



## Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy

Unique reference number: PBSP001

Document Owner: Chris Roach, Head of Safeguarding

Version: 1.3

### Purpose of Policy

Guide Dogs recognises that the welfare of Adults with Care and Support needs (England and Wales), Adults at risk /in need of protection, (Northern Ireland) Adults at Risk, (Scotland), and all Children & Young People, hereafter, referred to as 'Vulnerable Groups/ People', is of paramount importance putting them at the centre in decision making and making safeguarding personal.

Safeguarding under current legislation is concerned with:

- Promoting Welfare
- Preventing abuse and harm
- Protecting abused people
- Making safeguarding personal

The Charity Commission definition of Safeguarding is broader in its approach and requires that: Trustees must take reasonable steps to protect people who come into contact with a charity from harm.

This includes:

- people who benefit from the charity's work
- staff
- volunteers

It may also include other people who come into contact with the charity through its work. this includes supporters and other members of the public. That they must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to them. Having safeguards in place within an organisation not only protects and promotes the welfare of vulnerable groups but also it enhances the confidence of trustees, staff, volunteers, service users and others who come into contact with the charity.



## **Policy Statements**

### **1.To whom the policy applies:**

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility who works or volunteers within Guide Dogs where they come into contact with potentially vulnerable people or where they provide services to potentially vulnerable groups.

### **2.Main principles:**

- All People who receive services from Guide Dogs, or otherwise, who come into contact with Guide Dogs staff or volunteers, are deemed to be potentially vulnerable and have the right to be protected from abuse.
- Guide Dogs will aim to prevent abuse from occurring, wherever possible.
- Guide Dogs will respond promptly to any indications of actual or suspected abuse, or where there are low level concerns that may lead to harm and ensure that appropriate actions are taken.
- Guide Dogs will work cooperatively with all agencies who share the responsibility for protecting vulnerable people and those who come into contact with the charity.
- Guide Dogs recruitment processes and procedures for Staff and Volunteers support our responsibilities and duty of care as an employer in relation to safeguarding of vulnerable people.

### **3.Responsibilities:**

All staff and volunteers that have contact with or where they provide services to vulnerable people and others who come in contact with the charity, have a duty of care when there is any cause for concern that a person may be at risk of, is being, or has been in the past the subject of abuse, to take concerns, allegations or disclosures of abuse seriously, however insignificant they may seem and report them as per the procedures that follow.

Advice and guidance is available from the Safeguarding Team, People and Performance Directorate, as required. Guide Dogs will provide training, supervision and line management, appropriate to need. In the case of staff and



volunteers working directly with vulnerable people, supervision in relation to safeguarding must be sought from a manager who has had additional training in safeguarding vulnerable people or the Safeguarding Team.

Failure to comply with Safeguarding Policy and related procedures will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action.

#### **4. Monitoring:**

Legislation and Guidance that underpins the Guide Dogs Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Code of Conduct:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child 1991
- The Protection of Children Act and The Police Act 1997
- The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2003 (UK wide)
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 1984 and 1998
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Children Act 2004 (England) Part three applies solely to Wales.
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and GIRFEC
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 and UNOCINI
- Prevent Agenda - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- The Care Act 2014
- Duty of Candor, Section 20, Health and Social Care Act 2008
- The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- The Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Section 7 Mental Health Act 1983 - Guardianship
- Section 135 Mental Health Act 1983



- Section 136 Mental Health Act 1983
- Section 47 National Assistance Act 1948
- Non-Molestation Order-Section 42 of The Family Law Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999

Amendments and / or updates to any of the above may result in changes to this policy and / or related processes and / or procedures.

### **Related Policies or Processes:**

Key Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding Children Procedure,

Safeguarding Adults Procedure,

Safeguarding Children Codes of Conduct,

Safeguarding Adults Codes of Conduct,

Safeguarding Prevent Policy

Low Level Concerns Procedure

Safeguarding Training Level 1 and Level 2 materials to be read in conjunction with this document can be found on Gateway.

### **Permissible exceptions**

None identified at this time.

### **Governance Review & Approval Table:**

The table below contains two rows and five columns. The first row contains headings

	H&S	Protection of Children & Adults	Insurance	Legal
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Date Reviewed	N/A	08/01/2020 23/03/2022	N/A	N/A
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## Version control table:

The table below contains three rows and four columns. (Only the original approval date and the most recent amendment should be included in the table.) The first row contains headings.

Date	Version	Status	Details of Change
08/01/20	1.0	Approved	Chris Roach Head of Safeguarding
06/10/20	1.1	Updated	Transferred to new template
23/03/22	1.2	Updated	Addition of Safeguarding Prevent Policy
28/03/23	1.3	Updated	Addition of Low Level Concerns Procedure

## End of document