

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure v.7

Policy

It is DAS policy to provide an environment in which children and vulnerable adults, to the extent they may be exposed to us during the delivery of our services, are safe from abuse, and in which we respond to any suspicion of abuse promptly and appropriately.

We enforce procedures aimed at excluding known abusers from acting as a DAS employee or volunteer:

- In our application form for staff and volunteers it is made clear that the position is exempt from the 'Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974'.
- New members of staff have references checked, and any unexplained gaps in their employment history, or movement from one job to another requires an explanation.
- All staff and volunteers are required to provide clearance through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Our policy and procedures have taken into consideration compliance with the best practice set out in the [Home Office's Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance \(July 2022\)](#). DAS is committed to ensuring that it provides a safe space for our staff and volunteers, as well as our service users. We actively foster a culture where individuals feel comfortable in raising issues that concern them, knowing that they will be listened to and believed. The above guidance recommends a multi-agency approach, and DAS has established a relationship with a local specialist agency to support any individual, both staff and service user, who experiences domestic abuse.

Definitions

Children

A *child* is defined in the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 as "*anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This includes unborn children.*".

Safeguarding children is defined 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; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Adults

Safeguarding adults is defined as "*Protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect*" ([Care and Support statutory guidance](#), chapter 14 Safeguarding). Adult safeguarding is about preventing and responding to concerns of abuse, harm or neglect of adults at risk.

Principles for guiding our safeguarding activities

DAS will use these principles to guide our safeguarding activities. They are also used by local authorities and other statutory bodies to direct their adult

safeguarding activities:

- empowerment - actions or decisions must be based on the presumption of person-led decisions and informed consent
- prevention - it is better to take action before harm occurs
- proportionality - the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- protection - support and representation for those in greatest need
- partnerships - local solutions through services working with their communities
- accountability - accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

Fundamental to this policy is our aim to involve the client in decisions about what should happen wherever possible.

Mental capacity and safeguarding

We will assume that adults have mental capacity to make informed decisions about their own safety and how they live their lives. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is central to decisions and actions in safeguarding adults.

Where a person is able to make an informed choice in relation to a particular decision, they have a right to self-determination.

In practice, it may come to light that an adult at risk does not have capacity to make informed decisions about their own situation. One way this could occur is if an adult at risk's carer has a registered lasting power of attorney for one or more of the adults at risk's affairs. If there is reason to believe that the adult at risk is being abused, has been abused in the past, neglected or exploited by the person they attended with, it will be difficult to have a conversation with the client alone. If seeking consent would put a client in greater danger, then the staff member or volunteer should consult with the manager or chair of the management committee. In these circumstances, it is important to include the reason why consent was not sought when recording the actions taken.

If it is not clear whether a client has the capacity to make an informed decision, staff and volunteers should seek guidance from the manager or chair of the management committee.

Factors which will be relevant in determining whether a safeguarding concern should be reported about a person who lacks capacity to make the decision themselves are if the person cannot:

- understand information about the decision to be made on whether or not to report a concern because of a safeguarding reason, or
- retain that information in their minds, or
- use or weigh up that information as part of the decision-making process, or
- communicate their decision (by talking, using sign language or other means)

DAS recognises the risk some clients present in terms of the potential for self-harm and suicide and/or causing injury to others due to their medical condition. We address this in the context of our operational risk assessment programme, which may also include client specific risk assessments.

Provide Training and Information for Staff

- Training will be provided to all staff on safeguarding regularly either through training courses or by communicating information.
- At induction, new members of staff will be made aware of this policy and where relevant information is kept. An induction training record will be kept on each individual's file and signed to acknowledge safeguarding training has been received.
- All staff will be made aware that safeguarding information is retained within the office at 14 The Square.

Prevent Abuse by Means of Good Practice

- Parents will be responsible for the safety of their children during our benefit advice sessions. No staff or volunteers who have not been DBS checked will be left unsupervised with our clients.
- Trustees are not routinely DBS checked and will not be left unsupervised with our clients.

What is abuse?

There are different types of abuse including:

- Physical – the use of force, which results in pain or injury or a change in a person's natural physical state.
- Sexual – involvement of a child in sexual activity or a sexual relationship, and involvement of an adult on sexual activity or a sexual relationship that they have not consented to.
- Emotional and psychological – behaviour with a harmful effect on emotional health and development, any form of mental cruelty that results in mental distress, or the denial of basic human rights such as self-expression, privacy, and dignity.
- Neglect – of a child or person unable to care for themselves.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – girls from some minority ethnic communities may be at risk.
- Institutional – mistreatment by a regime or individuals within institutional settings or services.
- Discrimination – misuse of power that violates a person's values, beliefs or culture.
- Financial and material – the use of a person's property or assets, income, funds or any other resources without their informed consent or authorisation.
- There may also be instances when someone reports an intention to self-harm.

How might staff, volunteers or trustees find out about abuse?

- Disclosure by a child or vulnerable adult.
- Disclosure by a third party for example concerns raised by staff, volunteers, carers, neighbours, other family members or support workers
- Observation of an adult or young person's behaviour toward children or vulnerable adults.
- Observation of a member of staff, volunteer or trustee's behaviour towards

children or vulnerable adults.

- Observation of a child or vulnerable adult.

Our duty of care is to:

- Take action to protect the adult or child at risk:
 - listen to all disclosures and concerns, including those reported to us by third parties, and take them seriously.
 - record what is being said, and
 - explain that we will need to report what has been said.
- Deal with immediate needs which may involve an immediate telephone call to Customer First for advice.
- Report the abuse or crime.
- Record the events.

What to record

Staff and/or volunteers should use the DAS safeguarding report form to make a factual record of:

- Date of incident and date of recording.
- Your name.
- Name, address, age, gender of the person who may be at risk of abuse or self-harm.
- Name and address of alleged perpetrator if known.
- Name and address of person reporting risk.
- The circumstances of the alleged abuse or neglect.
- Any immediate steps taken to protect the adult or child at risk.
- Where possible obtain consent for the report to be made.

Recognising that these records could contain particularly sensitive information about the victim and potentially unproven allegations about the alleged perpetrator, hard copy reports must be kept in a locked cabinet in the office or, if stored electronically, in a password protected online folder to preserve confidentiality.

Reporting concerns

- Staff and volunteers should speak immediately to the DAS Designated Safeguarding Officer, Steve Race (01394 387070) or in his absence to Graham Walker (07860 578865), the chair of the management committee.
- If neither of the above is available and the situation is urgent call Customer First:
0800 917 1109 for Adult Social Care
0808 800 4005 for Children's Social Care
or, if you think a crime is taking place, or about to take place, call the police on 999.
Customer First will discuss your concerns and advise as to whether a safeguarding referral should be made.

- In certain circumstances the Police will carry out visits to vulnerable adults for whom there are concerns but no third party is involved, for example where an individual is threatening self-harm. In these circumstances we will call 101 to report the incident and request a welfare check.

Version Control Table			
Version	Date	Author	Reason for change
1	November 2015	Jen Morcom, Manager	New
2	July 2020	Nick Bennett, Chair	Revised
3	July 2021	Nick Bennett, Chair	Update
4	August 2022	Rod Gibson, Secretary	Update
5	April 2023	Rod Gibson, Secretary	Update
6	September 2023	Rod Gibson, Secretary	Review
7	June 2024	Claire Hindmarch, Trustee	Review
8	June 2025	Steve Race, Manager	Update