

# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Policy number	26	Version	008
Drafted by	Kathleen Wiseman	Approved by	24/09/2025
	Reviewed by ZS/ MB	Trustees on	
Responsible person	Trustees	Scheduled review date	25/09/2026

## INTRODUCTION

Downham Market and District Heritage Society (DMDHS) provides a range of opportunities for a wide cross section of people. All these individuals have a right to equal protection from harm.

Children, vulnerable adults, volunteers and hirers may use the Centre as general visitors, while completing volunteer activities or attending a specifically planned event. Most vulnerable people visit with a teacher, parent or carer. They can be involved in a range of activities including a workshop, drama/storytelling event or handling session. These are normally run by volunteers of the Society and/or outside individuals such as an artist. This may also include hiring out the venue for other charities and organisations for their own events.

This Policy covers all these situations, in addition to any activity involving the society's volunteers that takes place outside of the Centre.

This policy is written to ensure that:

1. All children, vulnerable adults and volunteers are guaranteed appropriate and safe treatment in all circumstances within our service.
2. All workers, volunteers and hirers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
3. All hirers of the Centre will be provided with a copy of DMDHS's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure with their booking, and they will be deemed to have accepted and abide by this policy when proceeding with this booking.

# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children, vulnerable adults and volunteers
- To provide volunteers with the overarching safeguarding principles that guide our approach to child and vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing , or be at risk of, harm.

This policy is mandatory for anybody working for or on behalf of DMDHS, and must be applied whenever there is a concern about a child or vulnerable adult or about the behaviour of an adult.

DMDHS believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

DMDHS recognises that:

- To protect children, vulnerable adults and volunteers, the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults regardless of vulnerability have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

## AUTHORISATION

Date of Approval by Trustees .....24/09/2025.....

Signature of Trustee...Zowie Sweetland.....

Downham Market & District Heritage Society

**Policies** can be established or altered only by the Trustees

**Procedures** may be altered by a designated person(s)

# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

Policy No 26

Version 00 g

Reviewed by ZS

Approved by Trustees 24/09/2025

Next review 25/09/2026

## PROCEDURE

Downham Market & District Heritage Society' (DMDHS) strives to create and maintain a healthy, positive and safe environment for all who visit and work there.

We have a responsibility to ensure children and vulnerable adults' safety. Children and vulnerable adults will be protected from physical, emotional or sexual abuse, bullying and neglect.

1. Volunteering: we will follow appropriate procedures to ensure the suitability of volunteers who are to work directly with children and vulnerable adults. This will include Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks where necessary.
2. Training: All Volunteers will be made aware of the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding guidelines at the volunteer meetings. All new volunteers will be provided with a copy (either digital or printed copy) of the safeguarding policy and procedure at induction. They will also be reminded that the policy can be found at reception.
3. Procedures are in place which would minimise any opportunity for abuse. This includes volunteers avoiding private or unobserved situations with children and vulnerable adults. The website will show the Centre's zero-tolerance to abuse in all its forms.
4. Risk assessments for events will include a Safeguarding assessment in addition to minimising risks of the activity itself.
5. Any suspected abuse will be reported to the Safeguarding Trustee or the Operational Safeguarding Lead and communicated to our partners. This could include physical or verbal evidence that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused.
6. DMDHS has nominated a designated trustee as a Safeguarding Trustee. The Safeguarding Trustee is Zowie Sweetland who may be contacted on [learning@discoverdownham.org.uk](mailto:learning@discoverdownham.org.uk) or by telephoning the Centre on 01366 384428. The Operational Safeguarding Lead is the person who is running the workshop, event or the centre at the time.

# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

1. Always have another responsible adult present when working with children and vulnerable adults. Avoid situations where an individual child or vulnerable adult is completely unobserved.
2. Recognise that parents, teachers or carers should always be involved in the monitoring of children or vulnerable adults' behaviour or development and should be the first point of contact (except in cases of suspected abuse).
3. If you accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult and they seem distressed in any way, appear to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstand or misinterpret something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Trustee or Operational Safeguarding Lead and record the details in the Safeguarding Register in the Office.
4. You should:
  - Never allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
  - Never allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
  - Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative play, including horseplay.
  - Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
  - Never make comments that may offend people regarding their vulnerabilities.
  - Never do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults they can do for themselves.
  - Never be alone with a child or vulnerable adult in an unsupervised area.
5. It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, particularly if they are young or have disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers/the person involved. There is a need to be responsive to a child or vulnerable adult's actions: if a child or vulnerable adult is fully dependent on you, talk with them about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This would include physical contact, lifting or assisting a child or vulnerable adult to carry out activities.

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6. Everyone should be aware that as a rule it does not make sense to:
- Spend time with children or vulnerable adults away from others.
  - Take children or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short.
  - Take children or vulnerable adults to where they will be alone with you.

## DEFINITIONS AND SIGNS OF ABUSE

Signs of abuse can often be difficult to detect. The following lists aim to help people to identify abuse and recognise possible indicators. Many forms of abuse are also criminal offences and should be treated that way. The lists below are not exhaustive, and **if you have any concerns, including those that are not mentioned below, then please raise these issues as outlined in the RESPONDING TO SUSPICION OR ALLEGATION OF ABUSE section below.**

### Types of physical abuse:

- Assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing
- Rough handling
- Scalding and burning
- Physical punishments
- Inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint
- Making someone purposefully uncomfortable (e.g. opening a window and removing blankets)
- Involuntary isolation or confinement
- Forcible feeding or withholding food
- Unauthorised restraint, restricting movement (e.g. tying someone to a chair)

### Types of domestic violence or abuse

Domestic violence or abuse can be characterised by any of the indicators of abuse outlined in this policies and procedures document relating to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional.

# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

## Signs and Indicators:

- Low self-esteem
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- Fear of outside intervention
- Damage to home or property
- Isolation – not seeing friends and family
- Limited access to money

Domestic violence and abuse includes any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It also includes so called 'honour-based' violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Coercive or controlling behaviour is a core part of domestic violence. Coercive behaviour can include:

- acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation
- harming, punishing, or frightening the person
- isolating the person from sources of support
- exploitation of resources or money
- preventing the person from escaping abuse
- regulating everyday behaviour.

## Types of sexual abuse

- Rape, attempted rape or sexual assault
- Inappropriate touch anywhere
- Non-consensual masturbation of either or both persons
- Non-consensual sexual penetration or attempted penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth
- Any sexual activity that the person lacks the capacity to consent to
- Inappropriate looking, sexual teasing or innuendo or sexual harassment
- Sexual photography or forced use of pornography or witnessing of sexual acts
- Indecent exposure

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## Signs and Symptoms:

- Bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area
- Unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Foreign bodies in genital or rectal openings
- Infections, unexplained genital discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- The uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- Incontinence not related to any medical diagnosis
- Self-harming
- Poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- Excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships
- Fear of receiving help with personal care
- Reluctance to be alone with a particular person

## Types of psychological or emotional abuse

- Enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends
- Removing mobility or communication aids or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance
- Preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs
- Preventing the expression of choice and opinion
- Failure to respect privacy
- Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities
- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse
- Addressing a person in a patronising or infantilising way
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Cyber bullying

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## Signs and indicators:

- An air of silence when a particular person is present
- Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- Insomnia
- Low self-esteem
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- A change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger
- Apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment

## Types of financial or material abuse

- Theft of money or possessions
- Fraud, scamming
- Preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- Employees taking a loan from a person using the service
- Undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence put on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- Arranging less care than is needed to save money in order to maximise inheritance
- Denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs
- Denying assistance to access benefits
- Misuse of personal allowance in a care home
- Misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home
- Someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress
- False representation, using another person's bank account, cards or documents
- Exploitation of a person's money or assets, e.g. unauthorised use of a car
- Misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, appointeeship or other legal authority
- Rogue trading – e.g. unnecessary or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs or poor workmanship

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## Signs and Indicators:

- Missing personal possessions
- Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
- Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
- Failure to register an LPA after the person has ceased to have mental capacity to manage their finances, so that it appears that they are continuing to do so
- The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
- The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
- Signs of financial hardship in cases where the person's financial affairs are being managed by a court -appointed deputy, attorney or LPA
- Recent changes in deeds or title to property

## Types of discriminatory abuse

- Unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation (known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010)
- Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic
- Denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader
- Harassment or deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- Denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment and criminal justice relating to a protected characteristic
- Substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic

## Signs and Indicators:

- The person appears withdrawn and isolated
- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
- The support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic

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## Types of organisational or institutional abuse

- Discouraging the involvement of relatives or friends
- Authoritarian management or rigid regimes
- Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service
- Lack of respect for dignity and privacy
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Failure to respond to abuse appropriately
- Interference with personal correspondence or communication
- Failure to respond to complaints

## Signs and Indicators:

- Lack of adequate procedures
- Poor record-keeping and missing documents
- Public discussion of personal matters
- Lack of management overview and support

## Types of neglect and acts of omission

- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs
- Ignoring or isolating the person
- Preventing the person from making their own decisions
- Preventing access to glasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc.
- Failure to ensure privacy and dignity

## Signs and Indicators:

- Poor environment – dirty or unhygienic
- Poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene
- Pressure sores or ulcers
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss
- Untreated injuries and medical problems
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations
- Accumulation of untaken medication
- Uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing

# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

## RESPONDING TO SUSPICION OR ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

Discover Downham (DMDHS) personnel have a duty to report any suspicions, allegations or disclosures to:

- The Safeguarding Trustee (Zowie Sweetland 01366 384650 or Operational Safeguarding Lead (person running the session at the time). **If it is an emergency then please call the Emergency Services on 999.**

Concerns can also be raised with:

- **Children's Advice and Duty Service or Norfolk MASH:**

If the suspicion relates to a child or vulnerable adult you can contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service or Norfolk MASH on their direct line: **0344 800 8020.**

- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):**

When an allegation of abuse is made against an adult working with children, this is reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Completed LADO referral forms should be sent to:

**LADO@norfolk.gov.uk.**

**If you are concerned about a child in Norfolk and want to speak to someone, contact 0344 800 8020.**

However, the first concern must be the reassurance of the child or vulnerable adult and their protection from any potential risk.

During the reporting process the young person or vulnerable adult should be protected from further contact with the individual involved in the allegation.

We will always seek consent from a child or vulnerable adult to share information they have given about themselves or others. However, if consent is not given, we should still share information with relevant professionals if we believe we are protecting someone from significant harm.

## REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST VOLUNTEERS

The law does give you protection if you raise concerns or report a colleague for safeguarding issues if the report was not malicious or vexatious. The procedures apply to all volunteers.

DMDHS recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a volunteer may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. Those dealing with an allegation will therefore maintain an open mind and investigations will be carried out thoroughly, without delay and with due sensitivity and care.

# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

## RECEIVING AN ALLEGATION FROM A VULNERABLE ADULT

A volunteer who receives an allegation about another worker from a vulnerable adult will report immediately to the Safeguarding Trustee or the Operational Safeguarding Lead, unless this is the person against whom the allegation is made, in which case the report should be made to the Trustees.

The Safeguarding Trustee should:

- Obtain written details of the allegation from the person who received it. Details must be signed and dated (dd/mm/yyyy). The written details should be countersigned and dated by the Chair of Trustees.
- Record information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.

Any issues will be raised at Trustee meetings, minuted and acted upon. Safeguarding will be on every agenda at the Trustee meetings.

## DATA PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

DMDHS is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personal information, including volunteer information, is kept locked and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is kept, and this is regularly reviewed at Trustee Meetings and outdated information destroyed appropriately.

## AUTHORISATION

Date of Approval by Trustees ...24/09/2025.....

Signature of Trustee.....Zowie Sweetland.....  
Downham Market & District Heritage Society

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