



# Safeguarding Policy

Date	Revised By:	Summary
18.01.14	Board of Trustees	DF Organisational Policy: General



# DYSPRAXIA FOUNDATION

## Safeguarding policy

### Introduction

#### *What this policy covers:*

This safeguarding policy sets out the Dyspraxia Foundation (DF)'s approach to the protection and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. It is based on the current safeguarding principles set out in government legislation.

It sets out definitions of terms such as children, vulnerable adults, abuse and neglect as well as highlighting key signs of abuse. The policy also explains the role of the DF in delivering a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults and how this is achieved.

#### *What this policy does not cover:*

This safeguarding policy does not cover workplace health and safety. The DF has produced a separate policy that deals with workplace health and safety.

#### *Aims*

We place the highest priority on the safety of all those we support and aim to ensure stringent procedures are in place for the protection of children and vulnerable adults who have contact with the DF.

#### *Current legislation and government initiatives*

There have been a number of government initiatives and pieces of legislation that affect how agencies and organisations approach safeguarding. These include: "Every Child Matters"; the Children Act (2004); "Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006) as well as the establishment of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (2009) which works alongside the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure that pre-employment checks for certain jobs are thorough and accurate. The DF policy reflects these key points.

### *Monitoring and review*

The policy should be reviewed annually and a report without identifiable information should be made to the trustees once a year on how the policy is working.

### **How the Dyspraxia Foundation achieves a safe working environment**

The Dyspraxia Foundation ensures that children and vulnerable adults are kept safe when using its facilities and resources. This is done by the active promotion of awareness, good practice and robust, effective procedures.

This safeguarding policy applies to all activities and events undertaken by the Dyspraxia Foundation where children and vulnerable adults are present. It covers all those working in such activities including employees and volunteers

#### *What is safeguarding?*

Safeguarding is defined by the Children Act 1989 and Joint Chief Inspectors Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children (2002) as:

*'Agencies [and organisations] working with children and young people take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to the individual's welfare are minimised; and*

*Where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies [and organisations] take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures, working in partnership with other local agencies'.*

This means that whenever possible a child or vulnerable adult is kept free from harm/abuse. If there are any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult, everything is done to sort this out within policy guidelines.

### **Definitions**

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive, but are only a guide to assist you.

#### *Defining children and vulnerable adults*

A **child** is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, including those not yet born.

A **vulnerable adult** is defined as anyone aged 18 or over who is in, or may be in need of, community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness; and who is unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect

himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation. (Who decides? 1997 Lord Chancellor's Department and 'No Secrets' 2000). A vulnerable adult may be a person who is elderly or frail; has learning disabilities; suffers from mental illness (e.g. dementia, personality disorder, depression); has physical disability; misuses substances; is homeless; is in an abusive relationship.

### *Defining the term "abuse"*

**Abuse** can be defined as "the inflicting of harm/distress or failing to prevent harm/distress within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust."

Abuse describes the ways in which children and vulnerable adults are harmed, usually by adults and often by those they know and trust. It refers to any harm done to physical or mental health or development. This may happen at home, in an educational setting or a community setting. It can cover both inflicting harm and failing to prevent harm.

Abuse can take many forms but is usually separated into these main categories:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying and harassment
- Self-harm

### ***Signs of abuse***

Recognising abuse is not easy. It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk of harm from someone. You do however, have both a responsibility and duty, as set out in this policy, to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child or vulnerable adult.

The following information should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

#### *Physical Abuse*

Most children and vulnerable adults will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough-and-tumble of daily life. This is particularly the case for people with dyspraxia. Injuries should always be interpreted in light of their medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children and vulnerable adults will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern, although this can be more complicated with burns, as these are often delayed in presentation due to blistering taking place sometime later.

### *Emotional Abuse*

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, as there are often no outward physical signs. There may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, although this will usually only be evident if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, for example when hospitalised or away from their parents' care. Even so, children and vulnerable adults who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down, bullied or belittled. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

### *Sexual Abuse*

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour that may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children and vulnerable adults who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

Signs may include

- Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects
- Nightmares, sleeping problems
- Becoming withdrawn or very clingy
- Becoming unusually secretive
- Sudden unexplained personality changes, mood swings and seeming insecure
- Regressing to younger behaviours, e.g. bedwetting
- Unaccountable fear of particular places or people
- Outburst of anger
- Changes in eating habits
- New adult words for body parts and no obvious source
- Talk of a new, older friend and unexplained money or gifts
- Self-mutilation (cutting or burning) in adolescents
- Physical signs, such as, unexplained soreness or bruises around genitals or mouth, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy
- Running away
- Not wanting to be alone with a particular child or young person

### *Neglect*

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children and vulnerable adults.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or poor personal hygiene
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

### *Self-harm*

Children and adults at risk may have suicidal thoughts when deeply distressed. At these times they may show signs of self-harming. This can include self-cutting or addictions including drugs and alcohol or eating disorders. The MIND charity say self-harming is usually a way of trying to kill the pain you are feeling inside rather than a wish to actually kill yourself.

### *Bullying*

Bullying is not always easy to recognise as it can take a number of forms. A child or vulnerable adult may encounter bullying attacks that are:

- physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats
- verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- emotional: excluding (sending to Coventry), tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating.
- All electronic forms of media; including cyber bullying

## **Dyspraxia Foundation – safe ways of working – our code of conduct**

### *Disclosure*

We each have a legal duty to ensure that any suspicion, incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is reported and recorded. This applies to all those working and having face to face contact with individuals as well as with telephone calls to the helpline.

### *General*

Staff and volunteers should never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about or to a child, young person or vulnerable adult even in fun.

Staff and volunteers should challenge all inappropriate behaviour such as bullying, offensive language, sexual innuendo, discriminatory or oppressive statements or acts.

### *One to one contact*

In a one-to-one situation with a child or young person, try to make sure that another adult knows the contact is taking place, why and how long it will take. If possible ensure another adult is nearby and that the child knows another adult is around.

When working in a one to one situation with children and vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children and vulnerable adults away from others.

The DF suggests planning activities that involve one or more people being present or at least being in sight or sound of another person.

In the event of having to meet with an individual child, young person or vulnerable adult, make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.

If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff/volunteers are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts and the comments/reason for the meeting.

### *Physical contact*

Staff and volunteers should **never** engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay. Staff and volunteers should **never** do things of a personal nature for a child, young person or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves. Staff and volunteers should **never** allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind.

### Telephone helpline

Ensure that the caller is listened to and notes recorded. Report any concerns to the appropriate line manager. Inform the caller that their comments/concerns may need to be reported and acted upon in order to help them.

### *Record-keeping*

All records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet. All online files should be password protected and kept in areas where only the key staff can access them.

### *Confidentiality*

All information received in the context of a child protection enquiry must be treated as confidential and must only be shared with statutory agencies and Foundation staff as detailed in this policy. It must not be disclosed for any other purposes. When in doubt advice should be sought from the National Designated Person or someone experienced in dealing with this issue.

### *Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers*

The DF operates employment and supervision procedures that ensure the highest priority is given to issues relating to safeguarding. All staff and volunteers will be required to provide references and undergo an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Check (CRB), and will be subject to the new Vetting & Barring Scheme overseen by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

Each new member of staff or volunteer will be made familiar with Dyspraxia Foundation policies and procedures including the safeguarding policy. *All staff and volunteers working with children are required to attend Child Protection Training and complete the Children's Workforce Development Council's Induction training.*

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Signed Dyspraxia Foundation  
Chair

Signed Dyspraxia Foundation  
General Manager