



Safeguarding policy

What you need to know

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you are concerned that a child, young person, or adult at risk (vulnerable adult) is being abused, or you suspect abuse, then you must:

- Inform the Chair of SDOS at the earliest opportunity
- Or in the very unlikely event of a child, young person or adult being in immediate danger, call the police on 999

There is more information and background, including important definitions in Appendix 1.

Purpose and scope

This policy framework sets out our stance in relation to safeguarding children and young people and adults (adults at risk) from abuse.

Awareness is the first step towards creating a safe environment for SDOS members and members of the public participating in SDOS activities.

A key principle is that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

In practice the purpose of this policy is to ensure that SDOS Council:

A) considers the potential for the abuse of children and young people, as well as adults at risk, whilst they participate in activities organised by SDOS

B) has a clear process, known to Council members and Walk and Event Leaders, that sets out the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns

Safeguards in place for children

We have identified three areas of activity where safeguards need to be in place. These are:

Participation in the User Group

As a matter of policy we will not allow children below the age of 13 to join the email User Group. Young people aged 13 - 15 can join the User Group, but only with written permission of a parent / carer / guardian. From the age of 16 onward parental approval for participation in the User Group is not required.

Participation in Walks or other Outdoor Events

Any child under the age of 13 wishing to join a Walk must be accompanied by a parent / carer / guardian or responsible adult. (the term responsible adult is defined below).

Any unaccompanied young person between the age of 13 and 16 must have written permission of a parent / carer / guardian **and** the agreement of the Walk Leader.

A sub-set of outings are public engagement events, organised by SDOS, but open to the general public. In such circumstances, the SDOS facilitators will be aware of the need to look out for children and to actively consider any safety concerns, taking action as required.

Participation in indoor meetings

Any child or young person under the age of 16 wishing to participate in an indoor meeting **must** be accompanied by a parent / carer / guardian or a responsible adult. This takes account of the fact that meetings can end after 9.30 pm and that an extra layer of safeguards is required.

Safeguards in place for adults at risk (vulnerable adults)

Across all settings, vigilance is the most important safeguard. This is because SDOS Council members and Walk or Event Leaders will not necessarily know that an adult is 'at risk' in terms of the legal definition (see Appendix 1 below).

In circumstances where someone is introduced as an 'at risk' adult, we will seek to discuss what safeguards might be appropriate: see Appendix 2 below for practice guidance.

The procedure to follow where there are concerns

If a Council member or Walk or Event Leader has any concerns that a child or young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of abuse, or abuse is observed, then the Chair of SDOS should be informed at the earliest opportunity. It is then the responsibility of the Chair to assess and decide what action should be taken and to ensure that a file note is created, recording the basis of that decision. Actions could include making a referral to the relevant Social Services department.

In the very unlikely event of a child, young person or adult being in immediate danger then it is essential that the police are contacted on 999.

Appendix 1

The nature of abuse

Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 5 main categories of abuse. These are: sexual, physical, financial, emotional abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories.

These are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child Criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse

Some important definitions

The definition of a child

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or are in hospital.

Safeguarding children

Safeguarding children is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) 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.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Adult at Risk

The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as any person who is aged 18 years or over who:

A) has needs for care and support (whether or not the Authority is meeting any of those needs),

B) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and

C) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

In this document we have used the term vulnerable adult and adult at risk synonymously.

Responsible adult

The responsible adult role allows for people like cousins, nephews or even neighbours to support children and young people. In practice, we will make a judgement that the person presenting as a responsible adult appears to be over the age of 18 and that the child or young person appears to be comfortable with that person. This is consistent with our stance towards a parent / carer / guardian (or grandparent). We are not able to check their identity and status.

Appendix 2

Practice guidance

If concerns are raised with the Chair (relating to either a child or an adult) then a file note must be created that details the date and time of the occurrence and the nature of the concerns (for example, what was the worry or concern, who is involved and anything that has been said or heard). The Chair should ensure that as much detail as possible is recorded, distinguishing between facts and opinion. In reaching a decision about what action to take or not, it is essential that the rationale for that decision is clearly explained. The thresholds for making Referrals are available from each of the relevant Local Authority websites and it is always possible for the Chair to have an informal discussion with the safeguarding teams.

If an adult is introduced to us as an adult at risk (probably by a family member, carer or support worker), a Council member (normally the Chair), should request a discussion with the adult in question and seek to complete a risk assessment. External advice may be needed.

Any emails sent to the junior.news@sdos.org address (for correspondence relating to the junior newsletter) is expected to emanate from an adult's email account. Care will be taken to verify this (for example by cross referencing to member mojo) before any response is sent.

Appendix 3

Key 'phone numbers and guidance

The following 'phone numbers relate to referral points for raising concerns, although in practice the Chair is likely to take the lead in making any referrals.

East Sussex County Council - Single Point of Advice (SPoA) Mon-Thurs 8.30am-5pm and Fri 8.30am-4.30pm.

Phone: 01323 464222

Email: 0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk

Out of Hours Social Care Service - Children's services: 01273 335905/6

Out of Hours Social Care Service Adult services: 01323 636399

East Sussex County Council - If you are worried about an adult who may be being abused, neglected or exploited, please tell us. Phone us on 0345 60 80 191 or report your concern online:

West Sussex County Council - Anyone who has concerns about the welfare of a child can contact a single countywide phone number, known as the Integrated Front door (IFD). Monday to Friday between 9am-5pm: 01403 229900. At all other times, including nights, weekends and bank holidays, contact the 'out of hours' emergency team: 0330 222 6664

West Sussex County Council - If you are a member of the public, and you wish to discuss your concerns, please phone 01243 642121. To report an urgent concern out of usual working hours (Monday-Friday, 09:00-17:00), please call the Adult Social Care out of hours manager on 03302 227007.

Brighton and Hove City Council -Telephone: 01273 290400 for children and 01273 295555 for adults. **Out of Hours Emergency Duty Service** Telephone: 01273 335905 or 335906

NSPCC - Adults concerned about a child can contact the NSPCC helpline seven days a week on 0808 800 5000, or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

Version 7

Approved by Council 9 May 2022

Tony Benton – Chair.....

Sue Miles – Secretary.....

To be reviewed annually from the above date