunteer behaviour

9.1 DL trustees, staff and volunteers working with children and/or adults at risk may be required to undergo awareness training.

9.2 Trustees, staff and volunteers must adhere to our code of conduct and should not:

- a. meet with a child or adult at risk on their own without the knowledge of the DSL or other member of management
- b. ask overly personal questions, including those about age or appearance (unless specifically related to a work project, in which case it must be documented in the relevant beneficiary notes)
- c. send/give out material that could be considered offensive, which includes material on social media sites
- d. suggest or imply a personal relationship could develop
- e. take an aggressive or bullying tone
- f. have physical contact
- g. offer or accept personal high value or monetary gifts
- h. travel alone with a young and/or vulnerable person.

9.3 The Internet is a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs and some adults use the Internet to try to establish contact with young and/or vulnerable people to 'groom' them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. DL would consider trustee, staff and volunteer involvement in such activities as gross misconduct, which could ultimately lead to dismissal and referral for police investigation.

9.4 Presence on websites and social media

Trustees, staff and volunteers should take care when communicating with others online, particularly when identifying themselves as DL trustees, staff or volunteers and when in contact with children and adults at risk.

Trustees, staff and volunteers should not make or accept connection requests to or from parents or children on any personal social media platforms.

9.5 DL trustees, staff and volunteers obtaining and accessing inappropriate text and images

Many websites contain offensive, obscene or indecent material such as sexually explicit images and related material, advocating of illegal activities, advocating intolerance for others.

Trustees, staff and volunteers authorised to use the Internet must not download pornographic or other unsuitable material on to DL machines or distribute such material to others. DL would consider this gross misconduct which could ultimately lead to dismissal and referral for police investigation.

In addition, users must not place any material on to the Internet that would be considered inappropriate, offensive or disrespectful of others. Disciplinary action will be taken against trustees, staff and volunteers that breach this policy.

Where this is done inadvertently, the user must escape from the website and/or delete the material immediately. They should also report the incident to their line manager, the DSL or CEO. Breach of this will be treated as gross misconduct.

9.6 Children or adults at risk obtaining indecent images or ‘sexting’

If a child or adult at risk reports to a member of staff or volunteer that they have sent, or been sent, indecent images (sometimes referred to as ‘sexting’), they should discuss the concern with the DSL. The police and the relevant Children’s Social Care or Adult Social Care team should always be contacted if:

- a. somebody involved is over the age of 18 or under the age of 13
- b. there are concerns about the ability to give consent
- c. the images are extreme or show violence
- d. the incident is intended to cause physical or emotional harm
- e. there is reason to believe the young person has been blackmailed, coerced or groomed.

Details of the incident and the actions taken must be recorded in writing. Staff should avoid looking at the image, video or message in question. If it is on a device belonging to DL, it may need to be isolated so that nobody else can see it. This may involve blocking the network to all users.

10.0 Confidentiality and sharing information

10.1 Confidentiality and the possible impact on the child or adult at risk

In any work with children and/or adults at risk it is important to be clear about confidentiality. When signing up to Doorstep Library families should be informed about confidentiality and safeguarding processes, and what responsibilities members of staff have. It is essential to be clear about the limits of confidentiality well before any such matter arises.

While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the subject’s consent, it is essential staff respond quickly where they have concerns or suspicions of abuse. Any concerns about confidentiality should not override the rights of children and/or adults at risk of, or suffering, harm. DL’s responsibility for protecting children and adults at risk means that, where necessary to protect welfare, it will breach confidentiality to raise concerns.

Information sharing must be done in a way that is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the common law duty of confidentiality. However, a concern for confidentiality must never be used as a justification for withholding information when it would be in the child or adult at risk’s best interests to share information.

10.2 Do not promise to keep secrets.

Should it become necessary to pass on information shared by another party this decision should always be discussed with the person in question and where possible

their cooperation sought beforehand. Explanations of the reasons, processes, likely sequence of events and who to contact for information or for support should also be provided.

When a child or adult at risk makes an allegation of abuse, they may hope that the abuse will stop without further enquiries. They may fear the effect this will have on their family and may fear retribution from the abuser. They should be helped to understand why the referral (to the DSL) must be made and what is likely to happen as a result. It is important to reassure the child or adult at risk, but he/she must not be told that their allegation will be treated in a way or that the information will be kept a secret.

DL should keep a record should be kept of any decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If DL decide to share, then record what has been shared, with whom and for what purpose.

10.3 Confidential Record-Keeping

Even if a concern has been discussed with a line manager/DSL, it is important all concerns are properly recorded in writing whether further action is taken or not.

It is important concerns raised are recorded accurately and in detail. All discussions should end with clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action. Where no further action is the outcome the reason for this should be clearly recorded.

Some of the information requested by the form may not be available. Staff should not pursue the questioning of the child or adult at risk for this information if it is not given freely. There should be no delay in reporting the matter by waiting for all the information.

Records must be kept securely in a locked place or file to which access is restricted. Managers have a responsibility in maintaining the confidentiality of these records and must ensure that the records, or any information they contain, are made available only to relevant parties. The transfer of information - verbally, through the mail, electronically, etc. - should be done in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

10.4 On and off-site activities

A Risk Assessment is in place for DL ongoing activities with children and/or adults at risk and should be reviewed annually.

11.0 Safe recruitment

11.1 Recruiting staff and volunteers

Some roles within DL, whilst not 'regulated positions' and thus not requiring a check of the barred list through the Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS), may involve working directly with children and/or adults at risk. Where this is the case, the relevant member of staff or volunteer will be required to have a DBS check carried out prior to commencing any direct work with children and/or adults at risk.

Where a criminal conviction is disclosed by an applicant or through a DBS check/basic disclosure, the stakeholder's line manager will consider this assessment objectively and, where the assessment indicates that the level of risk is too high to

allow the individual to start/continue working in a particular role/activity, the consequences of this for the individual will depend upon:

- a. The check concerned
- b. The reason for the check (that is, check for a new stakeholder, a recheck for an existing stakeholder in their current post or a check for an existing stakeholder in a new post)
- c. Relevant legislation
- d. The post concerned
- e. Whether the individual is suitable for other employment opportunities available within the organisation.

Possible outcomes include amended duties, redeployment, withdrawal of an offer of employment or, where the individual started work before the relevant screening check was completed, dismissal.

Safe recruitment practice of checking work history, identity, explanations for any gaps and references must be followed for all staff working at DL and partner organisations even if direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults is not part of their role.

11.2 Supporting staff

Line Managers should ensure the staff they line manage are aware of and understand the procedures and have the levels of knowledge and skills commensurate to their direct involvement with children and/or adults.

All staff and volunteers should:

- a. be supervised and supported in their work
- b. work to DL safeguarding procedures
- c. receive training in safeguarding at a level appropriate to their work
- d. receive refresher training and read policies annually
- e. be able to raise concerns about poor and dangerous practice.

All staff must fill in our internal 'Staff Safeguarding Training and Policies Log' whenever training has been undertaken and the following documents have been read and understood:

- a. DL Safeguarding Policy
- b. Safeguarding Children – the 4 R's
- c. Safeguarding Definitions and Signs of Abuse
- d. Online Safeguarding Policy

Staff must email the DSL to confirm that they have completed the above and filled in the log.

11.3 Safeguarding staff and volunteers

In order to protect staff and volunteers and other stakeholders, DL will follow the same safeguarding processes that apply to children and adults at risk.

DL will offer regular and ongoing support and supervision to all staff and volunteers, and foster a culture whereby people are always comfortable to raise concerns.

In addition to this policy, DL also has the following policies in place to further protect staff and volunteers:

- a. Complaints procedure
- b. Confidentiality
- c. Data Protection
- d. Equality and Diversity
- e. Health and Safety
- f. Volunteering
- g. Code of conduct

11.4 Allegations against staff

Any suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a child or adult at risk by an employee, CEO, volunteer, trustee or any other stakeholder must be reported to the DSL.

Concerns about staff must be treated with the same rigour as other concerns. If there are concerns abuse has taken place the DSL will pass this information to the Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care team for investigation. The DSL will work with the member of staff's line manager and will also need to decide whether the member of staff should be suspended pending a full investigation.

If the member of staff is not happy with the response they receive from the DSL, then they should refer to DL's Whistle Blowing Policy.

12.0 Complying with this policy

12.1 Expectations of employees

Staff and volunteers must always work to a high standard of professional conduct and act with integrity, to minimise the risk of abuse. When incidents of abuse are raised or suspected it is important staff have the necessary information and support and follow the procedures appropriately.

Staff and volunteers should ensure they have read and understood DL's safeguarding procedures in full. They should highlight and discuss any issues requiring clarification and any training issues with their line manager. Staff and volunteers should make sure that they have a working knowledge of the different forms of abuse and possible indicators.

All staff and volunteers should ensure that, when working with children and/or adults at risk, all colleagues, volunteers and other staff from partnering organisations have the appropriate employee checks in place which must include a full career history, identity checks and references and adherence to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) where applicable.

12.2 Freelance staff and associates

It is the responsibility of the commissioning manager or member of staff to ensure these staff are familiar with this document and agree to work within this framework. If there are any concerns with the conduct of freelance staff or associates, these concerns must be raised following the steps outlined in this policy.

13.0 Contact details

If you suspect that a child or adult at risk needs protection or is at risk of abuse, please contact DL's Designated Lead on Safeguarding (DSL):

- Name: Emily Oliver
- Title: Head of Programmes / DSL
- Mobile: 07769 320338 (10am-6pm, Mon-Fri) or 07944 007262 (if unavailable or outside of working hours)
- Email: emily@doorsteplibrary.org.uk

If the DSL is unavailable, contact:

- Name: Katie Bareham
- Title: CEO
- Mobile: 07836 250134
- Email: Katie@doorsteplibrary.org.uk
- Name: Aileen Kane
- Title: Safeguarding Trustee
- Mobile: 07894 819810
- Email: aileenkane1@gmail.com

14.0 Useful numbers for DL staff

- **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (24 hours)**
To report or discuss concerns about a child's welfare. Tel: 0808 800 5000 or textphone: 0800 056 0566 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP)**
Report a concern that a child is being sexually abused or groomed online at www.ceop.police.uk
- **Local Social Services Child Protection teams:**
- Hammersmith & Fulham - familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk or tel: 020 8753 6600 / out of hours service: 020 8748 8588
- Westminster - accesstochildreancesservices@westminster.gov.uk or tel: 020 7641 4000 / out of hours service: 020 7641 2388
- Lambeth – helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk or tel: 020 7926 5555
- Camden - LBCMASHAdmin@camden.gov.uk or tel: 020 7974 3317 / out of hours service: 020 7974 4444

15.0 Policy Owner

The DL Children and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy is owned by the CEO of DL. It will be annually reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and internal change.

16.0 Policy Review

DL will continually review, reflect and improve all safeguarding policies to ensure they are fit for purpose.